

CONVERSATION-BASED ONLINE INSTRUCTION FOR *MAHARAH KALAM*: AN EXPLANATORY CASE STUDY OF COMMUNICATIVE PRACTICE IN SANTRI PEDIA

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Abstract: *Maharah kalam* is a key indicator of communicative competence, yet its development remains challenging in online environments where interaction is often limited in spontaneity and depth. Although digital platforms provide opportunities for interaction, their effectiveness depends on how communicative activities are systematically designed. This study examines the implementation of conversation-based activities in an online Arabic course at Santri Pedia by integrating Communicative Language Teaching and Online Learning Theory. Using a qualitative-explanatory case-study design, data were collected through online observations, semi-structured interviews with one-founder, three-instructors, and 19-participants, as well as documentation analysis, and analyzed thematically using Spradley's framework. The findings show that learning is structured through stages of vocabulary preparation, guided dialogue, interactive speaking tasks, and reflective feedback, supported by tutor scaffolding and peer interaction. The gradual increase in task complexity and communicative load facilitates learners' transition toward more spontaneous communication, focusing fluency, vocabulary use, and confidence. However, limitations such as the lack of authentic materials, absence of placement testing, and limited post-course reinforcement affect learning sustainability. This study concludes that effective online *Maharah Kalam* instruction requires structured communicative interaction, pedagogical scaffolding, and sustained engagement, while future research should explore longitudinal outcomes, authentic task integration, and adaptive instructional design.

Keywords: *Maharah Kalam*, Communicative Language Teaching, Online Learning, Speaking Skill

Introduction

In Arabic language instruction, *Maharah Kalam* (speaking skill) is widely recognized as a central indicator of communicative competence, as it reflects learners' ability to use language actively in meaningful interaction rather than merely understanding it receptively.¹ Despite its importance, fostering speaking proficiency remains pedagogically demanding, particularly in online learning contexts where interaction is mediated by digital platforms.² The transition from face-to-face classrooms to virtual environments has raised critical concerns regarding how spontaneous dialogue, negotiation of meaning, and sustained communicative exchange can be effectively facilitated in technology mediated settings.³

In many instructional contexts, speaking activities dominated by teacher-centered explanation and form-focused exercises that prioritize grammatical accuracy over communicative fluency.⁴ When transferred to online environments, these limitations are often intensified by restricted interaction time, uneven learning participation, technological constraints, and reduced opportunities for authentic dialogue.⁵

¹ Inayah Inayah et al., "Public Speaking Training For Students of International Class Program State Islamic University Walisongo to Improve The Ability of *Maharah Kalam*," *Asalibuna* 7, no. 1 (2023): 14–33, <https://doi.org/10.30762/asalibuna.v7i01.848>; Khansa Nabila et al., "Tāthbīq Nāmūdḥāj Āt-Tā'Allum Āl-Qā'Im 'Ālā Āl-Māshārī" Bī-Istikhdam Wāsāith Powtoon Lī-Tāhsīn Māhārāt Āl-Kālām Lādāy Āt-Tullāb," *Mantiqū Tayr: Journal of Arabic Language* 5, no. 2 (2025): 183–205, <https://doi.org/10.25217/mantiqutayr.v5i2.5815>; Darwin Zainuddin, "نشأة اللغة العربية وتطورها في التاريخ الإسلامي," *Ihya Al-Arabiyyah: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Dan Sastra Arab* 8, no. 1 (2022): 45, <https://doi.org/10.30821/ihya.v8i1.12348>.

² Inayah Inayah et al., "Implications of Academic Writing Training on Journal Writing Activities of Arabic Language Learning Students at UIN Walisongo Semarang," in *Proceeding of International Conference on Arabic Language (INCALA) 2024*, vol. 3 (1) (Malang: Arabic Department, Faculty of Letters, Universitas Negeri Malang, Indonesia, 2024), 354–71.

³ Elina Novitasari, Inayah Inayah, and Waesama-ae Waemamu, "Contribution of Vygotskian-Language-Environment to Enhancement of Speaking Skills Among the Students of Fadl Al-Fadhlān," *Tadris Al-'Arabiyyah: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Arab Dan Kebahasaaraban* 4, no. 2 (2025): 228–50, <https://doi.org/10.15575/ta.v4i2.48169>.

⁴ Syani Dwi Fitriana and Slamet Setiawan, "The Application of Turn-Taking Strategies on THE BOYZ Podcast Highlight Episode: Conversation Analysis Reflection," *IDEAS: Journal on English Language Teaching and Learning, Linguistics and Literature* 10, no. 1 (2022): 964–74, <https://doi.org/10.24256/ideas.v10i1.2667>.

⁵ Amanda & Rudiansyah Amelia, "Digitalisasi Dan Pembelajaran Bahasa Di Era Digital," *Proceedings Seminar Nasional Pembelajaran Bahasa Dan Sastra (SELASAR)*, no. 1 (2021): 96–105.

Consequently, learners may experience limited speaking practice, decreased confidence, and heightened communication anxiety. These persistent challenges suggest that conventional approaches to teaching *Maharah Kalam* may be insufficient for supporting meaningful communicative development in contemporary online education.⁶

When combined with online learning, CLT principles can be operationalized through synchronous and asynchronous digital interactions that extend speaking practice beyond traditional classroom boundaries. Online learning theory highlights the importance of social presence, teaching presence, and learner engagement in facilitating meaningful learning experiences in digital contexts.⁷ Previous studies suggest that online platforms, when designed to support interaction rather than content transmission alone, can foster communicative language learning by providing flexible access, repeated practice opportunities, and reduced affective barriers to speaking. Together, these perspectives suggest that the effectiveness of online *Maharah Kalam* instruction depends not merely on technological access, but on how communicative interaction is pedagogically structured and sustained.

Within this broader context, Santri Pedia represents a relevant case of an online Arabic language course that places *Maharah Kalam* at the center of instruction. Santri Pedia organizes online learning activities that emphasize conversational practice (*hivār*), instructor-facilitated interaction, and learner participation within a virtual learning environment. The course integrates synchronous speaking sessions with structured dialogue practice and reflective activities, providing a bounded instructional context suitable for examining how conversation-based communicative activities are implemented in online Arabic learning. Rather than functioning merely as a content-delivery platform, it operates as a structured virtual communicative space where instructors and learners engage in sustained spoken interaction.

A growing body of research has examined the role of digital media in enhancing Arabic-speaking skills. Studies indicate that online programs and digital platforms can support *Maharah Kalam*

⁶ Musyafa Ali, Toifur Toifur, and Ahsan Hasbullah, "Development Of Santri Moral Reasoning (Study At Pesantren Al Ihya 'Ulumaddin Kesugihan-Cilacap)," *International Journal of Scientific Research and Management* 10, no. 03 (2022): 2215–21, <https://doi.org/10.18535/ijssrm/v10i3.el03>.

⁷ Jaja Sulaeman et al., "Islamic Religious Education Holistic-Integrative Learning in Elementary School," *International Journal of Social Science and Human Research* 06, no. 03 (2023): 1724–33, <https://doi.org/10.47191/ijsshr/v6-i3-51>.

development by increasing learner participation⁸ and providing diverse modes of interaction.⁹ Research on WhatsApp, Telegram, and video-based learning indicates that these platforms facilitate conversational practice and improve learners' confidence in speaking Arabic.¹⁰ Other studies highlight the effectiveness of daily conversation (*muhadatsah yaumiyah*) and virtual role-playing in reducing speaking anxiety¹¹ and promoting communicative competence.¹² Additionally, research conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic showed that online speaking programs could enhance Arabic speaking skills when supported by active instructor engagement and synchronous

⁸ Inayah Inayah et al., "Development of Curriculum and Learning Management in Training and Intensive Courses of Arabic Language Program l Tatwir Al-Manahij Wa Idarah Al-Ta'lim Fi-Baramij Al-Tadrib Wa Al-Tatwir Wa Al-Daurat Al-Mukassafah Li-Lughah Al-'Arabiyyah," *Jurnal Al Bayan: Jurnal Jurusan Pendidikan Bahasa Arab* 15, no. 2 (2023): 526, <https://doi.org/10.24042/albayan.v15i2.19089>; Lutfiya Nailul Muna et al., "Enthusiasm and Participation in Arabic Language Learning: A Qualitative Case Study in an Islamic Primary School Based on Curran's Theory," *Alibbaa: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Arab* 7, no. 1 (2026): 112–38, <https://doi.org/10.19105/ajpba.v7i1.22830>.

⁹ Mas Muhammadiah, Petrus Jacob Pattiasina, and Ali Pirdaus, "The Relevance of Speaking Skills with Improving Digital Literacy Skills" 8, no. 6 (2021): 669–78; Langgeng Budianto et al., "Digital Media 's Role in Overcoming Anxiety, Enhancing Linguistic Elements and Fostering Motivation for Developing Speaking Skills" 14, no. 2 (2025): 1379–88, <https://doi.org/10.11591/ijere.v14i2.31931>; Zhong Sun et al., "Improving the English-Speaking Skills of Young Learners through Mobile Social Networking," *Computer Assisted Language Learning* 30, no. 3–4 (2017): 304–24, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09588221.2017.1308384>; Applied Linguistics, "Https://Jurnal.Unigal.Ac.Id/Index.Php/Jall/Index," 2021.

¹⁰ Muhammad Ainul Yaqin, "Penggunaan Media WhatshApp Pada Pembelajaran *Maharah kalam* Bahasa Arab Pada Mahasiswa PBA IAI Al-Qodiri Jember," *Al Qodiri: Jurnal Pendidikan, Sosial Dan Keagamaan* 20, no. 2 (2022): 318–26, <https://doi.org/10.53515/qodiri.2022.20.2.318-326>; Chairani Astina, "تعليم مهارة الكلام", *من خلال تكوين الأفعال و الأسماء بطريقة القياس* 10, no. 1 (2022), 10.24235/ijas.v4i1.9776; Ahmad Azhari, "Peningkatan Kualitas Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab Pada Program Kallimni Kelas Online Lembaga Bahasa Al-Azhar Pare," *Al Fathin Jurnal Bahasa Dan Sastra Arab* 5, no. 2 (2022): 257–71; Hadi Saputra, Marsiah Marsiah, and Cecep Zakarias El Bilad, "Analisis Kualitas Instagram @kursus_arab_alazhar Dalam Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab Online," *El-Tsaqafah: Jurnal Jurusan PBA* 20, no. 1 (2021): 31–51, <https://doi.org/10.20414/tsaqafah.v20i1.3107>.

¹¹ Annisa Nabhan Kamila et al., "وقاية القلق اللغوي بالعربية لدى طلاب الجامعة: دراسة FLCAS," *Thariqah Ilmiah: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Kependidikan & Bahasa Arab* 13, no. 2 (2025): 167–82, <https://doi.org/10.24952/thariqahilmiah.v13i2.18016>.

¹² Helmi Muzaki, "Pengembangan Prototipe Media Pembelajaran Berbicara Berbasis Virtual Reality," *Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pembelajaran Indonesia (JPPI)* 4, no. 3 (2024): 868–75, <https://doi.org/10.53299/jppi.v4i3.607>.

interaction tools.¹³ These studies confirm the pedagogical potential of digital learning for developing *Maharah Kalam*. While these studies demonstrate the effectiveness of digital tools in supporting speaking practice, they predominantly emphasize learning outcomes rather than examining the pedagogical processes underlying communicative interaction in online Arabic courses.

However, despite the growing interest in online Arabic language learning, several gaps remain in the existing literature. First, most previous studies focus on measuring learning outcomes or evaluating the effectiveness of digital media, while offering limited process-based analysis of how conversation-based communicative activities are implemented in online contexts. Furthermore, research that explicitly integrates CLT principles with online learning theory in the context of Arabic-speaking instruction is still limited, particularly in non-formal or community-based online courses. Empirical studies that explore how conversation-based *Maharah Kalam* learning is implemented within Santri Pedia using an explanatory qualitative approach remain scarce.

Based on these considerations, this study aims to explain how conversation-based communicative activities are implemented in developing *Maharah Kalam* through an online Arabic language course, using Santri Pedia as an explanatory case study. Specifically, the study seeks to (1) examine how conversation-based communicative activities are designed and organized in the online Arabic language course. (2) How interaction patterns in *Maharah Kalam learning* at Santri Pedia. By integrating Communicative Language Teaching and Online Learning Theory, this study is expected to contribute theoretically to the discourse on Arabic language pedagogy and practically to the design of online speaking instruction, particularly for learners seeking meaningful and communicative *Maharah Kalam* learning experiences.

Literature Review

Conceptual Framework: Integrating CLT and Online Learning Theory

To rapid expansion of online language learning has generated two parallel but often disconnected strands of scholarship. On the one hand, research grounded in Online Learning Theory (OLT), particularly the Community of Inquiry (CoI) framework, emphasizes

¹³ Lisa Khillatur Risalah, Umi Machmudah, and Zakiyah Arifah, "Implementing an Online-Based Kallimni Program to Improve *Maharah kalam* in the Pandemic of Covid-19," *Alsinatuna* 7, no. 1 (2021): 1–16, <https://doi.org/10.28918/alsinatuna.v7i1.4467>.

social, teaching, and cognitive presence as determinants of meaningful learning in digital environments. On the other hand, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) highlights authentic interaction, negotiation of meaning, and task-based communication as central to speaking development. However, these traditions are frequently discussed independently: OLT research prioritizes instructional design and digital engagement, while CLT studies focus on communicative pedagogy, often in face-to-face.¹⁴ This theoretical separation creates a conceptual gap. Digital interaction alone does not guarantee communicative competence, and communicative task design without structured online facilitation may fail to sustain meaningful engagement. Therefore, this study positions CLT and OLT not as separate domains but as interdependent dimensions of online Arabic speaking instruction. CLT provides the pedagogical logic of communicative interaction, while the CoI framework explains the structural and cognitive conditions that sustain such interaction in digital environments.¹⁵

Within this integrated framework, social presence functions as the interpersonal foundation of communicative practice. In CLT, authentic communication depends on learners' willingness to negotiate meaning, take linguistic risks, and engage in spontaneous dialogue. These processes require trust, emotional safety, and a sense of belonging, conditions conceptualized in CoI as social presence. Empirical research consistently indicates that higher perceived social presence enhances participation and interaction quality in online language learning.¹⁶ However, comparative studies reveal a critical tension: while increased social presence fosters engagement, it does not automatically translate into measurable speaking development. Interaction may remain superficial if not pedagogically structured. This suggests that social presence operationalizes the interactional core of CLT, but its effectiveness depends on instructional mediation.¹⁷

¹⁴ Md. Rubel Parvez and Md. Saiful Islam, "CLT in Online Classroom: A Post-Pandemic Study on the Tertiary Level Practitioner & Participants of Bangladesh," *East West Journal of Humanities*, 2025, 53–71, <https://doi.org/10.70527/ewjh.vi.144>.

¹⁵ Noel Carroll, Michael Lang, and Cornelia Connolly, "An Extended Community of Inquiry Framework Supporting Students in Online and Digital Education," *Innovations in Education and Teaching International* 62, no. 2 (2025): 369–85, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14703297.2024.2326658>.

¹⁶ Le He, "Pathways to Social Presence in Online Learning Communities," *Learning & Education* 10, no. 8 (2022): 91, <https://doi.org/10.18282/l-e.v10i8.3070>.

¹⁷ Brigita Woro Diyatni Kusumaningtyas and Thomas Wahyu Prabowo Mukti, "Students' Perception of Social Presence in the Online EFL Speaking Class," *Englisia:*

That mediation is conceptualized as teaching presence. In the CoI framework, teaching presence involves instructional design, facilitation of discourse, and direct instruction. From a CLT perspective, these elements correspond to communicative task sequencing, scaffolding of dialogue stages, vocabulary activation, and corrective feedback. Research on online language courses shows that clear objectives, guided practice, and structured feedback significantly enhance learner engagement and motivation. Yet synthesis across studies indicates that many technology-driven courses prioritize platform innovation over communicative task design. Without deliberate scaffolding, learners tend to use digital platforms for passive consumption or social entertainment rather than purposeful language production. Thus, teaching presence becomes the mechanism through which communicative principles are operationalized in online settings. It ensures that interaction remains meaning-focused, progressively challenging, and pedagogically coherent.¹⁸

Beyond interaction and facilitation, sustainable speaking development requires cognitive processing. Cognitive presence, as conceptualized in the CoI framework, refers to learners' ability to construct and confirm meaning through reflection and discourse. In speaking instruction, this aligns with the progression from initial exposure (triggering event), to exploratory dialogue, to integration of vocabulary and grammatical structures, and ultimately to resolution through fluent expression. Studies on conversation-based activities, such as role-play and contextual dialogue, demonstrate improvements in fluency and confidence. However, a cross-study analysis reveals that gains are most substantial when activities include reflective stages and feedback cycles that prompt learners to reorganize linguistic knowledge. This indicates that cognitive presence transforms communicative participation into durable speaking competence (*Maharah Kalam*).

Across these strands of research, a coherent pattern emerges: digital accessibility enhances interaction, communicative tasks stimulate engagement, but speaking development becomes pedagogically meaningful only when social interaction, instructional scaffolding, and cognitive processing operate simultaneously. Social presence encourages learners to speak; teaching presence guides how they speak;

Journal of Language, Education, and Humanities 10, no. 2 (2023): 37, <https://doi.org/10.22373/ej.v10i2.15018>.

¹⁸ Carroll, Lang, and Connolly, "An Extended Community of Inquiry Framework Supporting Students in Online and Digital Education."

cognitive presence shapes what they internalize from speaking. The integration of CLT and OLT therefore offers a theoretically coherent model for understanding online *Maharah Kalam* instruction.¹⁹

Conversation and Learning of *Maharah Kalam*

Conversation plays a crucial role in the practice of speaking skills (*Maharah Kalam*) in Arabic language learning. Studies by Albarra Sarbaini and Novita Rahmi²⁰ and Azhari²¹ indicate that learners' speaking proficiency is strongly influenced by the instructional method and the quality of its implementation. Azhar emphasizes that communicative methods enhance students' speaking ability and active participation, particularly when supported by a conducive language environment, vocabulary mastery, and grammatical competence. Meanwhile, Albarra highlights the importance of teachers' readiness in lesson planning, the use of varied instructional strategies, and consistency in implementing speaking practices. These studies suggest that the development of Arabic speaking skills requires a communicative approach supported by systematic planning and sufficient opportunities for practice.

These findings are further supported by recent studies that emphasize the effectiveness of conversation-based activities in improving Arabic speaking skills. Research published in the *International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development* demonstrates that the use of role-play and contextual dialogue activities significantly improves learners' fluency, confidence, and oral communication skills, as students are actively engaged in simulated real-life conversations.²² Existing research on online Arabic

¹⁹ Ruijia Yang and Wei Wei, "A Systematic Review of Language MOOCs: Research Design, Evidence, and Implications," *Journal of Educational Technology and Innovation* 5, no. 2 (2023): 33–47, <https://doi.org/10.61414/jeti.v5i2.108>; Rustam Shadiev and Xun Wang, "A Review of Research on Technology-Supported Language Learning and 21st Century Skills," *Frontiers in Psychology* 13, no. July (2022): 1–19, <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.897689> Beth Oyarzun and Florence Martin, "A Systematic Review of Research on Online Learner Collaboration from 2012 – 21: Collaboration Technologies, Design, Facilitation, and Outcomes," *Online Learning Journal (OLJ)* 27, no. 1 (2023): 71–106, <https://doi.org/10.24059/olj.v27i1.3407>.

²⁰ Albarra Sarbaini and Novita Rahmi, "Enhancing Arabic Speaking Skills: A Study on Instructional Design, Implementation, and Assessment," *Arabiyatuna: Jurnal Bahasa Arab* 8, no. 2 (2024): 641–62, <https://doi.org/10.29240/jba.v8i2.10828>

²¹ Azhari, "Peningkatan Kualitas Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab Pada Program Kallimni Kelas Online Lembaga Bahasa Al-Azhar Pare."

²² Karima Aboubakr Salem Abdulhafid et al., "Improvement of Arabic Speaking Skills among Non-Arabic Students through Role-Play Activities," *International Journal of*

language courses predominantly emphasizes technological platforms, learner autonomy, and digital flexibility. While these factors are important, they often overshadow the pedagogical processes underlying communicative speaking development. Few studies explicitly examine how conversation-based communicative activities are structured, facilitated, and cognitively processed in fully online Arabic courses, particularly within santri-based learning communities.²³

Although Online Learning Theory demonstrates that digital environments can sustain interaction through social, teaching, cognitive presence, and Communicative Language Teaching confirms the effectiveness of conversation-based activities for developing speaking skills, these frameworks remain insufficiently integrated in empirical research. Studies on online Arabic instruction often foreground technological affordances, while research on *Maharah Kalam* emphasizes communicative pedagogy in conventional classroom settings.

Three gaps are therefore evident. First, there is limited process-based analysis explaining how communicative interaction unfolds in online speaking courses. Second, few studies conceptually integrate CLT and the Community of Inquiry framework to explain speaking development in digital contexts. Third, empirical research focusing on santri-based online Arabic learning communities remains scarce. Addressing these gaps, this study conducts an explanatory case study of conversation-based communicative activities in *Maharah Kalam* within Santri Pedia as an online Arabic language course. By examining how CLT principles are operationalized through social, teaching, and cognitive presence, this study seeks to contribute a theoretically integrated model of online communicative speaking instruction.

Method

This study employed a qualitative approach using an explanatory case study design²⁴ This design was selected to obtain an in-depth and

Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development 13, no. 1 (2024): 2299–2313, <https://doi.org/10.6007/ijarped/v13-i1/20760>.

²³ Novy Maryani, Isop Syaifei, and Abdul Kosim, “Ta’ Lim Al - ‘ Arabiyyah : Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Arab Dan Kebahasaaraban” 8, no. 1 (2024): 18–33.

²⁴ Muhammad Ahsanul Husna et al., “Project-Based Learning on Direct Translation Material with Pop-Up for Students of Walisongo State Islamic University Semarang,” *Alsuniyat: Jurnal Penelitian Bahasa, Sastra, Dan Budaya Arab* 8, no. 1 (2025): 160–79, <https://doi.org/10.17509/alsuniyat.v8i1.77945>; Muhammad Ahsanul Husna et al., “Implementasi Materi Mahârah Al-Kalâm Dalam Transformasi Kurikulum Bahasa

contextual understanding of how and why conversation-based learning is implemented within an online Arabic language course. A qualitative explanatory case study is appropriate when the research aims to explore processes, interactions, and meanings underlying a particular educational practice in a real-life setting. The explanatory orientation of the case study allowed the researchers to go beyond surface description and examine the pedagogical rationale, instructional strategies, and interaction patterns involved in the implementation of *Himar*-based speaking instruction. This design is consistent with the principles of Communicative Language Teaching, which emphasize meaningful interaction, as well as Online Learning Theory, which highlights learning as a socially constructed process within digital environments.

The research was conducted in Santri Pedia, an online Arabic language learning platform that consistently offers communication-based courses with a strong emphasis on speaking skills (*Maharah Kalam*), particularly through *Himar* (dialogue) activities. The study focused on the virtual *muhadatsah* class, which serves as the primary space for synchronous speaking practice. Santri Pedia was purposively selected as the research site because it represents a bounded system characterized by (1) systematic implementation of conversation-based instruction, (2) intensive interaction between instructors and participants, and (3) integration of digital technology with traditional Arabic learning practices. The research was conducted online in January 2023, following the regular instructional schedule of the course.

The participants in this study consisted of four key informants, comprising one founder of the Santri Pedia platform and three Arabic language instructors who were directly involved in teaching the virtual *muhadatsah* class and there were 19 participants attending the Santri Pedia class at the time. They comprised five people aged 20, seven aged 21, four aged 23, two aged 30, and one aged 40. These informants were selected using purposive sampling, as they possessed rich and relevant knowledge regarding the design and implementation of conversation-based *Maharah Kalam* learning. The inclusion criteria for the instructional context of the course required learners to be at least twelve years old, have basic Qur'anic reading ability, possess access to a digital device (laptop or handphone), attend a minimum of eight instructional meetings, actively participate in learning activities, and consent to involvement in the research process. Although learners were not

treated as primary informants, their learning activities and interactions were observed as part of the instructional process.

Data collection techniques to ensure data richness and credibility, this study employed method triangulation, consisting of online observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation analysis. Online observations focused on Zoom-based learning sessions, WhatsApp interactions, and recorded *Himar* practices to examine participant engagement and spoken Arabic use. Semi-structured interviews explored instructors’ perceptions of instructional strategies, learning materials, participant involvement, assessment, and challenges. Documentation included learning modules, instructional guidelines, chat archives, and recorded learning activities to support and validate observational and interview data.

Data analysis followed thematic analysis informed by Spradley’s framework, consisting of domain, taxonomic, componential, and theme analysis. This approach enabled systematic identification of instructional patterns, interaction dynamics, and key themes related to the implementation of conversation-based *Maharah Kalam* learning in an online environment.

Result and Discussion
Instructional Design of Online Conversation-Based *Maharah Kalam* Learning on Santri Pedia

The findings of this study are organized into two main analytical themes: instructional design and interaction patterns. These themes illustrate how conversation-based online learning is implemented and how teachers are involved in designing conversation-based teaching practices, taking place in the Santri Pedia online classroom. Figure 1 explores the teaching stages carried out in instructional design, starting from the opening of the class until the completion of the first session for online course participants.

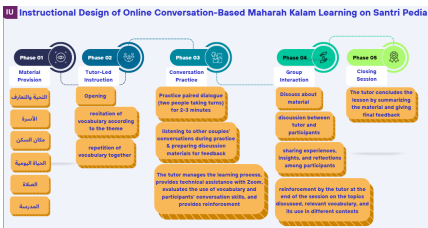


Figure 1. Instructional Design of Online Conversation-Based *Maharah Kalam* Learning

Figure 1 illustrates the instructional design used to organize the findings of the study. In the material provision stage, Santri Pedia provides textbooks containing several materials, namely *التحية والتعارف*, *المدرسة* and *الأسرة*, *مكان السكن*, *الحياة اليومية*, *الصلاة*. Furthermore, teaching guided by tutors includes various learning activities, ranging from the introduction of vocabulary practiced directly by tutors, independent repetition of vocabulary pronunciation, and simultaneous vocabulary practice with the help of several media, such as PowerPoint. Conversation practice is conducted in pairs, with participants practicing vocabulary according to the current theme, receiving feedback from the tutor, and reinforcement at the end of the session for the overall practice carried out by the participants. This activity is also related to the group interaction stage, where after practicing conversation with their own partner, participants then hold a cross-discussion with other members. This continues until the entire group has finished the conversation. This model adopts the jigsaw stage of active learning. Finally, in the closing session, the tutor reviews the material that has been presented, provides motivation, and gives participants the opportunity to ask questions or offer suggestions and criticism. Table 1 systematically describes the material based on task complexity and communicative load.

Table 1. Sequence of Core Materials at Santri Pedia Based on Task Complexity and Communicative Load

Theme	Core Material	Learning Activities	Skill Objectives	Task Complexity	Communicative Load
التحية والتعارف (Greetings & Introductions)	Greetings, introduction expressions, simple dialogues (6)	Tutor reads sample dialogue → participants practice in pairs → pronunciation & comprehension practice	Practice pronunciation, introduce oneself, greet politely	Memorizing basic greeting vocabulary and repeating short model dialogues	Very low communicative load; controlled interaction using fixed expression
الأسرة (Family)	Family vocabulary (father, mother, siblings), introducing family	Read family tree → family dialogues → Q&A about family members	Mention and describe family members using simple sentence structures	Memorizing family-related vocabulary and constructing simple descriptive sentences	Low communicative load; responding to guided questions about family members
مكان السكن (Place of Residence)	Types of housing, location,	Q&A on residence → describe home	Explain residence using correct	Memorizing place-related vocabulary	Moderate communicative load; describing

	directional prepositions	and surroundings	place prepositions	and combining nouns with prepositions in short descriptions	personal living environment
الحياة اليومية (Daily Life)	Daily routines, present tense verbs (wake up, study, eat, etc.)	Compose daily stories → list daily activities → narrate sequence orally	Describe daily routines logically and sequentially	Memorizing verbs of daily activities and organizing them into sequential oral narratives	Increasing communicative load; producing longer spoken sequences
الصلاة (Prayer)	Prayer times, places of prayer, and expressions for ablution	Dialogue on prayer times → mention worship sequences → discuss prayer habits	Use religious vocabulary and describe religious activities orally	Memorizing religious vocabulary and integrating it into contextual dialogue	Moderate to high communicative load; explaining religious routines and habits
المدرسة (School)	School activities, subject names, teachers, and school facilities	Q&A on school life → introduce teachers & friends → dialogue about favorite subject	Orally describe school experiences and activities	Memorizing school-related vocabulary and expressing personal preferences	High communicative load; extended interaction and opinion sharing
المراجعة والتقييم (Review & Evaluation)	Review of all previous themes	Paired speaking test → tutor feedback → learning reflection	Assess speaking progress and summarize learning outcomes	Integrating previously memorized vocabulary across themes	High communicative load; spontaneous speaking and summarizing experience
Ikhtibar (Test)	Topics 1–7	GoogleForm Evaluation	Assessment	Recall and recognition of vocabulary and expressions	Evaluation of communicative competence

As shown in Table 1, the learning materials are systematically organized to support the gradual development of speaking competence. The sequence of themes reflects a progression from basic interpersonal communication to more contextually complex communicative tasks. Initial sessions focus on greetings and introductions, which allow learners to practice simple expressions and pronunciation patterns. Subsequent topics expand toward more contextual communication such as family, place of residence, daily routines, and school activities. In addition to thematic progression, the complexity of communicative tasks also increases throughout the

course. Early activities emphasize guided dialogue practice based on tutor-provided models, whereas later sessions require learners to construct dialogues independently, narrate daily routines, and respond to spontaneous questions. This gradual shift from controlled practice to more open communicative interaction reflects the pedagogical principles of Communicative Language Teaching.

The communicative load of speaking tasks also develops progressively. While initial activities focus on repetition and structured interaction, later tasks require learners to integrate vocabulary knowledge, sentence construction, and contextual meaning simultaneously. As a result, learners are increasingly encouraged to produce meaningful spoken language rather than merely reproduce memorized expressions. Tutor feedback and observational data indicate that most participants demonstrated noticeable progress in pronunciation accuracy, contextual sentence construction, and thematic vocabulary use during conversational practice. However, several challenges remain, including difficulties in memorizing new vocabulary, constructing grammatically appropriate sentences, and dealing with technical limitations such as unstable internet connections during synchronous sessions.

The implementation of *Maharah Kalam* in this platform is evident through various contents that encourage participants to understand the context of sentences, form simple dialogs, and practice correct pronunciation. Santri Pedia also presents live classes (live online) guided by experienced tutors. In this session, participants are given the opportunity to practice speaking, discussing, and giving short presentations using Arabic. This approach greatly supports the implementation of *Maharah Kalam*, as it creates an interactive atmosphere that resembles face-to-face learning. Participants are not only passive listeners, but also active speakers.



2a



2b

Figure 2. The Appeal of Santri Pedia Content to the Interest in Learning Arabic

Figure 2a relates to the Arabic language learning program on the Santri Pedia platform. The poster features visual elements such as

illustrations of two people conversing in Arabic, as well as Arabic text with the material “*Muḥādatsah wa Istimā*” (Conversation and Listening). Figur 2b displays a collection of screenshots from various Santri Pedia content posts on social media (Instagram) with the theme of Arabic language learning. Each post includes Arabic images and text, with various topics such as everyday vocabulary, conversational sentences, and an introduction to sentence structure. This presentation also shows that Santri Pedia actively uses digital platforms to deliver material that supports the continuous mastery of *mahārah kalām*.

In this community, participants can discuss and practice conversations in Arabic in a relaxed yet meaningful way. This collaborative learning atmosphere strengthens the implementation of *Maharah Kalam*, as participants have the space to practice consistently outside of formal sessions. With all these elements, Santri Pedia becomes an online Arabic learning platform that is not only creative but also applicable in shaping participants’ speaking skills.

The framework of communicative *hiwar* activities implemented in the online conversation class. The learning process is structured around several stages, including vocabulary preparation, guided dialogue practice, interactive speaking tasks, and continuous feedback. Tutor facilitation strategies play a central role in this process, particularly in encouraging learners to speak without fear of making mistakes, providing corrective and motivational feedback, and utilizing digital communication tools such as Zoom and WhatsApp to maintain interaction. At the same time, active learner participation is essential, as students are required to respond spontaneously in Arabic and gradually construct longer utterances through guided communicative practice.

The integration of structured *hiwar* activities, tutor scaffolding, and peer interaction ultimately contributes to the development of *Maharah Kalam*, particularly in terms of speaking fluency, vocabulary expansion, and confidence in oral communication. More broadly, the findings suggest that conversation-based online instruction can serve as an effective pedagogical model for Arabic language learning when communicative interaction, social community, and instructional guidance are systematically integrated.

Interaction Patterns in *Maharah Kalam* Learning at Santri Pedia

The interaction patterns design implemented in Santri Pedia reflects a communicative learning structure in which *hiwar* (dialogue) functions as the central pedagogical activity in learning of *Maharah Kalam*. Rather than emphasizing grammatical explanation alone, the

learning process prioritizes meaningful interaction and active language use through structured conversation-based activities. The patterns of interaction in Santri Pedia online course shows in Figure 3.



Figure 3. Interaction Patterns in *Maharah Kalam* Learning at Santri Pedia

Based on Figure 3, the interaction patterns exhibited by course participants form three distinct interaction patterns: learners' engagement with course materials, interactions between learners and course tutors, and interactions amongst participants within a single course session. The first interaction pattern involves course participants studying the course material to acquire new information, by reading text modules or PDFs and watching instructional videos provided by Santri Pedia or the tutor. The second pattern, involving learners and the tutor, aims to provide guidance, motivation, and feedback to participants. These include live Q&A sessions (via Zoom or Google Meet), feedback on submitted assignments, and discussions via messaging apps. The third pattern, between participants, aims to build a learning community and facilitate the exchange of ideas amongst participants. This includes discussions on the community forum, pair work during Zoom sessions, and discussions in the virtual classrooms.

Beside that, Based on the timing of the learning sessions, there are two types of interaction on Santri Pedia: synchronous and asynchronous. Synchronous interaction involves video conferences provided by the organisers via Zoom Meetings and Google Meet, with a schedule of two online face-to-face sessions. The second type is live chat via a WhatsApp group, where tutors ask participants about their progress, challenges in learning Arabic, and technical issues related to Arabic conversation. Generally, there are no strict time limits for live chat during the one-month course. Meanwhile, asynchronous interaction involves participants submitting video recordings of the tasks assigned during synchronous sessions, followed by feedback on the tasks and the completion of a Google Form regarding the learning

progress made. Some documentation of the synchronous activity can be seen in Figure 4.



Figure 4. *Maharah kalam* Sessions at Santri Pedia

Based on Figure 4 there are *Maharah Kalam* sessions held twice a week on Sunday and Monday at night from 7:30 to 8:30 PM. These sessions are led by Ustadz Ali Firman At-Tangkiliy as the main tutor. The materials are practical and contextual, tailored to the participants' daily communication needs. The teaching model encourages learners to actively practice speaking in pairs (*hinar*) and provides opportunities for immediate feedback from the tutor.

From Participation to Proficiency: Unpacking the Pedagogical Mechanisms of Online Arabic Speaking Instruction

The indicators of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in the context of online Arabic language courses encompass five key elements: Active Interaction and Student-Centered Learning, Use of Authentic Materials, Communicative Activities (Task-Based), Contextual Language Learning, and Communicative Feedback.²⁵ Of these five indicators, Santri Pedia incorporates all five in the following ways. Regarding the student-centered aspect, Santri Pedia provides participants with more speaking time. This can be calculated from the duration allotted for paired conversation practice, which is 2–3 minutes per pair, with 19 participants, resulting in an estimated total of 25–30

²⁵ Arjulayana and Tri Pujiati, "Optimize Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) Approach for Non-English Learners' Speaking Skill," *Jalie: Journal of Applied Linguistics and Islamic Education* 8, no. 2 (2024): 215–38; Ahmad Tauchid et al., "Investigating Communicative Language Teaching through Meaning-Based Tasks and Processing Strategies to Strengthen Learners' Oral Performance," *Journal of Research in English Language Teaching and Linguistics (JRELL)* 1, no. 2 (2025): 153–69, <https://doi.org/10.65431/jrell.v1i2.30>; Sana Tawfiq Yaqobi, "The Effectiveness of Communicative Language Teaching and Task-Based Technology in Promoting International Graduate Students' Communicative Competence and Willingness to Communicate in English: A Case Study" (Texas Tech University, 2022); Sumaya N Ali Alshareef, "Applying the Communicative Approach in Assessing EFL Young Learners," *Eurasian Journal of Applied Linguistics* 10, no. 1 (2024): 14–27.

minutes. This is followed by an intensive discussion and interaction session among participants, with a duration of 2–3 minutes per participant, for a total of 19 participants. Thus, the total time participants spend on each synchronous activity is 30 + 38 minutes (1 hour 8 minutes). The remaining time is used by the tutor to provide feedback and reinforcement at the end of the session. Consequently, course participants speak or use Arabic more (student-talking-time) than the instructor in this Santri Pedia program. In addition, the synchronous process also emphasizes fluency, in which the instructor is more tolerant of grammatical errors if the message is conveyed clearly.

However, the use of authentic materials in Santri Pedia is not sufficiently covered. Although there is study guides provided, specifically designed for online Arabic language courses, they lack contextual content adapted from videos depicting real-life situations, such as conversations at the airport, Arabic news, or restaurant menus. In the Communicative Activities (Task-Based) session, the activities in Santri Pedia include Role-Playing: where participants simulate specific conversations, such as buying and selling, interviews, or ordering food. However, they do not include Information Gap Activities and Problem-Solving, which should be conducted to foster a deeper understanding of the context of vocabulary.

On the other hand, by incorporating Contextual Learning (CLT), Santri Pedia effectively applies language functions, not just grammar. The learning focus is on how to ask for permission (*al-isti'dzan*), greet others (*at-tahiyat*), or decline a request, rather than merely memorizing the formula for the *Ismiyah* phrase, and Arabic is used as a tool for communication, not merely as an academic subject. and in the Communicative Feedback stage, corrections focus on meaning, where the instructor provides corrective feedback when participants are unable to convey their intended meaning, rather than simply correcting specific vowel marks or grammatical structures.

Although some participants practiced the language regularly in their daily lives while taking the course, once the course ended, the majority admitted that this habit faded due to the lack of requirements, assignments, and responsibilities. As a result, many of them said they had forgotten much of what they had learned. In addition, four participants admitted that this was their first time learning Arabic. For this group, they found it difficult to practice speaking Arabic. Another factor was the lack of practice or supportive conditions for practice in

their daily lives. as quoted from the following interviews with Respondent 1 (R1), R2, R3, and R4.

"While taking the course, I practiced it regularly in my daily life because there were daily assignments, if I'm not mistaken. It was homework and a responsibility, so I tried my best to get used to it. But after the class ended, the habit faded away. "So, I've forgotten now". "I had a few challenges because this was my first time learning Arabic, which meant starting from scratch. Then I struggled with speaking. Another reason was that I rarely practiced".

Regarding student admission, Santri Pedia does not impose any specific age restrictions. Consequently, the proficiency level targeted by the course is not clearly defined. Furthermore, at the beginning of the enrollment process, there are no entrance exams, such as pre-tests or placement tests, administered to participants before they begin the course material. Based on data collected from participants in 2023, there were 5 participants aged 20, 7 aged 21, 4 aged 23, 2 aged 30, and 1 aged 40. To date, previous researchers have not found any evidence to support the claim that as a person's age increases, their Arabic language proficiency improves. Since Arabic is the third, fourth, or fifth language for many Indonesians, a placement test is necessary to determine the suitability of the online course being offered relative to the participants' proficiency levels.

The main differences between Arabic language learning models in MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) and Santri Pedia lie in scale, level of interaction, and curriculum focus. MOOCs offer self-paced,²⁶ mass-market learning for a broad audience,²⁷ while Santri Pedia offers more personalized online courses with two focus areas: Nahwu-Shorof or conversation classes. In terms of Scale and Flexibility, MOOCs (such as UGM Online and EdX) are "massive" and "open." They are designed to accommodate thousands of participants at once.²⁸ Learning tends to be self-paced, where participants access video

²⁶ Tobias Rohloff et al., "OpenSAP: Learner Behavior and Activity in Self-Paced Enterprise MOOCs," *International Journal of Advanced Corporate Learning (IJAC)* 13, no. 2 (2020): 30–40, <https://doi.org/10.3991/ijac.v13i2.16531>.

²⁷ Hugo-henrik Hachem et al., "Give MOOCs Some Credit: A System-Divergent Innovation Accrediting an AI Mass-Market MOOC at a Swedish University," *Cogent Education* 12, no. 1 (2025): 2529421, <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2025.2529421>.

²⁸ Chris R Glass, Mitsue S Shiokawa-Baklan, and Andrew J Saltarelli, "Who Takes MOOCs," in *MOOCs and Higher Education: Implications for Institutional Research*, ed. Stephanie J. Blackmon and Claire H. Major, 167th ed., vol. 167 (San Francisco: Wiley Periodicals, Inc. 350 Main Street, Malden, MA 02148, 2016), 41–55.

materials and modules at any time.²⁹ Meanwhile, Santri Pedia is more of a dedicated online course. Although it is online, there is often a class schedule or more structured guidance, focusing on participants who want to delve into Arabic in a practical way. In terms of Content Focus and Approach, MOOCs generally follow a standard academic or general curriculum, such as basic Arabic for beginners, business Arabic, or Arabic for tourism.³⁰ Santri Pedia, on the other hand, specializes in a curriculum focused on Arabic language fundamentals, such as *Nahwu*, *Shorof*, and Arabic Proficiency (referred to here as “*muhadatsah*” classes). Its approach is tailored to the needs of millennial students, using terms such as “*Tasrif Istilah*” or Nahwu Shorof Olympiads.

In terms of interaction and support, MOOCs tend to have minimal interaction between tutors and participants. Communication primarily takes place in discussion forums among participants.³¹ In contrast, Santri Pedia offers more intensive interaction through online classes, access to recorded lessons for those who fall behind, and frequent practice sessions, both synchronous (live practice sessions) and asynchronous (video practice sessions from participants). In terms of objectives and outcomes, MOOCs often aim to provide basic literacy or professional certification. Santri Pedia, on the other hand, aims to produce individuals capable of understanding the Arabic grammar used in classical Islamic literature (*kitab kuning*) and communicating in Arabic, within the distinctive learning environment of the “Santri” community.

²⁹ Meina Zhu and Curtis J. Bonk, “Designing MOOCs to Facilitate Participant Self-Monitoring for Self-Directed Learning,” *Online Learning Journal (OLJ)* 23, no. 4 (2019): 106–34, <https://doi.org/10.24059/olj.v23i4.2037>; Meina Zhu, “Designing and Delivering MOOCs to Motivate Participants for Self-Directed Learning,” *Open Learning: The Journal of Open, Distance and e-Learning* 39, no. 4 (2024): 353–72, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02680513.2022.2026213>.

³⁰ Abdellah Idrissi Jouicha et al., “Starting MOOCs in African University: The Experience of Cadi Ayyad University, Process, Review, Recommendations, and Prospects,” *IEEE Access* 8 (2020): 17477–88, <https://doi.org/10.1109/ACCESS.2020.2966762>; Nada Ali M. Hakami, “An Investigation of the Motivational Factors Influencing Learners’ Intentions to Continue Using Arabic MOOCs” (University of Southampton, 2018); Muntasar F Al-Hamad, “Incorporating MOOCs in Teaching a Pre-A1 Arabic University Course,” *Magia IHHO* 6, no. 2 (2024): 168–82, <https://doi.org/10.24833/2949-6357.2024.GEO.1>.

³¹ Wei Wei et al., “Effective Interactive Engagement Strategies for MOOC Forum Discussion: A Self-Efficacy Perspective,” *PLoS ONE* 18, no. 11 (2023): e0293668, <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0293668>.

Conclusion

This study concludes that effective online conversation-based *Maharah Kalam* learning depends on the systematic integration of instructional design, interaction patterns, and communicative pedagogy rather than merely digital delivery. The Santri Pedia model demonstrates that structured hiwar-based activities, gradual task complexity, and intensive tutor scaffolding can foster learners' speaking fluency, vocabulary capability, and confidence. These findings reinforce current perspectives in Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and second language acquisition, emphasizing that meaningful interaction, scaffolded practice, and increasing communicative load are essential for developing oral proficiency in online environments.

However, the sustainability of learning outcomes remains a critical issue. The limited use of authentic materials, absence of placement testing, and lack of post-course reinforcement reduce long-term retention and instructional alignment. These findings suggest that communicative gains require continuous exposure and contextual practice beyond structured sessions. Future research should investigate the integration of authentic multimedia resources, longitudinal impacts of speaking development, and the role of diagnostic assessment in heterogeneous online classrooms, as well as comparative studies between interactive courses and large-scale MOOCs.

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