Development of Teachers' Primary School Skills in Teaching Arabic

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Abstract

In Islamic elementary school, Arabic is a compulsory subject that must be taught. In fact, the majority of elementary school teachers are not equipped with enough competence to teach it. This paper aims to describe efforts to improve the competence of elementary school teachers in teaching Arabic. The research method is descriptive qualitative through teacher competency mapping, needs analysis and Focus Group Discussion (FGD). The result of the research shows that Teacher Proficiency Development (TPD) in the form of workshop and teaching practice can be one of alternative in improving the pedagogic and professional competence of elementary school teacher in teaches Arabic. In order for effective TPD program, massive dissemination, advisory and sustainable programming is required involving relevant universities, government, and schools.

1. INTRODUCTION

Language, including Arabic in it, has a central role in the intellectual, social, and emotional development of students (Mahn, & John-Steiner, 2002). Aside from being a medium of communication, Arabic is also a key determinant of success in studying other fields of study. Not a few references to study fields that use Arabic (Teh, Embi, Yusoff, & Mahamod, 2009). Given the vital function of language, a language curriculum for formal schools should be able to prepare students to understand the content and context and its application for daily life (Rivers, 2018). By mastering Arabic, students are expected to be able to reflect their own experiences and experiences in others, express ideas and feelings, and understand various meanings. Through language mastery, students are expected to be able to know themselves, their culture, and other people's culture and actively participate in community activities.

Learning Arabic has become a global issue, including Indonesia with the largest Muslim community in the world (Santoso, & Fitriansyah, 2017). So far, Arabic is synonymous with the language of the Koran. Therefore, there is an assumption that if you want to understand the Koran, then he must understand Arabic. Arabic is not only

used for communication with fellow human beings but also the language was chosen for worship in Islam. Therefore, Arabic has a special place and interest as a language used in religious activities (Wekke, 2015). Seeing the importance of the role and function of the Arabic language, the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia has placed Arabic as a compulsory subject that must exist, starting from elementary to university level.

Mastery of Arabic is an important requirement for the success of individuals, society, especially the Indonesian people in answering the challenges to the age at the global level. The Arabic language competence improvement program has been widely researched and carried out, both focusing on students and focusing on teachers. Zainuddin & Sahrir (2016) states that teaching and learning Arabic has long been dominated by the use of conventional methods of lectures on the help of several tools such as whiteboards, tape recorders, and flashcards. Currently learning Arabic is done through a socio-cultural and socio-linguistic approach that compromises the use of the first language in a foreign language (Eldin, 2015). Other efforts that can be done are through the innovation of learning methods such as the application of thinking skills through instrumental enrichment or by creating a culture of thinking in the classroom (Yusuf & Wekke, 2015). In addition to innovating approaches and methods, increasing student competencies can be done through learning media innovations. Mango's research (2015) shows that

iPad plays an important role in student learning involvement so that it encourages active learning in the classroom and paves the way for their success.

Some learning innovations for improving student competence can be carried out by competent teachers. Learning Arabic from elementary to tertiary level must be delivered by professional Arabic teachers. However. Arabic teachers at the elementary school level have been presented by class teachers (general). Teachers who teach are teachers that are not provided specifically to teach Arabic. They only get one or two Arabic language courses (2-4 SCS) when they are studying so that it is not enough to build their professional competence.

The initial findings in this study indicate that learning Arabic is still dominated by conventional methods. The teacher reads the text in the book, while the students follow what the teacher reads. In this context, improving teacher competencies must be done, one of which is through mentoring programs or Co-teaching Professional Development (CoPD) conducted by Shaffer & Thomas-Brown (2015) and training programs (May, Zakaria, Adam, & Ju, 2016). One type of training that has been developed is education and training (INSET) in-service initiated by Roberts (2016). Even the latest training has integrated the mobile phone in it (Ekanayake, & Wishart, 2015).

In this study, by concocting previous research and adjusting to the needs of the program and infrastructure, teacher training was carried out in the form of a centralized workshop followed by

mentoring in their respective schools. The training program presents experts on the field of Arabic and pedagogic with a simple but fun approach. The media used has also varied from role-playing, multimedia use, and others.

This paper would like to reveal the results of a preliminary study on the profile of elementary school teachers in one city in Indonesia and the results of Teacher Proficiency Development to improve their competence in teaching Arabic.

2. METHOD

This research method uses the descriptive method. The aim is to express some of the series of programs to improve the competence of Arabic teachers in one city in Indonesia. This study began with an initial study conducted by researchers on 10 elementary school teacher respondents that taught Arabic. The method used is an interview and questionnaire distribution. The research data onto the first stage is in the form of teacher profiles in general. Based on this preliminary data, researchers can state what competencies are needed by the teacher. The results of this initial study were made as a baseline for the creation of appropriate training programs.

Based on the results of the Focus Group Discussion (FGD), the training program that will be given to the teacher is in the form of a centralized workshop and individual guidance. The main material that will be provided is content and pedagogical strengthening, preparation of lesson plans, teaching practices, and instrument preparation. Improving teacher competency during training is recorded through Authentic Assessment Based on Teaching and Learning Trajectory with Student Activity Sheet (AABTLT with SAS). SAS is what will be examined and given a score based on the rubric compiled. The assessment rubric for each participant's answer is made in the range 0-4 with an explanation as in table 1.

Table 1. AABTLT with SAS Rubric

Score	Criteria
0	If the respondent does not give an answer
1	If the respondent gives the wrong answer
2	If the answer given is correct but incomplete
3	If the answer given is correct, and complete but not perfect as expected
4	If the answer is appropriate / perfect

Furthermore, SAS that has been given a score and accumulated for each respondent will be processed and analyzed using descriptive statistics and expressed in percentage of learning outcomes. The average criteria for learning outcomes of training participants are given in table 2. The criteria in table 2 show that the learning outcomes obtained by the training participants indirectly indicate the effectiveness of the training delivered by the trainer.

The number of training participants is 20 people, coming from public and private schools. The first phase of

training was carried out centrally for three days. The material presented in the form of exposure to learning plans, learning practices, learning methods and learning media relevant to the elementary school. Training participants are given the opportunity to practice learning before experts and will receive input from experts and other participants.

Table 2. Criteria for Learning Outcomes

Score	Criteria
<55	Ineffective
55 – 70	Less effective
71 – 85	Effective
>85	Very effective

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The main results of this study consist of profiles of primary school teachers that teach Arabic as input for training programs and their competency profiles during training. Table 3 below shows the results of interviews and questionnaires for 10 primary school teachers who were prospective trainees.

The research findings revealed in table 3 are the background of the importance of increasing the competence of Arabic language teachers through the Teacher Proficiency Development (TPD) program. Figure 1 below shows the recording of the teacher training activity process revealed through the Student Activity Sheet (SAS).

Table 3 shows the initial profile of the Arabic teacher before training. There are some interesting findings. (1) Teacher education background: Only one teacher has an Arabic background that is academically considered capable of teaching Arabic. This finding is reasonable because the educational background required by the law is S1 elementary school education. In fact, with the finding that there is one primary school teacher with an S1 degree from Arabic showing an inappropriate academic background. The majority of elementary school teachers who do not have an Arabic language background are one of the causes of the low quality of learning Arabic. (2) Teacher competency: The majority of teachers are not used to making good lesson plans; the results of interviews with several teachers stated that during this time, the lesson plan used was the result of downloads from certain sites/websites. At the implementation level of learning, the learning done by the teacher is dominated by lectures where the teacher reads the words or words of the book while the students are asked to repeat them. There is also aspect of assessment, the teacher only uses examples of questions on the book, and almost no teachers develop their own instruments.

The background and competence of teachers will greatly influence the quality of learning. Zailaini, Ismail, Ali, & Mishra (2017) stated that qualified

teachers will surely produce quality students. According to them, qualified teachers will ensure that the teaching process must be presented according to the level of students' abilities, provide lots of practice and conduct regular assessments, and provide motivation and hope to students so that they will work hard in the study.

The results of the preliminary study described in table 3 are the background to the implementation of TPD with a focus on training in improving the competence of primary school teachers in teaching Arabic.

Table 3. Arabic Teacher Profile

Data	Description
Background	Of the 10 teachers who were sampled only 1 person had an Arabic undergraduate education background. Their academic background is dominated by scholars of Islamic Education (PAI) and some even have a high school background
Teacher Competency ▪ Making learning plans ▪ Mastering learning methods ▪ Carry out learning ▪ Conduct learning assessments	Only 4 teachers are accustomed to making Learning Plans, 1 person is accustomed to using certain learning methods and only 3 teachers are able to make and carry out learning evaluations.
Student response	Of the 100 students from three teachers from three different schools, 62.4% said they were not satisfied with the appearance of the Arabic teacher when teaching in class.
Headmaster's response	The results of interviews with several principals suggested that the development of teacher competencies was almost non-existent, except for the implementation of the KKG (teacher working groups). In reality, the KKG itself is only a teacher development in general, not a subject teacher. There is no specific Arabic teacher competency development program

The training is divided into two sessions, namely a centralized session in the form of workshops and individual mentoring sessions. The centralized workshop contains five competencies built namely content sharpening, a pedagogical theory which contains several models, learning methods and strategies, preparation of learning plans, teaching practices and making assessment instruments. Figure 1 above is the training effectiveness profile recorded from the training participants' answers to the questions or bills given by the instructor.
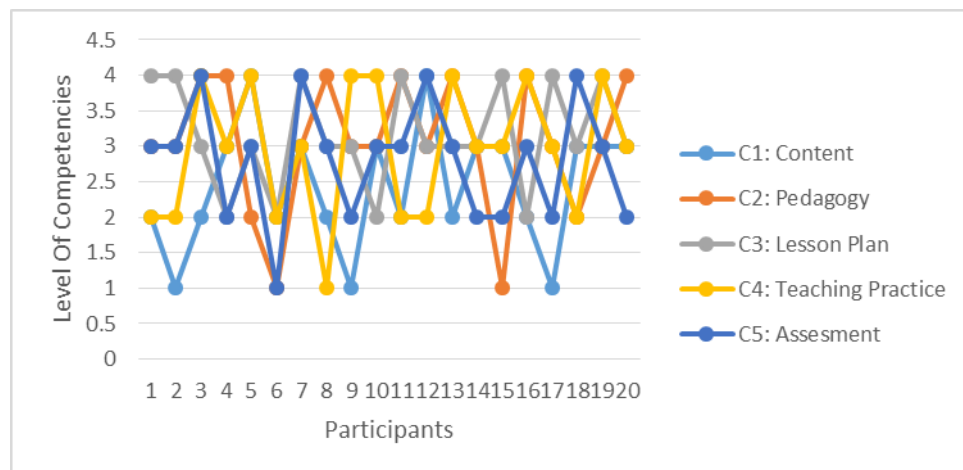
Figure 1. The Effectiveness of Training

Based on Figure 1 above, the average learning achievement during the workshop was 72% in the effective category. The training material that was most absorbed by the participants was the lesson plan (3.15) and the training material that was least absorbed was the preparation of assessment (2.8). This data shows that the training participants were very enthusiastic and concentrated when the instructor explained and discussed the lesson plan. This is because they really need the material presented. The preparation of the lesson plan for this workshop has involved the use of technology in learning media. In this digital era, teachers should be able to optimize the role of technology as broadly as possible in learning so students want to follow the lessons taught by the teacher. Research conducted by Al-Busaidi, Al Hashmi, Al Musawi, & Kazem (2016) shows that the new software for Arabic language learning (ALL) has been proven to improve student learning and overcome their learning difficulties. Other research results show that the use of computer-assisted language learning (CALL) has proven to provide meaningful experiences of students in using technology that can improve classroom learning (McMurry, Rich, Hartshorn, Anderson, & Williams, 2016).

4. CONCLUSION

Lack of courses, teaching experience, and educational background mismatch are the main causes of the low competency of elementary school teachers in teaching Arabic. One solution to improve their competence is through continuous teaching proficiency development (TPD). This study shows that there are positive changes of teachers both from the approach, techniques, and methods of teaching and positive responses to training. Further research is needed to measure and assess program success through time-series research. In order for this program to continue and have a positive impact, it requires the support of all parties, especially the education

office, education practitioners and all related parties.

The results of this study recommend the need for continuous, massive and measurable and sustainable training as outlined in the training curriculum. This training is expected to produce professional teachers. For consideration, Mana and England (2017) have made a comprehensive professional standard proposal for Arabic teacher certification. In their book, they have created standards that serve as a framework of achieving pedagogical and professional competence and effectiveness in teaching Arabic at all levels. The standards they make are general and can be applied to training and preparing Arabic language teachers throughout the learning spectrum. In addition to the curriculum, aspects of the learning environment and the use of learning technology also need to be considered. Wekke & Andriansyah (2016) stated that environmental aspects are the main key to the success of the Arabic learning process. Meanwhile, Abdullahi & Rouyan (2018) stated that the application of modern technology in education was very interesting with sudden changes in internet usage from Web 1.0 to Web 2.0. However, in learning Arabic it is not widely adopted by practitioners.

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