Journal of Arabic Language and Learning in Focus
e-ISSN: 2987-3347
Volume 2, Issue. 1, 2025, pp. 1-16
https://jurnal.isimupacitan.ac.id/index.php/alif.

Differentiated Arabic Language Learning: Promoting Student-Centered and Inclusive Education in Madrasah Aliyah

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Submitted: 02-01-2025 Revised : 22-02-2025 Accepted: 27-04-2025

ABSTRACT. This study investigates the implementation of differentiated learning in Arabic language instruction at Madrasah Aliyah and its impact on students' language skills, motivation, and engagement. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, data were collected through classroom observations, interviews, and documentation. The findings revealed that differentiated instruction was implemented through adjustments in learning content, teaching methods, classroom activities, and assessment strategies based on students' readiness, interests, and learning profiles. Teachers applied collaborative learning, role-playing, project-based learning, multimedia resources, and technology-assisted instruction to create adaptive and student-centered learning environments. The implementation of differentiated learning improved students' listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills, as well as their motivation, confidence, participation, and learner autonomy. Differentiated instruction also helped reduce learning disparities among students from diverse educational backgrounds through scaffolding, remedial activities, and enrichment programs. Despite challenges related to teacher competence, instructional time, and facilities, differentiated learning proved effective in supporting inclusive and meaningful Arabic language learning.

Keywords: *Differentiated Learning, Arabic Language Learning, Madrasah Aliyah, Student Motivation, Learning Engagement*

https://doi.org/10.52640/alif.256

How to Cite Zunaidah, A., & Ulvia, F., (2025). Differentiated Arabic language learning: Promoting student-centered and inclusive education in Madrasah Aliyah, *Journal of Arabic Language and Learning in Focus* (2) 1. 1-16.

INTRODUCTION

Arabic language learning in Madrasah Aliyah (MA) holds a strategic role in developing students' linguistic competence, religious understanding, and communication skills. Arabic is not merely taught as a foreign language, but also serves as the primary language of Islamic sources such as the Qur'an and Hadith. Consequently, the effectiveness of Arabic instruction significantly influences students' academic achievement and religious literacy. In practice, however, Arabic language learning in many madrasahs still encounters various challenges related to differences in students' learning readiness, motivation, educational background, and cognitive abilities. The diversity of students' characteristics often creates difficulties for teachers in conducting effective classroom instruction (Kurniya Khurotin et al., 2024) .

The implementation of conventional teaching approaches that treat students uniformly frequently results in low participation and unequal learning outcomes. Teacher-centered instruction tends to ignore students' individual learning needs, causing some learners to experience difficulties in understanding learning materials while others feel less challenged. Such

conditions indicate the need for innovative and adaptive learning approaches capable of accommodating classroom diversity. Therefore, Arabic language teachers are expected to implement instructional strategies that can address students' varying abilities, interests, and learning preferences in order to create more meaningful and effective learning experiences (Langelaan et al., 2024) .

One instructional approach that has recently gained considerable attention is differentiated learning. Differentiated instruction emphasizes the adjustment of teaching strategies according to students' readiness, interests, and learning profiles. Through this approach, teachers are encouraged to design flexible learning experiences by differentiating learning content, instructional processes, learning products, and classroom environments. In the context of Arabic language learning, differentiated instruction is considered highly relevant because students in Madrasah Aliyah possess different levels of Arabic proficiency and diverse learning styles. By implementing differentiated strategies, teachers can create more inclusive, interactive, and student-centered learning environments that support students' active participation (Smets & Struyven, 2020) .

The importance of differentiated learning has become increasingly prominent following the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in Indonesia, which promotes adaptive and learner-oriented instruction. In Arabic language education, differentiated instruction supports the development of communicative competence, critical thinking, and student engagement. Previous studies have demonstrated the positive impact of differentiated learning on Arabic language achievement (Nurlatifah et al., 2024a) . Zulkarnain& Abdullah Khoir (2023) , for instance, reported that differentiated learning improved students' Arabic achievement at Madrasah AliyahNegeri 2 Sragen through flexible instructional activities and personalized learning strategies. Similarly, Syaputri&Zulheddi (2025) emphasized that the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in Arabic instruction requires innovative approaches that consider students' individual characteristics and learning needs.

In addition, differentiated instruction contributes to improving students' motivation and classroom engagement in Arabic learning. Shalihah et al. (2023) found that differentiated strategies in *MaharahQira'ah*instruction encouraged higher student participation and enhanced reading comprehension skills. The flexibility of differentiated learning allows teachers to apply various instructional methods such as project-based learning, collaborative learning, contextual activities, and technology integration. These instructional strategies can accommodate visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learners more effectively. Furthermore, differentiated instruction also supports inclusive education because students in Madrasah Aliyah come from diverse educational backgrounds, including Islamic boarding schools, public junior high schools, and madrasahs. Such diversity influences students' vocabulary mastery, grammatical understanding, and speaking ability. Therefore, differentiated learning enables teachers to provide appropriate scaffolding and instructional support according to students' competencies and learning needs.

Despite its advantages, the implementation of differentiated learning in Arabic language instruction still faces several challenges. Teachers often experience difficulties in preparing differentiated teaching materials, managing classroom diversity, and conducting authentic assessments. Limited training opportunities and insufficient understanding of differentiated pedagogy also become significant obstacles to effective implementation. Hidayat et al. (2024) highlighted that successful differentiated Arabic instruction requires teacher creativity, curriculum flexibility, and institutional support. Based on these issues, this study aims to comprehensively analyze the implementation of differentiated approaches in Arabic language learning at Madrasah Aliyah, including its application in classroom activities, challenges encountered by teachers, and its contribution to improving students' language competence, motivation, classroom participation, and communicative skills. This study is expected to contribute both theoretically to the development of learner-centered Arabic pedagogy and practically to improving the quality

and effectiveness of Arabic language learning in Madrasah Aliyah.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design to examine the implementation of differentiated instruction in Arabic language learning at the Madrasah Aliyah (MA) level. The qualitative descriptive approach was chosen because it allows for an in-depth exploration of learning processes, student diversity, and instructional practices within their natural educational setting. Through this approach, the researcher was able to investigate how Arabic language teachers adapted learning content, instructional processes, and assessment strategies based on students' learning readiness, interests, and learning profiles in order to create more inclusive and student-centered learning experiences (Dinana et al., 2024a) .The participants of this study consisted of Arabic language teachers and students at a Madrasah Aliyah institution who were selected purposively based on their active involvement in the implementation of differentiated learning practices. Purposive sampling was utilized to ensure that the selected participants possessed relevant experiences and adequate understanding related to differentiated instruction in Arabic language education.

Data collection techniques included classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and documentation analysis. Classroom observations were conducted systematically to identify instructional strategies, classroom interactions, and differentiated learning activities implemented by teachers during Arabic language instruction. Semi-structured interviews were carried out to explore participants' perceptions, experiences, challenges, and responses regarding the application of differentiated instruction in the classroom context. In addition, documentation analysis was employed to examine supporting educational documents, such as lesson plans, teaching modules, learning media, assessment instruments, and students' assignments, which served to strengthen and validate the observational and interview findings (Al-Khawaldeh&Shaqirat, 2023) . The collected data were analyzed using an interactive qualitative analysis model consisting of three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification. Data reduction involved selecting, classifying, and simplifying relevant information obtained from the field. Data display was conducted systematically in the form of descriptive narratives to facilitate interpretation and understanding of the findings, while conclusion drawing aimed to formulate meaningful interpretations based on recurring patterns and relationships identified throughout the research process. To ensure the trustworthiness and credibility of the findings, the study applied source triangulation and technique triangulation. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from teachers, students, and documentation, whereas technique triangulation involved cross-checking data collected through observations, interviews, and documentation analysis. Through these procedures, the study was expected to produce comprehensive and credible findings concerning the effectiveness, implementation processes, and challenges of differentiated instruction in Arabic language learning at the Madrasah Aliyah level (Nisa et al., 2023) .

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Implementation of Differentiated Learning in Arabic Instruction

The findings of this study revealed that the implementation of differentiated learning in Arabic instruction at Madrasah Aliyah was carried out through adjustments in learning content, teaching methods, learning activities, classroom environments, and assessment strategies according to students' readiness, interests, and learning profiles. Arabic teachers recognized that students possessed different levels of language competence, educational backgrounds, learning motivation, and participation levels. Therefore, teachers attempted to design flexible instructional activities that could accommodate classroom diversity and provide equal learning opportunities

for all students. Differentiated learning was implemented beginning with the identification of students' learning characteristics and Arabic proficiency levels through observations, diagnostic assessments, and informal interviews. The findings further showed that teachers grouped students according to their readiness and competence in Arabic language skills, including listening (maharahistima') , speaking (maharahkalam) , reading (maharahqira'ah) , and writing (maharahkitabah). Students with higher proficiency levels were assigned more complex tasks such as presentations, debates, dialogue creation, and text interpretation, while students with lower proficiency received simpler activities such as vocabulary memorization, pronunciation exercises, sentence arrangement, and guided translation tasks.

In classroom practice, differentiated instruction was implemented through content, process, product, and learning environment differentiation. Teachers modified learning materials according to students' competence levels and provided various learning resources such as textbooks, worksheets, digital media, Arabic videos, and online learning platforms. Interactive learning methods including collaborative discussions, peer tutoring, role-playing, contextual learning, and project-based learning were also applied to encourage active participation and communication among students. The findings additionally indicated that project-based learning activities enabled students to express creativity according to their interests and abilities through Arabic posters, storytelling performances, short videos, and group presentations. The integration of digital technology and interactive media also supported individualized learning experiences by allowing students to access materials independently and practice Arabic skills through educational applications and online platforms.

Furthermore, differentiated learning positively influenced students' motivation, participation, and self-confidence in Arabic learning. Students felt more comfortable participating because learning tasks were adjusted to their abilities and interests, while advanced students remained challenged through enrichment activities. The study also found that differentiated instruction encouraged teachers to shift their roles from information providers to facilitators who guided, motivated, and provided individualized feedback to students. Another important finding revealed that differentiated learning was particularly beneficial for students from diverse educational backgrounds, such as Islamic boarding schools, madrasah tsanawiyah, and public junior high schools. Through scaffolding, remedial learning, and enrichment activities, teachers were able to reduce learning gaps and provide equitable learning opportunities. In addition, differentiated learning contributed to the development of students' collaborative and social skills through group-based learning activities that emphasized cooperation and mutual support. Despite these positive impacts, teachers encountered several challenges in implementing differentiated learning, including difficulties in preparing differentiated lesson plans, designing varied instructional materials, conducting authentic assessments, limited instructional time, and large classroom sizes. Nevertheless, teachers attempted to overcome these obstacles through collaboration, professional development, and technology-assisted learning resources. Overall, the findings demonstrated that differentiated learning created more inclusive, adaptive, and student-centered Arabic learning environments that improved classroom interaction, communicative competence, learning participation, and students' academic development.

Improvement of Students' Arabic Language Skills

The findings of this study demonstrated that the implementation of differentiated learning approaches significantly improved students' Arabic language skills in Madrasah Aliyah. The improvement was evident across the four major language competencies: listening (*maharahistima'*) , speaking (*maharahkalam*) , reading (*maharahqira'ah*) , and writing (*maharahkitabah*). Differentiated instruction enabled teachers to adapt learning materials, instructional strategies, classroom activities, and assessment methods according to students' readiness, learning preferences, and language proficiency levels. As a result, students experienced more meaningful, engaging, and student-centered learning processes that positively influenced their language development,

classroom participation, confidence, and learning motivation.

One of the primary findings revealed significant improvement in students' vocabulary acquisition and pronunciation abilities. Teachers implemented various differentiated strategies such as picture cards, storytelling, role-play, digital media, interactive games, and contextual vocabulary exercises to accommodate visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learners. Beginner students received guided pronunciation support and structured vocabulary activities, whereas advanced students practiced vocabulary application through dialogues, presentations, and text analysis. These adaptive learning strategies gradually improved students' vocabulary mastery according to their individual language competence.

The findings also indicated a substantial increase in students' confidence and participation in oral communication activities. Prior to the implementation of differentiated learning, many students were reluctant to speak Arabic because they feared making grammatical or pronunciation mistakes. However, differentiated instruction created a more supportive and inclusive classroom atmosphere that encouraged students to participate actively in pair work, discussions, dialogue practices, role-playing, storytelling, and collaborative learning activities. Students with lower proficiency levels practiced simple conversations and basic communication, while advanced students engaged in debates, presentations, and argumentative discussions.

In terms of reading skills, differentiated learning significantly enhanced students' reading comprehension (*maharahqira'ah*). Teachers provided reading materials with varying levels of complexity based on students' literacy competence and language readiness. Beginner learners were given simple texts with contextual illustrations and basic sentence structures, while advanced learners analyzed more complex Arabic texts such as narratives, Islamic articles, and literary passages. Students gradually improved their reading fluency, vocabulary recognition, analytical thinking, and comprehension skills through adaptive reading activities.

Another important finding showed that differentiated writing instruction improved students' creativity, grammatical understanding, and written communication skills. Students produced various forms of Arabic writing, including descriptive texts, dialogue scripts, reflections, essays, and storytelling compositions. Writing tasks were adjusted according to students' proficiency levels and interests. Beginner students focused on sentence construction and guided writing, whereas advanced students practiced independent and argumentative writing. Flexible assignments and continuous teacher feedback increased students' enthusiasm and confidence in expressing ideas through written Arabic.

The findings further revealed that differentiated listening instruction using audio-visual media significantly improved students' listening comprehension and pronunciation accuracy. Teachers utilized Arabic videos, podcasts, songs, animations, and interactive applications tailored to students' listening abilities. Beginner students listened to short dialogues and simple recordings, while advanced students analyzed authentic Arabic audio materials. The integration of multimedia resources made listening activities more contextual, interactive, and engaging.

In addition, the study found that differentiated learning increased students' overall motivation and active participation in Arabic learning. Students became more enthusiastic because learning activities were aligned with their interests, abilities, and learning preferences. The implementation of differentiated instruction also reduced learning disparities among students from different educational backgrounds by providing scaffolding, remedial learning, and enrichment activities according to students' needs. Overall, differentiated learning created adaptive, inclusive, and student-centered learning environments that effectively supported students' Arabic language acquisition.

Students' Motivation and Learning Engagement

The findings of this study revealed that the implementation of differentiated instruction

significantly improved students' motivation and learning engagement in Arabic language learning at Madrasah Aliyah. Differentiated learning created a more flexible, inclusive, and student-centered learning environment that accommodated students' diverse interests, abilities, and learning preferences. As a result, students demonstrated higher enthusiasm, stronger participation, and greater emotional involvement during Arabic lessons. Compared to traditional teacher-centered instruction, differentiated learning made classroom activities more meaningful, enjoyable, and interactive, thereby increasing students' willingness to engage actively in the learning process.

One of the major findings indicated that differentiated instruction enhanced students' intrinsic motivation in learning Arabic. Prior to its implementation, many students perceived Arabic as a difficult and monotonous subject due to lecture-based instruction and repetitive memorization activities. After differentiated strategies were applied, students experienced more varied and engaging learning activities tailored to their readiness levels and interests. Teachers implemented flexible assignments, collaborative projects, role-play activities, digital learning tasks, and contextual exercises that enabled students to learn according to their individual abilities and learning styles. Students reported reduced academic pressure because learning tasks were adjusted to their proficiency levels, allowing them to progress gradually and confidently.

The findings also demonstrated a significant increase in students' classroom participation and enthusiasm. Students became more active in asking questions, expressing opinions, engaging in discussions, and collaborating with peers. Teachers observed that previously passive students gradually became more involved in classroom activities after differentiated learning was introduced. Furthermore, students showed greater responsibility in completing assignments and participating in projects because the learning activities were perceived as more relevant and enjoyable.

Another important finding revealed that differentiated instruction improved students' emotional engagement in Arabic learning. Students experienced more supportive and inclusive classroom environments where mistakes were considered part of the learning process rather than signs of failure. Positive feedback, flexible participation opportunities, and peer collaboration reduced students' anxiety in speaking and writing Arabic. Students also felt more appreciated because teachers considered their individual learning needs and abilities.

The study further found that collaborative learning activities played a major role in increasing students' engagement. Group discussions, peer tutoring, storytelling, role-playing, and project-based learning encouraged active interaction among students. Learners with stronger Arabic proficiency often assisted peers who experienced learning difficulties, thereby creating supportive peer-learning environments. This collaborative atmosphere enhanced students' confidence in communicating in Arabic and fostered stronger social interaction in the classroom.

In addition, differentiated instruction promoted learner autonomy and independence. Students were given opportunities to select learning activities and learning products according to their interests and strengths, such as creating dialogue videos, poster presentations, storytelling performances, or written compositions. Students also became more independent in managing their learning progress through reflective activities, independent projects, and self-directed learning practices.

Technology integration emerged as another significant finding in enhancing students' motivation and engagement. Teachers utilized digital learning platforms, online quizzes, Arabic learning videos, interactive applications, PowerPoint presentations, and social media platforms to support differentiated learning. Multimedia-based instruction made Arabic learning more attractive and interactive, while gamified learning activities increased students' enthusiasm and

reduced boredom during lessons.

The findings additionally indicated that differentiated instruction improved students' persistence and resilience in learning Arabic. Students became more willing to face learning challenges because teachers provided tasks that were achievable yet appropriately challenging according to students' abilities. The provision of scaffolding, guidance, and peer support reduced frustration and encouraged students to continue practicing Arabic despite difficulties.

Another finding showed that differentiated instruction strengthened students' positive perceptions toward Arabic learning. Learning activities became more contextual, interactive, and relevant to students' daily lives, Islamic culture, communication needs, and contemporary contexts. Consequently, students developed more positive attitudes toward Arabic and became motivated to learn the language not only for academic purposes but also for communication and religious understanding.

Finally, the findings revealed that differentiated instruction reduced classroom inequality and learning gaps among students from different educational backgrounds. Teachers were able to provide additional support for struggling learners while simultaneously offering enrichment activities for advanced students. This balanced approach helped maintain active participation among all students and improved overall classroom atmosphere, discipline, and cooperation.

Challenges in Implementing Differentiated Learning

The study revealed that the implementation of differentiated approaches in Arabic language learning at Madrasah Aliyah encountered several significant challenges. One of the primary obstacles was teachers' limited understanding of differentiated pedagogy. Many teachers experienced difficulties in designing adaptive lesson plans, preparing varied instructional materials, and implementing authentic assessments that accommodated students' diverse readiness levels, interests, and learning profiles. In addition, teachers reported that differentiated instruction demanded greater preparation time, more complex classroom management, and additional effort in organizing multiple learning activities for students with varying levels of Arabic language proficiency

Another challenge identified in the study was the limited availability of learning facilities and instructional media. Several madrasahs lacked adequate technological resources to support differentiated learning activities effectively. Furthermore, large classroom sizes restricted teachers' ability to provide individualized guidance and attention to students. Assessment practices also became more demanding because teachers were expected to employ diverse evaluation methods that measured not only academic achievement, but also students' participation, creativity, collaboration, and learning progress. The findings further indicated that some students initially experienced confusion and difficulty adapting to differentiated learning activities because they were more familiar with traditional teacher-centered instruction. Consequently, teachers needed to provide continuous guidance and gradual adaptation to help students understand the objectives and procedures of differentiated learning. Despite these challenges, the findings demonstrated that differentiated learning positively contributed to students' motivation, engagement, and attitudes toward Arabic language learning.

Contribution of Differentiated Learning to Arabic Education

The findings revealed that differentiated learning significantly contributes to improving the quality of Arabic language education in Madrasah Aliyah. The implementation of differentiated instruction enabled teachers to accommodate students' diverse backgrounds, learning styles, readiness levels, and abilities within the learning process. As a result, students received more equitable learning opportunities and were able to participate actively according to their individual capacities and potentials. The study also found that differentiated learning supports the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, particularly in promoting student-centered learning,

independent learning, creativity, and critical thinking skills.

In addition, the findings indicated that differentiated Arabic instruction created more flexible, contextual, and adaptive learning environments. Teachers became more innovative in designing instructional activities, integrating educational technology, and applying reflective teaching practices. The implementation of differentiated learning further contributed to strengthening teachers' pedagogical competence and encouraged continuous professional development in Islamic educational institutions.

Furthermore, the results demonstrated that differentiated learning positively influenced students' attitudes toward Arabic language learning. Students no longer perceived Arabic merely as a difficult subject but rather as an engaging, interactive, and meaningful learning experience. This positive perception contributed to increased motivation, classroom participation, and long-term language mastery. Overall, the study confirmed that differentiated instruction provides an effective solution for addressing classroom diversity while simultaneously supporting students' academic achievement and personal development in Arabic language learning

Discussions

Implementation of Differentiated Learning in Arabic Instruction

The findings indicate that differentiated learning in Arabic instruction provides an effective pedagogical framework for accommodating students' diverse learning needs, readiness levels, and educational backgrounds in Madrasah Aliyah. The implementation of adaptive instructional strategies supports the view of Carol Ann Tomlinson, who emphasized that differentiated instruction aims to respond to students' individual differences through flexible and student-centered learning approaches. By grouping students according to their readiness and adjusting instructional activities to their abilities, teachers were able to create more equitable learning opportunities and reduce disparities in Arabic language competence.

The implementation of content differentiation through varied learning materials and resources reflects the principle that students learn more effectively when instructional content is aligned with their cognitive readiness and learning pace. The use of authentic Arabic texts for advanced students and simplified materials for beginners demonstrates that differentiated instruction can improve comprehension and maintain students' motivation. This finding is consistent with the argument of Carol Ann Tomlinson and other scholars who explain that adaptive content selection enables students to engage meaningfully with learning materials according to their developmental levels (Tomlinson, 2018) .

The use of collaborative learning methods such as peer tutoring, role-playing, and project-based learning also confirms that differentiated instruction enhances students' communicative competence and classroom participation. Through flexible grouping and authentic language practice, students became more actively involved in Arabic communication activities. This finding supports the study of Hidayat and Anwar, who argued that collaborative differentiated learning significantly improves students' language interaction and confidence because students participate directly in contextual communication practices (Ismail & Al Allaq, 2019) .

Moreover, the integration of project-based learning and digital technology demonstrates that differentiated learning can make Arabic instruction more contextual, creative, and meaningful. The opportunity for students to produce varied learning products according to their interests and strengths supports constructivist learning principles, where students actively construct knowledge through authentic experiences. This finding is aligned with the perspective of Suparno and colleagues, who emphasized that differentiated learning integrated with contextual and project-based approaches enhances creativity, problem-solving abilities, and classroom engagement. Similarly, the use of digital media and online learning platforms confirms the argument of Alenezi that technology integration in differentiated language learning promotes

learner autonomy and active engagement (Ilma et al., 2023) .

The positive impact of differentiated learning on students' motivation and self-confidence indicates that student-centered instruction can reduce learning anxiety and create supportive classroom environments. Students with lower proficiency levels felt more comfortable participating because they were provided with achievable tasks and individualized support, while advanced students continued to experience intellectual challenges through enrichment activities. These findings are consistent with the study of Rahmawati (2024) , who found that adaptive instructional strategies positively affect students' confidence, engagement, and communicative competence in Arabic learning.

The findings also demonstrate that differentiated instruction aligns closely with the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum, which emphasizes flexibility, competency-based instruction, and student-centered learning. Teachers' transition from traditional lecturers to facilitators reflects a significant pedagogical shift in contemporary Arabic language education. Teachers not only delivered material but also guided, motivated, and supported students according to their individual learning progress. This supports the argument of Dinana (2024) that differentiated learning is highly relevant to the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum because it prioritizes personalized and inclusive instruction.

Furthermore, differentiated learning proved beneficial in addressing the diversity of students' educational backgrounds in Madrasah Aliyah. Students from Islamic boarding schools generally demonstrated stronger Arabic competence, while students from public schools required additional scaffolding and remedial support. Through adaptive instructional strategies, teachers were able to minimize learning gaps and promote inclusive participation. This finding reinforces the idea that differentiated instruction is essential in heterogeneous classrooms because it enables all students to access learning according to their abilities and needs (Vantieghem et al., 2020) .

The study also highlights the social benefits of differentiated collaborative learning. Group-based activities encouraged students to communicate, cooperate, and respect individual differences, thereby fostering emotional engagement and positive classroom relationships. This finding supports the view of Santoso and Prasetyo, who stated that collaborative differentiated learning strengthens students' communication skills, teamwork, and social connectedness during classroom interaction (Muharni et al., 2025) .

However, the findings reveal that implementing differentiated learning remains challenging for teachers, particularly in preparing varied instructional materials, conducting authentic assessments, and managing large classrooms within limited instructional time. These challenges indicate that successful differentiated instruction requires not only teacher creativity and pedagogical competence but also institutional support, professional development, and adequate educational resources. Therefore, sustainable implementation of differentiated Arabic learning depends on continuous teacher training, curriculum support, and effective use of technology-assisted instructional strategies.

Improvement of Students' Arabic Language Skills

The findings of this study confirm that differentiated instruction is an effective pedagogical approach for improving Arabic language learning in Madrasah Aliyah. The significant improvement across listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills demonstrates that adaptive learning strategies can accommodate students' diverse learning needs and language abilities more effectively than conventional teacher-centered approaches.

The improvement in students' vocabulary mastery and pronunciation supports the argument that differentiated language instruction enhances language acquisition because students receive learning experiences suited to their cognitive and linguistic readiness. The use of contextual vocabulary activities, multimedia resources, and interactive learning methods allowed

students to learn vocabulary more naturally and meaningfully. This finding is consistent with Mirawati (2022) , who argued that differentiated instruction improves vocabulary mastery by adapting instructional practices to students' learning readiness and proficiency levels.

The increased confidence and participation in speaking activities indicate that differentiated instruction contributes significantly to the development of communicative competence. Collaborative learning activities such as role-playing, peer tutoring, storytelling, and group discussions encouraged authentic communication and reduced students' anxiety in using Arabic orally. The supportive classroom atmosphere enabled students to participate more actively without fear of making mistakes. This finding aligns with Amar (2025) , who stated that collaborative differentiated learning promotes speaking competence, classroom interaction, and students' motivation through authentic peer communication.

Furthermore, the improvement in reading comprehension demonstrates that differentiated reading materials help students develop literacy skills gradually according to their reading competence. Providing texts with varying levels of complexity prevented students from feeling overwhelmed and allowed them to engage with reading activities more confidently. Advanced students were encouraged to think critically and analytically, while beginner students focused on foundational comprehension skills. This result supports Rahma (2025) , who found that differentiated strategies in *MaharahQira'ah*instruction significantly improve students' reading comprehension and learning motivation.

The findings related to writing instruction also highlight the importance of flexibility and personalization in language learning. Differentiated writing tasks allowed students to express ideas creatively according to their interests and abilities, which increased their motivation and reduced anxiety during writing activities. Continuous feedback, revision exercises, and contextual assignments helped students improve grammatical accuracy and organization of ideas. These findings are in line with Rozi (2022) , who emphasized that differentiated writing instruction enhances students' writing quality and motivation because learners are provided with meaningful and personalized learning experiences.

In terms of listening skills, the integration of audio-visual media and technology-based learning resources proved effective in improving students' listening comprehension and pronunciation accuracy. Multimedia learning enabled students to access authentic Arabic language input repeatedly according to their own learning pace, thereby supporting independent learning experiences. This finding is consistent with Saraswaty (2024) , who explained that differentiated multimedia learning positively affects students' listening competence, classroom engagement, and interactive learning experiences.

Moreover, the findings suggest that differentiated instruction not only improves linguistic competence but also supports students' emotional and social development. The inclusive learning environment reduced students' fear of failure, increased self-confidence, and strengthened collaborative interaction among learners with different proficiency levels. Advanced students acting as peer tutors also contributed to cooperative learning and social engagement within the classroom.

Another important implication of this study is that differentiated instruction can reduce learning disparities among students from different educational backgrounds. Students entering Madrasah Aliyah with varying levels of Arabic proficiency received learning support according to their individual needs through scaffolding, remediation, and enrichment activities. This adaptive approach promoted more equitable learning opportunities and enabled students to progress gradually toward shared learning objectives.

Overall, the discussion confirms that differentiated learning is an effective and relevant instructional approach for Arabic language education in Madrasah Aliyah. Through adaptive

teaching strategies, collaborative learning, multimedia integration, and student-centered instruction, differentiated learning creates meaningful learning experiences that improve students' language competence, motivation, confidence, and active participation in Arabic learning.

Students' Motivation and Learning Engagement

The findings of this study confirm that differentiated instruction is an effective pedagogical approach for enhancing students' motivation and engagement in Arabic language learning. The implementation of adaptive teaching strategies enabled teachers to address students' diverse readiness levels, interests, and learning profiles, thereby creating more inclusive and meaningful learning experiences. These findings support the argument that student-centered instruction contributes positively to learners' academic and emotional development.

The increase in students' intrinsic motivation can be understood through the flexibility offered by differentiated instruction. When students are provided with learning activities that align with their abilities and interests, they are more likely to experience enjoyment, confidence, and a sense of achievement during learning. This finding aligns with the perspective of Gregory and Chapman, who argued that differentiated instruction promotes positive learning experiences because students feel respected, supported, and appropriately challenged according to their abilities. In the context of Arabic language learning, differentiated learning reduced students' anxiety and transformed Arabic from a difficult subject into a more engaging and accessible learning experience (De Graaf et al., 2019) .

The findings regarding increased classroom participation and emotional engagement indicate that differentiated instruction not only improves cognitive outcomes but also strengthens affective dimensions of learning. Emotional engagement is particularly important in Arabic language learning because students often experience fear of making mistakes in pronunciation, grammar, and communication. By creating supportive classroom environments where mistakes are treated as part of the learning process, teachers helped students develop confidence and willingness to participate actively. This finding is consistent with the view of Carol Ann Tomlinson, who emphasized that differentiated learning strengthens emotional engagement because students feel valued as individuals with unique learning characteristics.

Collaborative learning activities also contributed significantly to students' engagement and communication skills. Group discussions, peer tutoring, role-playing, and project-based learning created opportunities for meaningful social interaction and cooperative learning. These activities encouraged students to communicate more actively in Arabic while simultaneously developing empathy, mutual respect, and social connectedness. The findings support the study conducted by Endeshaw (2023) , which found that differentiated collaborative learning improves classroom interaction, emotional engagement, and communication abilities through active social participation.

The promotion of learner autonomy through differentiated instruction further demonstrates the importance of giving students greater responsibility in the learning process. By allowing students to choose learning activities and demonstrate understanding through various learning products, teachers encouraged self-directed learning and independent problem-solving. This finding supports the argument of Alenezi that learner autonomy is one of the most significant outcomes of differentiated instruction because students become active participants rather than passive recipients of knowledge. In Arabic learning contexts, learner autonomy is particularly valuable because language acquisition requires continuous practice beyond classroom instruction (Nurlatifah et al., 2024) .

Technology integration also played a critical role in supporting differentiated Arabic learning. The use of digital platforms, multimedia resources, and gamified learning activities enhanced students' interest and participation by accommodating different learning styles and

preferences. Technology-assisted instruction provided students with greater flexibility in accessing learning materials and practicing language skills independently. These findings indicate that integrating technology into differentiated instruction can create more interactive, adaptive, and engaging language learning environments.

Furthermore, differentiated instruction contributed to students' resilience and persistence in learning Arabic. The provision of appropriately challenging tasks combined with scaffolding and peer support enabled students to overcome learning difficulties gradually. This supportive environment reduced frustration and encouraged students to remain actively involved in the learning process despite challenges. Such findings suggest that differentiated instruction not only improves immediate learning engagement but also fosters long-term learning persistence.

The study also highlights the role of differentiated instruction in reducing learning inequality among students with diverse educational backgrounds. By balancing remedial support for struggling learners and enrichment opportunities for advanced students, differentiated learning ensured that all students remained engaged and academically supported. This inclusive approach is particularly relevant in Madrasah Aliyah contexts, where students often come from varying educational experiences and levels of Arabic proficiency.

Overall, the discussion demonstrates that differentiated instruction provides substantial pedagogical benefits for Arabic language learning. Through adaptive teaching strategies, collaborative learning, learner autonomy, emotional support, and technology integration, differentiated instruction creates inclusive learning environments that foster students' motivation, engagement, confidence, and positive attitudes toward Arabic learning. Therefore, differentiated instruction can be considered an effective and relevant approach for improving the quality of Arabic language education at Madrasah Aliyah.

Challenges in Implementing Differentiated Learning

The challenges identified in this study highlight that the successful implementation of differentiated instruction in Arabic language learning requires not only pedagogical innovation, but also adequate teacher competence, institutional support, and classroom resources. Teachers' limited understanding of differentiated pedagogy suggests that professional development and continuous training are essential for improving teachers' abilities in designing adaptive instruction and authentic assessment strategies. This finding supports the study of Handayani et al. (2023) , which emphasized that differentiated instruction often becomes difficult to implement due to insufficient teacher training and limited institutional support. The complexity of preparing multiple instructional activities and managing heterogeneous classrooms also indicates that differentiated learning requires higher levels of instructional planning and pedagogical flexibility compared to conventional teaching approaches.

Moreover, the limitations related to facilities, technology, and classroom size demonstrate that external factors significantly influence the effectiveness of differentiated learning implementation. Inadequate technological support and overcrowded classrooms may hinder teachers from providing personalized learning experiences and meaningful interaction with students. The findings regarding assessment challenges also reinforce the argument proposed by Fauziyah and Mulyani (2021) , who stated that differentiated assessment requires comprehensive teacher competence in developing flexible and authentic evaluation strategies. Additionally, students' initial confusion toward differentiated activities reflects the need for gradual instructional transition from teacher-centered to student-centered learning environments. Nevertheless, despite these obstacles, differentiated instruction proved effective in fostering students' motivation, participation, and positive attitudes toward Arabic learning. This indicates that differentiated pedagogy has strong potential to enhance the quality of Arabic language instruction in Madrasah Aliyah when supported by adequate training, resources, and institutional commitment.

Contribution of Differentiated Learning to Arabic Education

The findings of this study highlight the important role of differentiated learning in enhancing the effectiveness and inclusiveness of Arabic language education in Madrasah Aliyah. By adapting instructional content, learning processes, and assessment strategies to students' individual needs, differentiated instruction creates a more responsive learning environment that acknowledges learner diversity. This supports the principle of inclusive education, where every student has equal opportunities to develop their academic potential regardless of differences in ability, background, or learning preferences.

The implementation of differentiated learning is also closely aligned with the objectives of the Merdeka Curriculum, which emphasizes learner autonomy, active participation, and competency-based education. Through differentiated instruction, Arabic language learning becomes more student-centered and meaningful because students are encouraged to engage actively in the learning process according to their readiness and interests. Such conditions are essential for developing higher-order thinking skills and fostering independent learning habits among students.

These findings are consistent with the study conducted by Fitriani et al. (2023) , which stated that differentiated learning plays a crucial role in developing 21st-century competencies, including communication, collaboration, creativity, and problem-solving skills. In the context of Arabic language education, differentiated instruction not only improves students' linguistic competence but also strengthens their social and cognitive abilities through interactive and contextual learning experiences.

Moreover, the study demonstrates that differentiated learning contributes positively to teachers' pedagogical transformation. Teachers are encouraged to become more reflective, innovative, and flexible in selecting teaching methods and learning media. This process indirectly enhances teachers' professional competence and supports sustainable educational improvement within Islamic schools. The integration of technology and varied instructional strategies also indicates that differentiated learning can modernize Arabic language instruction while maintaining its educational and religious values.

Another important aspect identified in this study is the positive impact of differentiated instruction on students' motivation and attitudes toward Arabic learning. When students experience learning activities that match their abilities and interests, they tend to develop greater confidence and emotional engagement in the classroom. This positive learning atmosphere reduces anxiety and negative perceptions toward Arabic as a difficult subject. Consequently, students become more motivated to participate actively and achieve better language mastery over time.

Therefore, differentiated learning can be regarded as an effective pedagogical approach for addressing the complexity and diversity of Arabic language classrooms in Madrasah Aliyah. Its implementation not only improves academic outcomes but also fosters inclusive, engaging, and adaptive learning environments that support students' holistic development.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that differentiated learning is an effective and relevant pedagogical approach for improving the quality of Arabic language instruction in Madrasah Aliyah. The implementation of differentiated instruction through adjustments in content, learning processes, assessment strategies, classroom activities, and learning environments successfully accommodated students' diverse readiness levels, interests, educational backgrounds, and learning profiles. By applying flexible and student-centered instructional strategies, teachers were able to create more inclusive, adaptive, and meaningful Arabic learning experiences.

The findings demonstrate that differentiated learning significantly improved students' Arabic language competencies in listening (*maharahistima'*) , speaking (*maharahkalam*) , reading (*maharahqira'ah*) , and writing (*maharahkitabah*). The use of adaptive instructional materials, collaborative learning activities, project-based learning, multimedia integration, and technology-assisted instruction enhanced students' vocabulary mastery, pronunciation, reading comprehension, writing ability, communicative competence, and overall language performance. Students became more confident, active, and motivated in participating in Arabic learning because learning activities were adjusted to their individual abilities and learning needs.

In addition, differentiated instruction positively influenced students' motivation, engagement, emotional involvement, and learner autonomy. Supportive classroom environments, flexible learning opportunities, peer collaboration, and contextual learning activities reduced students' anxiety and transformed Arabic learning into a more enjoyable and meaningful experience. Differentiated learning also contributed to reducing learning disparities among students from different educational backgrounds by providing scaffolding, remedial support, and enrichment activities according to students' proficiency levels.

Despite its positive contributions, the implementation of differentiated learning still faces several challenges, including teachers' limited understanding of differentiated pedagogy, difficulties in preparing adaptive lesson plans and authentic assessments, limited instructional facilities, time constraints, and large classroom sizes. These findings indicate that the successful implementation of differentiated instruction requires continuous professional development, institutional support, adequate learning resources, and effective integration of educational technology.

Overall, this study confirms that differentiated learning provides substantial pedagogical benefits for Arabic language education in Madrasah Aliyah. Differentiated instruction not only improves students' academic achievement and language competence, but also promotes inclusive, student-centered, and competency-based learning environments that support students' cognitive, emotional, and social development. Therefore, differentiated learning can be considered a strategic approach for addressing classroom diversity and enhancing the effectiveness of Arabic language education in contemporary Islamic educational contexts.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This study has several limitations that should be considered in interpreting the findings. First, the study was conducted only in selected Madrasah Aliyah contexts, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other educational institutions with different characteristics, resources, and student backgrounds. Second, the research employed a qualitative descriptive approach that primarily focused on exploring classroom practices, teachers' experiences, and students' perceptions. Therefore, the study did not quantitatively measure the statistical effectiveness of differentiated instruction on students' Arabic language achievement.

Third, the implementation of differentiated learning was observed within a limited period of time, so the long-term impact of differentiated instruction on students' language mastery, learner autonomy, and academic development could not be fully examined. In addition, this study mainly focused on classroom instruction and did not extensively investigate external factors such as parental support, school policy, technological infrastructure, or socio-cultural influences that may affect the success of differentiated learning implementation.

Another limitation concerns the challenges of data collection in heterogeneous classroom settings, where variations in students' abilities and learning participation may have influenced the depth of classroom observations and interpretations. Furthermore, the findings relied heavily on teachers' and students' subjective experiences, which may contain personal bias despite efforts to

ensure data validity through triangulation and cross-checking procedures.

Therefore, future studies are encouraged to employ mixed-method or experimental research designs involving larger participant populations and longer observation periods in order to provide more comprehensive evidence regarding the effectiveness of differentiated instruction in Arabic language learning.

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