

Cultivating Cultural and Language Interest among Youth through a Local Wisdom Based Arabic Language Learning Program

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ABSTRACT. This study examines the effectiveness of a local wisdom-based Arabic language learning program in enhancing learning interest, language proficiency, and cultural awareness among adolescents in Kembang Village, Pacitan. The program integrated local cultural elements such as folklore, proverbs, and traditional practices into Arabic learning activities. Using classroom action research with mixed qualitative and quantitative methods, data were collected through observations, interviews, language tests, and documentation. The findings indicate increased learner engagement and motivation, accompanied by improvements in vocabulary, grammar, and speaking and listening skills through a contextual, culture-based approach. The program also promoted creativity and collaboration through expressive activities, including drama and poetry. Moreover, participants developed stronger cultural awareness and identity, viewing language learning as a means of preserving local heritage. These results suggest that local wisdom-based Arabic instruction effectively enhances both linguistic competence and cultural character, and its broader implementation is recommended through targeted teacher training.

Keywords: *Arabic, Local Wisdom, Interest in Learning, Culture, Youth.*

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INTRODUCTION

Arabic is an international language that plays a strategic role in education, culture, and religion. Arabic language skills not only facilitate access to religious literature but also open up opportunities for broader social and cultural interactions (Abu Bakar, 2025). In Indonesia, Arabic language learning is generally implemented in formal schools and Islamic boarding schools (Aisyah, 2024). However, this learning is often theoretical, focusing on memorizing vocabulary and grammar, thus lacking a focus on the local social and cultural context. However, strengthening Arabic through a local wisdom approach is believed to increase the appeal of learning for adolescents while preserving the community's cultural values.

In Kembang Village, Pacitan Regency, there is rich local cultural potential, such as oral traditions, folk arts, and social values passed down through generations. However, adolescent interest in learning Arabic remains relatively low. Initial observations at local schools and Islamic boarding schools indicate that monotonous and non-contextual learning methods make adolescents feel that learning Arabic is less relevant to their daily lives. This results in a lack of

intrinsic motivation to learn and potentially decreases Arabic language skills, while also diminishing concern for preserving local culture.

This phenomenon raises an urgent need for innovations in Arabic language learning that integrate local culture. Learning methods based on local wisdom are believed to be able to bridge the gap between Arabic and the context of rural youth life. With a relevant and interactive approach, learning not only improves language skills but also fosters pride and love for local culture.

This approach is based on the constructivist theory proposed by Piaget and Vygotsky, which emphasizes the importance of direct experience and social interaction in the learning process (Hamid et al., 2019). This theory states that learning will be more effective when the material is linked to the learner's environment and culture (Hendrowati, 2015). Furthermore, Deci and Ryan's intrinsic motivation theory asserts that learning interest increases when learners perceive the relevance and personal value of the material being studied (Hajar et al., 2025). Therefore, integrating local wisdom into Arabic language learning is believed to be effective in increasing learning interest while strengthening cultural identity.

Several previous studies support this approach. Research (Idhayani et al., 2023) found that using local folklore as a learning medium can improve students' Arabic reading and writing skills. Research (Mekalungi et al., 2025) showed that local wisdom-based methods can foster learning interest and cultural awareness among adolescents. However, most research still focuses on schools or Islamic boarding schools in urban areas, resulting in very little emphasis on developing Arabic language learning in villages with distinctive local cultures, such as Kembang Village.

The novelty of this program lies in the integration of Arabic language learning with local village wisdom through interactive methods, including storytelling, educational games, and materials based on local traditions. This approach differs from conventional methods that rely solely on memorization and textbooks. Furthermore, adolescents are actively involved in the learning process, thus strengthening not only their language skills but also their cultural identity.

The urgency of implementing this program is quite high. First, adolescents in Kembang Village require learning methods that are contextual, engaging, and relevant to their daily lives. Second, integrating Arabic with local wisdom helps preserve village traditions and cultural values. Third, this program plays a role in developing adolescents' human resources, improving Arabic language skills while simultaneously fostering a cultured and globally knowledgeable character. Fourth, this program serves as an innovative model of community service that can be replicated in other villages with unique local cultural potential.

Against this backdrop, the program "Local Wisdom-Based Arabic Language Learning to Cultivate Cultural and Language Interest among Adolescents in Kembang Village, Pacitan" is expected to increase interest in learning Arabic, strengthen local cultural identity, and make a tangible contribution to the development of community-based education in the village.

This program introduces a hybrid pedagogical model that systematically integrates Arabic language instruction with village-specific local wisdom through participatory and culturally embedded learning activities. Unlike previous studies that merely adapt local stories as supplementary materials, this program positions local traditions, social practices, and linguistic expressions of Kembang Village as the core learning framework for Arabic instruction. Moreover, the program uniquely targets rural adolescents outside formal educational institutions, emphasizing informal and community-based learning spaces. By combining constructivist and intrinsic motivation theories with locally grounded content, this initiative offers a new conceptual and practical contribution to Arabic language education, particularly in underrepresented rural contexts with strong cultural identities.

METHOD

The research method used in this program is a participatory and contextual community action research approach (Cornish et al., 2023). This approach was chosen to ensure that the Arabic language learning process could be directly implemented within the youth community in Kembang Village and adapted to local cultural characteristics. This research involved the active participation of youth as the primary subjects, mentor teachers, and local community leaders in designing, implementing, and evaluating the program on an ongoing basis.

The research process was conducted in several stages: needs identification, program design, implementation of local wisdom-based learning, and evaluation of learning outcomes (Zuber-Skerritt & Wood, 2020). The identification stage was conducted through observation, interviews, and questionnaires to determine youth's interests and difficulties in learning Arabic. Next, learning materials were developed by integrating local village wisdom, such as folklore, oral traditions, and local culture. Learning was implemented through interactive methods, including storytelling, educational games, and group discussions.

Program evaluation used both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Quantitatively, improvements in Arabic language skills were measured through vocabulary, reading, and writing tests before and after the program. According to Trott et al. (2020), researchers need to conduct in-depth interviews, participant observation, and activity documentation to assess adolescents' learning motivation, active participation, and responses to local wisdom-based learning. The results of this evaluation will be used to refine the program and provide recommendations for more effective implementation in other villages.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A local wisdom-based Arabic language learning program implemented in Kembang Village, Pacitan, has demonstrated encouraging results in fostering cultural and linguistic interest among adolescents. Field observations and participation data indicate a significant increase in participants' learning motivation. Prior to the program, most adolescents were less enthusiastic about learning Arabic, considering it a boring formal subject that was difficult to apply to everyday life. However, after integrating local cultural elements such as folklore, proverbs, and traditions into the learning materials, their learning interest significantly increased. Participant attendance consistently increased, classroom interactions became more active, and enthusiasm was evident through verbal and non-verbal responses during the learning activities. This demonstrates that the local cultural context can be a powerful intrinsic motivator, in line with learning motivation theory, which emphasizes the importance of relevance and autonomy in increasing participant engagement.

Furthermore, the program emphasizes not only formal Arabic language proficiency but also focuses on understanding and appreciation for the local culture of Kembang Village. Learning that integrates elements of local wisdom provides a more contextual learning experience, enabling adolescents to go beyond memorizing vocabulary and grammar rules to understanding the meaning behind each expression. This approach positions language as a means of meaningful communication, not merely an abstract academic skill. This makes learning relevant to participants' daily lives and can increase their intrinsic motivation to learn.

Youth participating in the program demonstrate the ability to connect Arabic vocabulary, language structures, and expressions with local cultural values. For example, when learning terms about nature, participants not only learn the Arabic names of plants and animals but also learn how the people of Kembang Village protect the environment and conserve their natural resources. This approach makes language a medium for understanding real-life cultural practices, allowing participants to see the direct connection between language and social life.

Furthermore, the program emphasizes introducing traditional rituals and ceremonies that are part of the daily life of the people of Kembang Village. For example, participants are encouraged to learn vocabulary related to harvest ceremonies, mutual cooperation activities, and local celebrations, then use it in Arabic conversations or dialogues. These activities not only improve participants' linguistic abilities but also help them internalize social values such as cooperation, solidarity, and respect for tradition. This demonstrates that language acquisition can go hand in hand with character development and cultural awareness. The use of folklore as a learning medium is another important strategy. By retelling local legends or fairy tales in Arabic, participants are trained to construct appropriate sentences, enrich their vocabulary, and improve their speaking skills. Furthermore, this activity fosters analytical skills and contextual understanding, as participants must grasp the meaning of the story and convey it in a different language. This strategy aligns with Byram's view that effective language learning must always be linked to cultural understanding, so that students master not only the language form but also the social and cultural values it embodies (Devi, 2025).

With this approach, Arabic is not only taught theoretically but also linked to real-life social and cultural contexts (Ni'mah, 2024). Participants gain a deeper understanding that language proficiency can be used as a tool to preserve culture, convey local values, and build a strong cultural identity. This integration of language and culture demonstrates that language education is not only cognitive but also has affective and sociocultural dimensions, fostering awareness, appreciation, and pride in local cultural heritage.

Furthermore, participants' Arabic language competency significantly improved throughout the program. Pre- and post-program test data showed clear differences in vocabulary, grammar, and speaking and listening skills. Participants who previously had limited Arabic knowledge were now able to use new vocabulary in simple sentences and more complex conversations. This demonstrates the effectiveness of the learning approach, particularly in systematically building linguistic skills.

One of the main factors influencing this competency improvement is the integration of local culture into the learning process (Hartono et al., 2022). The vocabulary and expressions taught are not presented abstractly, but are directly linked to participants' daily experiences and their surroundings. For example, words related to agriculture, traditional ceremonies, or mutual cooperation activities are taught alongside relevant social and cultural contexts. This way, participants can more easily remember vocabulary and apply it naturally in everyday communication.

Furthermore, the use of local cultural contexts improves participants' listening and speaking skills. Through discussions, dramas, or retellings of folk tales in Arabic, participants become accustomed to listening to and understanding conversations containing new vocabulary and expressions. These activities also encourage them to express ideas and stories more creatively, while simultaneously practicing their speaking fluency. Thus, learning focuses not only on theoretical aspects but also on real-life practices relevant to their lives.

This learning method also aligns with the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which emphasizes the use of language in real-life communication (Priasih, 2024). The integration of local cultural elements enriches the CLT approach by providing an authentic context that makes communication more meaningful. Participants not only learn language as a formal skill but also use it as a means of social interaction and expression of cultural experiences. This demonstrates that effective language acquisition must always be linked to the participants' real-life contexts.

Beyond linguistic aspects, the integration of local culture also has an affective impact on participants. They become more motivated and confident in using Arabic because the vocabulary and expressions learned are directly relevant to their lives. This sense of connectedness fosters an

intrinsic interest in continuing to learn and develop language skills, while strengthening their appreciation for local culture. Thus, learning Arabic becomes a holistic experience, encompassing not only cognitive but also emotional and social aspects.

Therefore, the participants' improved Arabic language competence demonstrates the effectiveness and applicability of a learning approach that integrates local wisdom. The language taught is not only a means of communication but also a medium for understanding, appreciating, and preserving local culture. This model demonstrates that language acquisition can be optimally achieved when learning is linked to the social, cultural, and real-life contexts of participants, resulting in meaningful and sustainable learning.

The active participation and creativity of adolescents is one of the most significant impacts of the implementation of the local wisdom-based Arabic language learning program in Kembang Village. Since the beginning of the program, observations have shown that adolescents who were previously passive began to show a strong interest in participating in every activity. They not only followed teacher instructions but also proactively sought ways to practice Arabic through various creative media. These activities stimulated deeper engagement because participants felt that language learning was not only academic, but also enjoyable and relevant to their daily experiences.

One of the most prominent forms of creative activity was a drama based on local folklore. Participants were invited to write scripts, portray characters, and deliver dialogue in Arabic. This activity required them to actively use vocabulary and language structures, while simultaneously understanding the cultural values embedded in the stories. This process not only improved their Arabic speaking and listening skills but also honed their analytical skills, creativity, and cultural interpretation. Adolescents learned how to convey complex messages in a foreign language clearly and expressively.

In addition to drama, composing traditional Arabic poetry served as an important means for participants to express their imagination and creativity. In this process, participants are encouraged to combine Arabic elements with local cultural symbols, such as legendary figures, the natural environment, or social values upheld by the community. These poems are then shared in groups, providing opportunities for discussion, constructive criticism, and appreciation of each other's work. This activity encourages participants to think creatively while sharpening their language skills through artistic expression.

The short story competition also serves as an effective vehicle for developing participants' creativity. Teenagers are given the freedom to develop storylines, characters, and conflicts related to daily life or the traditions of Kembang Village, then write them in Arabic. This activity combines writing skills, critical thinking, and the application of new vocabulary. Through the competition, participants learn how to construct logical narratives, integrate language and culture, and effectively convey moral messages or social values.

This creative activity also encourages the development of social and leadership skills. In groups, participants learn to work together to complete projects, share responsibilities, and solve problems collectively. They develop interpersonal communication skills, empathy, and the ability to respect the opinions of others. Active participation in creative activities makes the learning process more democratic, inclusive, and supports the development of adolescents' character as independent and responsible individuals.

Thus, creativity in this program is not only the end result of learning, but also a strategic tool for strengthening Arabic language proficiency and understanding of local culture. By expressing themselves through drama, poetry, and short stories, participants can internalize vocabulary, grammar, and cultural values more deeply. As a result, learning becomes a holistic experience involving cognitive, affective, and social aspects, enabling adolescents not only to

become proficient in Arabic but also to gain a greater appreciation and pride for their own culture.

The impact of this program on the development of adolescents' cultural identity is significant. Arabic language proficiency is no longer viewed solely as an academic skill, but rather as a means of understanding and appreciating local culture. Teenagers participating in the program begin to realize that language can be a window into the values, traditions, and history inherent in their community. This awareness makes them more engaged in their learning and encourages them to relate Arabic language material to everyday life in Kembang Village.

Program participants are able to retell local folktales and legends in Arabic with a high level of comprehension. They not only memorize the text but also grasp the meaning, moral messages, and social context contained within the stories. This skill demonstrates that cultural integration in language learning allows for a deeper transfer of knowledge, where language and culture mutually reinforce participants' understanding. This process also encourages adolescents to think critically and reflectively about their cultural heritage.

In-depth interviews with participants revealed that many of them feel pride in the local culture of Kembang Village. They see mastering Arabic as a way to preserve and pass on traditional values to the next generation. This sense of pride not only increases motivation to learn but also fosters a sense of responsibility for preserving and promoting local wisdom. Thus, Arabic language learning becomes more than just a linguistic skill; it becomes a strategic tool in developing a strong cultural identity.

The interaction between language and culture in this program also fosters important social values, such as empathy, solidarity, and social responsibility. As participants practice language through drama, poetry, or group discussions, they learn to cooperate, respect the opinions of their peers, and adapt to social contexts. These activities help build character in participants who appreciate cultural diversity, empathize with others, and actively contribute to the community. Language learning using this approach develops not only cognitive aspects but also affective and social aspects. Furthermore, this program strengthens the youth's identity as an integral part of their community. Mastery of Arabic, linked to local culture, empowers participants to recognize their connection to the cultural heritage of Kembang Village. They begin to understand that cultural identity is not just about knowledge, but also about the ability to express, preserve, and practice these values in everyday life. This awareness forms a crucial foundation for character and identity development, grounded in pride in one's own culture.

These findings underscore the importance of a learning approach that integrates language and culture as an effective multicultural education strategy. This program demonstrates that language can be a medium for building cultural awareness, preserving traditions, and developing the holistic character of adolescents (Hikmat et al., 2025). By mastering Arabic enriched with local cultural context, participants not only become linguistically proficient but also develop a deep understanding of the values, traditions, and identity of their community, ultimately strengthening their cultural attachment and shaping a conscious, creative, and responsible young generation.

According to (Saputra & Parisu, 2025), multicultural education aims not only to transfer knowledge but also to build social awareness, develop cultural identity, and foster appreciation for cultural heritage. In the context of Arabic language learning in Kembang Village, the integration of local wisdom is an effective strategy for delivering vocabulary, grammar, and expressions contextually, while simultaneously strengthening participants' engagement with local culture.

Furthermore, contextual learning theory explains that students will more easily understand and remember material if learning is linked to real-life experiences and their everyday

environment (Putri & Subando, 2025). Integrating local culture into Arabic language learning provides an authentic context that enables adolescents not only to master the language but also to understand the social practices, values, and norms inherent in their community. This approach makes language a medium for maintaining traditions, conveying moral values, and internalizing positive social behaviors.

Furthermore, holistic education theory emphasizes the holistic development of students, encompassing cognitive, affective, and social aspects (Mahmoudi et al., 2012). By linking Arabic language proficiency to the local cultural context, this program not only enhances linguistic competence but also shapes adolescents' character, pride in their cultural identity, creativity, and social responsibility. The result is a generation of young people who are not only proficient in the language but also possess a deep understanding of the values, traditions, and identity of their community, making language education a means of developing conscious, creative, and responsible individuals.

A local wisdom-based Arabic language learning program has had a comprehensive positive impact on adolescents in Kembang Village. The program has successfully increased interest in learning Arabic, strengthened local cultural awareness, enhanced language competence, encouraged active participation and creativity, and strengthened the connection between language and cultural identity. Contextual, creative, and culture-based learning has been proven to make Arabic more engaging and relevant, while also helping adolescents understand and appreciate their cultural heritage. Therefore, this learning model can serve as a reference for developing language education in other regions, especially those with rich local wisdom potential that needs to be preserved by the younger generation.

CONCLUSION

Based on research findings, a local wisdom-based Arabic language learning program in Kembang Village, Pacitan, has proven effective in increasing learning interest, language competence, and cultural awareness among adolescents. The integration of local cultural elements, such as folklore, proverbs, and traditions, makes Arabic more contextual and relevant to the participants' lives, ensuring that learning is not only academic but also socially and culturally meaningful. The program also encourages active participation, creativity, and collaboration, positively impacting the development of the participants' character and cultural identity.

Arabic language proficiency linked to local wisdom strengthens the connection between language and adolescents' cultural identity. Participants are able to internalize social, moral, and cultural values through creative activities such as drama, poetry, and short stories, utilizing language as a means to preserve and convey cultural heritage. These findings confirm that culture-based language learning can shape a young generation that is not only linguistically competent but also aware of and proud of their cultural identity.

Based on the research findings, it is recommended that local wisdom-based Arabic language learning programs continue to be developed and implemented more widely in schools or other communities with local cultural potential. Teachers and educators should be trained to effectively integrate language and culture, and to utilize creative methods that can increase participant motivation and participation. Furthermore, schools and local governments can support this program by providing relevant facilities, learning media, and extracurricular activities, ensuring its sustainability and broader positive impact on cultural and language development among the younger generation.

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