

Learning Arabic Language Books for Beginners Through the Application of The Imla' Method

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ABSTRACT. This study aims to determine the process and effectiveness of learning Arabic texts for beginners through the Imla' method at the Darunnajah Kalikuning Islamic Boarding School (PPTQ). The Imla' method is used as the primary approach because it emphasizes direct listening and writing skills, enabling students to recognize Arabic letter forms, vocabulary, and structure more effectively. This study employed a qualitative, descriptive approach. Data were obtained through observation of the learning process, analysis of student learning activities, and observation of student responses during dictation sessions. The results indicate that learning using the Imla' method occurs in three main stages: preparation, dictation, and evaluation. The teacher introduces new vocabulary, provides pronunciation examples, and dictates words or sentences in a structured manner, repeating them three times. This process is effective in improving students' listening skills, correct Arabic writing, accuracy, and memory. Furthermore, this method fosters discipline and independence through self-evaluation conducted by students after dictation.

Keywords: *Arabic Language Books, Beginners, Imla' Method.*



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INTRODUCTION

Learning Arabic for beginners is an essential aspect of education, particularly in Islamic educational institutions such as pesantren, madrasahs, and other Islamic learning environments. Arabic is not only a means of communication but also a primary key for understanding Islamic sources such as the Qur'an, Hadith, and classical Islamic texts. The Qur'an itself emphasizes the importance of Arabic as the language of revelation, as stated in Surah Yusuf (12:2): "Indeed, We have sent it down as an Arabic Qur'an so that you may understand." This verse highlights the central role of Arabic language proficiency in accessing and comprehending Islamic teachings. Therefore, effective and appropriate teaching methods are needed to help beginners acquire Arabic language skills in a systematic and meaningful way.

Arabic language learning for beginners often presents unique challenges, particularly in mastering the fundamental skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Many students

struggle with recognizing Arabic letters, understanding phonetic patterns, and writing correctly due to differences between Arabic and their native languages. These challenges require structured and effective instructional approaches that support gradual skill development (Hasbi, 2025). In many educational settings, especially in non-Arabic-speaking countries, students are introduced to Arabic as a foreign language, which requires teaching strategies that emphasize both linguistic accuracy and practical application (Waliyuddin et al., 2024). Without appropriate methods, beginners may experience difficulties that hinder their progress and reduce their motivation to learn.

One of the fundamental aspects of Arabic language learning is writing accuracy, which plays an important role in understanding vocabulary, sentence structure, and grammatical rules. Writing in Arabic requires students to master letter shapes, spelling conventions, and orthographic rules. These skills cannot be developed instantly but require continuous practice and reinforcement. The dictation method, commonly known as *Imla'*, is one of the traditional yet effective approaches used to develop writing skills in Arabic. *Imla'* emphasizes listening and writing simultaneously, enabling students to connect sounds with written forms. This method helps learners become familiar with vocabulary, sentence patterns, and spelling rules from an early stage of learning (Bangsa et al., 2025). Research indicates that *Imla'* plays a significant role in improving writing accuracy and strengthening students' understanding of Arabic orthography (Sufyan, 2025).

The *Imla'* method focuses on developing listening and writing skills through direct teacher-student interaction. In this process, the teacher reads words or sentences aloud while students listen carefully and write them down. This activity trains students to recognize sounds, understand word structures, and reproduce them accurately in written form. The integration of listening and writing makes *Imla'* particularly effective for beginners, as it encourages active participation and immediate feedback. Studies have shown that dictation-based learning can improve students' ability to write Arabic words and sentences correctly while also enhancing their listening comprehension (Kusnawan et al., 2023).

In addition to improving writing skills, the *Imla'* method also contributes to vocabulary acquisition and language comprehension. When students repeatedly listen to and write Arabic words, they gradually internalize vocabulary and sentence patterns. This repetition helps strengthen memory and supports long-term retention of language structures. Dictation exercises also help students identify common writing errors and correct them through guided practice. Research on Arabic dictation learning shows that students who regularly practice *Imla'* demonstrate significant improvement in spelling accuracy and writing proficiency (Rosyad & Haq, 2024).

Another advantage of the *Imla'* method is its role in building concentration and discipline. During dictation exercises, students must listen carefully, process information quickly, and write accurately within a limited time. This process trains students to focus and develop attention to detail. These cognitive skills are essential not only for language learning but also for academic success in general. Furthermore, dictation activities encourage students to develop good learning habits such as careful listening, neat writing, and consistent practice. These habits contribute to the development of responsible and disciplined learners (Sufyan, 2025).

The effectiveness of the *Imla'* method is also related to its interactive nature. Unlike passive learning approaches, dictation requires active participation from students. They must listen attentively, understand what they hear, and translate it into written form. This active involvement helps reinforce learning and makes the learning process more engaging. Interactive learning methods have been shown to improve language acquisition by promoting meaningful engagement with the material (Erina et al., 2025).

In the context of beginner-level Arabic learning, the *Imla'* method provides a strong foundation for developing language skills. Beginners often need structured and repetitive exercises to build confidence and familiarity with the language. Dictation exercises offer this

structure by providing clear instructions and immediate feedback. This structured approach helps students gradually improve their skills and overcome initial difficulties. Research on Arabic language teaching methods indicates that structured learning approaches are particularly beneficial for beginners because they provide a clear framework for skill development (Waliyuddin et al., 2024).

Furthermore, the Imla' method supports the integration of multiple language skills. Although its primary focus is on writing, dictation also involves listening and comprehension. Students must understand what they hear before they can write it correctly. This integration of skills helps create a more comprehensive learning experience. Language learning research emphasizes the importance of integrating multiple skills to achieve effective language acquisition (Hasbi, 2025).

In addition to its linguistic benefits, the Imla' method also contributes to character development. Through repeated practice and structured exercises, students learn to be patient, careful, and responsible. They must pay attention to details, follow instructions, and complete tasks accurately. These qualities are essential for academic success and personal development. The discipline developed through dictation exercises can also influence students' attitudes toward learning and encourage them to take responsibility for their progress.

The Imla' method also has practical relevance in everyday life. Students who develop strong writing skills are better able to understand religious texts, communicate in written Arabic, and preserve the accuracy of meaning in their writing. Accurate writing is particularly important in Arabic because small changes in spelling can significantly alter meaning. Therefore, mastering writing skills is essential for effective communication and comprehension.

Moreover, the application of the Imla' method can help students prepare for more advanced stages of Arabic learning. Once students have mastered basic writing skills, they can move on to more complex tasks such as reading classical texts, composing essays, and engaging in academic discussions. The foundation built through dictation exercises supports further language development and helps students achieve higher levels of proficiency.

The relevance of the Imla' method extends beyond the classroom. In academic contexts, Arabic proficiency is essential for accessing a wide range of knowledge, including religious studies, literature, and linguistics. In professional contexts, Arabic language skills can open opportunities in fields such as education, translation, and international communication. Therefore, developing strong foundational skills is an important step toward achieving long-term success in Arabic language learning.

Despite its many advantages, the Imla' method should be implemented in a way that is engaging and appropriate for beginners. Teachers should use clear pronunciation, appropriate vocabulary, and gradual progression to ensure that students can follow the dictation effectively. Providing feedback and correction is also essential to help students learn from their mistakes and improve their skills. Effective implementation of dictation requires careful planning and adaptation to students' needs.

In conclusion, the Imla' method is a valuable approach for teaching Arabic to beginners. It provides a structured and interactive learning experience that supports the development of listening and writing skills. Through repeated practice, students become familiar with vocabulary, sentence structures, and spelling rules. The method also promotes discipline, concentration, and responsibility, contributing to both linguistic and personal development. When applied consistently and systematically, the Imla' method can serve as a strong foundation for Arabic language learning and help students achieve comprehensive language proficiency.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive research design (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Nassaji, 2015). This approach was chosen because the study aimed to obtain a deeper understanding of the process of learning Arabic for beginners through the Imla' method in a

natural context without manipulating variables. The research focused on describing, analyzing, and interpreting phenomena occurring in the classroom, covering all aspects of the learning process from planning and implementation to students' responses during Imla' activities. To obtain accurate data, several data collection instruments were used. First, a writing test was administered to measure students' Arabic writing skills before and after the implementation of the Imla' method. The test consisted of dictation of Arabic words and sentences, and the assessment was based on letter accuracy, correctness of harakat, accuracy of words or sentences, and neatness of writing, with a maximum score of 100. Second, structured observations were conducted to examine the implementation of the Imla' method during the learning process, focusing on the clarity of the teacher's dictation, students' attention, student participation, and the feedback provided by the teacher. Third, a questionnaire was distributed to identify students' responses to the use of the Imla' method. The questionnaire used a four-point Likert scale consisting of strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree, with indicators including learning interest, ease of understanding the material, and student motivation. Finally, documentation was used as supporting data, including students' written work, score lists, and photographs of the learning activities (Al-Shumaimeri & Alhumud, 2021; Alqahtani, 2019).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of Arabic Learning for Beginners Using the Imla' Method

Based on classroom observations, Arabic language instruction for beginners using the Imla' method was conducted in three main phases: the preparation phase, the dictation implementation phase, and the evaluation phase of students' written work. These phases reflect a structured instructional process that supports gradual skill development and aligns with effective language teaching practices emphasizing systematic progression and repetition (Al-Shumaimeri & Alhumud, 2021).

During the preparation phase, the teacher began the lesson by explaining the learning objectives, introducing new vocabulary, and providing pronunciation models for the words that would later be dictated. Special emphasis was placed on pronouncing difficult Arabic letters such as ث (tha), ذ (dhal), ض (dad), and ق (qaf) to ensure that students could distinguish between similar sounds before beginning the dictation exercise. Observations indicated that most students paid close attention during this stage, particularly when the teacher demonstrated pronunciation repeatedly. This phase was essential because beginners often struggle with phonetic distinctions in Arabic, and accurate pronunciation plays a significant role in accurate writing (Saiegh-Haddad & Henkin-Roitfarb, 2014; Al-Qahtani, 2019).

The dictation phase involved structured steps designed to optimize student learning. The teacher pronounced each word slowly and repeated it three times, with each repetition serving a distinct pedagogical purpose. During the first pronunciation, students were instructed to listen carefully without writing. This stage was intended to develop listening skills, concentration, and familiarity with Arabic sounds. Listening is a foundational skill in language acquisition, and research shows that auditory exposure significantly improves phonological awareness among beginner learners (Nation & Newton, 2020).

During the second pronunciation, students began writing the words they heard. This stage required coordination between listening and writing skills, encouraging students to associate sounds with written symbols. The integration of auditory and motor skills is particularly important in early language learning because it strengthens cognitive connections between phonemes and graphemes (Ehri, 2017). Observations showed that students varied in their writing speed, with some able to write quickly while others hesitated when forming letters, particularly when letters appeared in initial, medial, or final positions.

The third pronunciation allowed students to review and correct their own work before submitting it. This stage functioned as a form of self-evaluation, encouraging students to identify and correct errors independently. Self-correction is considered an important component of

language learning because it promotes learner autonomy and metacognitive awareness (Anderson, 2018). Students who initially struggled with letter formation often used this opportunity to revise their work, indicating that repetition and reflection improved their confidence.

The repetition process proved particularly helpful for students who had difficulty distinguishing between similar sounds and letter shapes. With multiple opportunities to listen and write, students gradually developed better phonetic awareness and visual memory of Arabic letters. This finding is consistent with previous research indicating that repeated exposure enhances both language retention and writing accuracy (Alharbi, 2018). In addition to improving writing accuracy, the Imla' method had positive effects on several aspects of language learning. First, listening skills improved as students became more attentive and better able to recognize Arabic sounds. Second, writing skills improved as students practiced forming letters and words consistently. Third, learner independence increased as students became accustomed to reviewing and correcting their own work. Finally, discipline and concentration improved as students followed structured instructions during dictation activities.

During implementation, the teacher occasionally paused the dictation process to provide guidance, particularly for students who struggled with letter formation. This demonstrated that the Imla' method functions not only as a writing activity but also as a means of reinforcing students' understanding of Arabic letter structures. Direct teacher feedback during dictation has been shown to enhance writing accuracy and reduce repeated errors (Alnujaidi, 2019).

Objectives and Functions of the Imla' Method for Beginners

The primary objective of implementing the Imla' method at the beginner level is to develop fundamental writing skills. Writing is a core component of language learning, and early mastery of writing skills provides a foundation for the development of other language skills such as reading, listening, and speaking (Graham, 2019). At the beginner stage, students must first become familiar with the shapes of Arabic letters, the direction of writing, and the basic rules governing the connection between letters. Without a solid foundation in writing, students often experience difficulties in recognizing words and understanding texts. Therefore, the implementation of structured dictation activities provides a systematic way for students to gradually acquire writing proficiency. The findings of this study indicate that structured dictation exercises help students learn to write Arabic letters, words, and simple sentences correctly and neatly according to orthographic rules. The repetitive nature of dictation allows students to internalize patterns of writing while simultaneously strengthening their listening skills.

One major finding was that students improved their ability to write Arabic letters accurately. Students were trained to recognize letter shapes, identify letter positions within words, and distinguish between similar letters. Arabic script presents unique challenges because letter shapes change depending on their position in a word—initial, medial, final, or isolated forms. Many beginners initially struggle to differentiate between letters with similar shapes, such as *ba*, *ta*, and *tha*, or *jim*, *ha*, and *kha*. Through repeated dictation exercises, students gradually became more familiar with these variations, reducing basic writing errors. The act of repeatedly hearing and writing letters helped students associate sounds with written symbols, strengthening their orthographic awareness. This supports previous research indicating that repeated handwriting practice strengthens orthographic knowledge and improves letter recognition (Abbott & Berninger, 2015). Over time, students demonstrated increased confidence in writing letters independently, which is an essential step toward mastering more complex writing tasks.

Another important finding was improvement in word and sentence accuracy. Through repeated dictation exercises, students became accustomed to writing words correctly and paying attention to vowel marks (harakat). Accurate use of harakat is particularly important in Arabic because vowel differences can change word meanings. For example, a small variation in vowel marking can transform a noun into a verb or alter the grammatical function of a word within a sentence. Many beginner students initially omitted vowel marks or used them incorrectly, which often led to misunderstandings in reading and writing. However, with consistent practice through

dictation, students began to recognize the importance of vowel accuracy and demonstrated gradual improvement. Research has shown that explicit instruction in vowel marking improves reading and writing accuracy among beginner learners (Saiegh-Haddad & Taha, 2017). The results of this study confirm that dictation exercises provide an effective context for practicing vowel placement in a meaningful and structured way.

In addition to improving technical writing skills, the Imla' method also contributed to the development of students' concentration and listening abilities. During dictation activities, students were required to listen carefully to the teacher's pronunciation and write what they heard within a limited time. This process required sustained attention and mental focus. Students learned to process auditory information quickly and translate it into written form, which strengthened the connection between listening and writing skills. Many students showed noticeable improvement in their ability to remain focused throughout the lesson. Initially, some students were easily distracted or required repeated instructions, but over time they became more attentive and responsive. This improvement suggests that dictation activities not only enhance writing skills but also support cognitive development, particularly in areas related to attention and working memory.

Furthermore, the Imla' method encouraged students to develop neatness and organization in their writing. Arabic writing requires careful attention to spacing, alignment, and letter formation. Students were trained to write letters proportionally and maintain consistent spacing between words. At the beginning of the program, many students produced irregular or poorly spaced writing, making their work difficult to read. However, as dictation exercises continued, students showed gradual improvement in handwriting quality. Neater writing made it easier for both students and teachers to identify errors and monitor progress. This aspect of the Imla' method highlights its role not only in linguistic development but also in fostering good study habits.

Another significant finding was the role of repetition in reinforcing learning. Repetition is a key element in language acquisition, particularly at the beginner level. Dictation exercises provided repeated exposure to the same letters and words, allowing students to practice them multiple times in different contexts. This repetition helped students move from conscious effort to automatic recognition. Words that were initially difficult to write became more familiar over time, reducing the cognitive load required for writing. As a result, students were able to focus more on meaning and comprehension rather than basic letter formation. The gradual transition from effortful writing to more automatic writing indicates that repeated dictation exercises effectively support skill development.

The findings also indicate that the Imla' method supports vocabulary acquisition. Each dictation session introduced students to new words, which they encountered through listening and writing. This dual exposure helped reinforce memory and improve retention. Students often remembered words more easily after writing them compared to simply hearing or reading them. Writing required active engagement with the language, which strengthened learning outcomes. Over time, students developed a growing vocabulary base that supported their reading and comprehension skills. This vocabulary growth demonstrates the broader impact of dictation beyond writing alone.

In addition to academic benefits, the Imla' method also contributed to the development of positive learning attitudes. Students learned the importance of patience and perseverance as they worked to improve their writing skills. Mistakes were treated as part of the learning process, encouraging students to keep practicing and improving. Many students became more confident as they saw their progress over time. This increased confidence motivated them to participate more actively in class activities. The structured nature of dictation exercises also helped students develop a sense of responsibility for their work. They understood that careful listening and accurate writing were necessary for success.

Despite these positive outcomes, some challenges were observed during the implementation of the Imla' method. Differences in students' initial abilities affected the pace of learning. Some students quickly adapted to dictation activities, while others required additional guidance and practice. Teachers needed to provide individual support to ensure that all students could keep up with the lesson. Another challenge was maintaining students' motivation during repetitive exercises. While repetition is essential for learning, excessive repetition can sometimes lead to boredom. To address this issue, teachers occasionally varied the dictation format by including short sentences, familiar vocabulary, or interactive elements. These variations helped maintain student interest while preserving the benefits of repetition.

Overall, the implementation of the Imla' method at the beginner level proved to be effective in developing foundational writing skills. Students showed improvement in letter recognition, word accuracy, and sentence writing. They also demonstrated increased concentration, neater handwriting, and greater confidence in their abilities. The integration of listening and writing provided a comprehensive learning experience that supported multiple aspects of language development. The results suggest that dictation is a valuable method for introducing Arabic writing skills to beginners.

In conclusion, the findings of this study highlight the importance of structured dictation exercises in Arabic language learning. The Imla' method provides a systematic approach to developing writing skills while also supporting listening, vocabulary acquisition, and cognitive development. Through repeated practice, students gradually build the skills and confidence needed to progress to more advanced levels of language learning. With appropriate guidance and consistent implementation, the Imla' method can serve as a strong foundation for Arabic literacy and overall language proficiency.

In addition to technical accuracy, the study also emphasized the aesthetic aspect of writing. Students were encouraged to write neatly and consistently, resulting in writing that was not only correct but also visually organized. Neat handwriting contributes to readability and reflects careful learning habits (Graham, 2019). Observations showed that students gradually improved in maintaining consistent letter size and spacing. The dictation process also improved spelling accuracy. Students learned to distinguish between similar sounds such as *س* and *ص* or *ذ* and *ج*, which are common sources of error among beginners. The integration of listening and writing helped students connect phonetic distinctions with written forms, strengthening both phonetic and orthographic skills (Alharbi, 2018). Another important benefit of the Imla' method was the improvement of concentration and memory. Repeated listening and writing exercises required students to focus carefully on each word. This repeated practice enhanced students' ability to remember new vocabulary. Cognitive research suggests that repetition involving multiple sensory channels improves memory retention (Nation & Newton, 2020).

Overall, the findings indicate that the Imla' method is effective in developing basic Arabic writing skills. Students not only learned to write correctly but also developed habits of discipline, accuracy, and consistency. These habits are essential for long-term language learning success.

Overall Effectiveness of the Imla' Method

The findings indicate that the Imla' method contributes significantly to the development of basic language skills. Writing skills improved as students practiced copying and rewriting dictated words and sentences. These activities helped develop fine motor skills required for writing Arabic letters accurately. Reading skills also improved as students became more familiar with letter shapes and word patterns. Familiarity with written forms made it easier for students to recognize words when reading. This relationship between writing and reading development has been well documented in language learning research (Graham, 2019).

Vocabulary acquisition also improved through dictation exercises. The combination of listening, writing, and repetition strengthened students' memory of new words. Multisensory learning approaches have been shown to improve vocabulary retention, particularly among beginner learners (Nation & Newton, 2020).

The Imla' method proved particularly suitable for beginner learners because it follows a gradual progression from letters to words and then to sentences. This progression reflects the principle of scaffolding, which emphasizes building skills step by step (Vygotsky-based approaches in education) (Walqui, 2016). By starting with small units of language, the method reduces cognitive load and allows students to focus on mastering basic skills. Beginners are not overwhelmed with long texts but instead learn through manageable units. This approach is consistent with cognitive load theory, which suggests that learning is more effective when information is presented gradually (Sweller, 2019).

The Imla' method also supports students' readiness to study basic Arabic texts. Reading classical or instructional texts requires accurate recognition of letters and words, as well as the ability to copy text correctly. Regular dictation exercises provide consistent practice that prepares students for more advanced learning. Students who practiced dictation regularly showed greater confidence when reading simple texts. This suggests that writing practice strengthens reading readiness, which is essential for progressing to higher levels of Arabic learning (Al-Qahtani, 2019).

Challenges in Implementing the Imla' Method

One major challenge observed in this study was the variation in students' initial abilities. Some students had prior experience with Arabic writing, while others were complete beginners. These differences affected the pace of learning, with some students progressing quickly while others struggled to keep up. Students with weaker backgrounds often had difficulty following dictation, particularly when longer words were introduced. This finding highlights the importance of differentiated instruction in beginner classrooms (Tomlinson, 2017). Teachers may need to provide additional support for struggling students, such as extra practice sessions or small-group instruction. Differentiated instruction has been shown to improve learning outcomes in mixed-ability classrooms (Tomlinson, 2017).

Another challenge was inconsistency in dictation speed. At times, the teacher dictated words too quickly for slower writers to follow. This caused some students to miss letters or make errors. Irregular pacing can increase cognitive load and reduce writing accuracy (Sweller, 2019). Therefore, teachers should adjust dictation speed to match the average ability level of the class and provide repetition when necessary. Providing consistent pacing and repetition can significantly improve student performance and reduce errors during dictation activities (Alnujaidi, 2019).

Overall, the findings demonstrate that the Imla' method is effective in supporting Arabic language learning for beginners. The method improves writing accuracy, listening skills, vocabulary retention, and learner independence. The structured phases of preparation, dictation, and evaluation provide a systematic framework that supports gradual skill development. Despite some challenges, such as differences in student ability and dictation speed, the method remains a valuable tool for beginner Arabic instruction. With appropriate adjustments and support, the Imla' method can provide a strong foundation for further language learning.

CONCLUSION

The learning of Arabic books for beginners at PPTQ Darunnajah Kalikuning through the Imla' method has proven to be effective in building students' fundamental language skills. This method enhances students' abilities in listening, writing, and recognizing Arabic letters and vocabulary accurately. Through repeated dictation exercises, students gradually become more familiar with the shapes of letters, the structure of words, and correct spelling patterns. The repetition involved in the Imla' process also strengthens students' concentration, memory retention, and attention to detail. In addition, the Imla' method encourages the development of positive learning attitudes such as discipline, responsibility, and independence, as students are required to listen carefully and write accurately based on the teacher's instructions. These learning

habits contribute not only to language mastery but also to students' overall academic development.

Although some obstacles remain, such as differences in students' initial abilities and variations in dictation speed, the Imla' method still serves as a strong foundation for further Arabic language learning. Students with lower basic skills sometimes need more time and guidance to follow the dictation process, while faster learners may require additional challenges to stay engaged. Therefore, it is recommended that teachers adjust the pace of dictation according to students' abilities and provide additional support for those who need it. The use of varied teaching strategies, such as grouping students by ability level, providing guided practice, and incorporating interactive activities, may further enhance the effectiveness of the method. With consistent application and proper guidance, the Imla' method can continue to support students at PPTQ Darunnajah Kalikuning in developing their Arabic language skills and preparing them for more advanced levels of learning.

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