

The Influence of The Arabic Curriculum on Students' Motivation and Perception in English Learning

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Abstract

This study investigates the influence of an Arabic-oriented curriculum on students' motivation and perceptions in learning English at a modern Islamic boarding school. English learning in multilingual educational contexts often presents unique challenges, particularly when another foreign language dominates daily instruction. This research aims to explore how the Arabic curriculum shapes students' motivation and perceptions toward English learning. A qualitative case study design was employed. The participants were ten male students of Grade 3 TMI at Al-Ghuroba Modern Islamic Boarding School. Data were collected through questionnaires, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The questionnaire was used to identify students' levels of motivation, while interviews explored students' perceptions and learning experiences. The data were analyzed using descriptive qualitative analysis and thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns and meanings. The findings reveal that most students demonstrate moderate to high motivation in learning English, particularly when learning activities involve vocabulary practice and game-based tasks. These activities make English learning more enjoyable and meaningful for students. However, students still experience difficulties in grammar, translation, and sentence construction. Students' perceptions of the influence of Arabic on English learning vary, indicating that multilingual exposure affects learners differently. Despite these challenges, students generally perceive English as useful for school activities and future opportunities. This study suggests that maintaining interactive learning strategies and providing clearer guidance in challenging areas can enhance English learning in Arabic-oriented educational settings

Keywords: Arabic Curriculum, Student Motivation, Student Perception, English Learning

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Introduction

English has become an essential global language that supports access to knowledge, academic mobility, and international communication. In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts such as Indonesia, students are expected to develop adequate English proficiency to meet educational and professional demands. However, successful language acquisition is influenced not only by instructional quality but also by affective variables, particularly learning motivation. Motivation determines learners' willingness to invest effort, persist in difficulties, and actively participate in language learning activities (Dörnyei, 2019; Ryan & Deci, 2020). Without sufficient motivation, even well-designed instruction may fail to produce meaningful learning outcomes.

The issue of motivation becomes more complex in multilingual educational settings such as Islamic boarding schools (pesantren). These institutions typically implement a curriculum that emphasizes Arabic for religious purposes while also teaching Indonesian and English as academic subjects. Multilingual exposure can theoretically enrich learners' linguistic repertoire; however, it may also create competing priorities that influence students' motivational orientation. Research in multilingual education indicates that when one target language is institutionally dominant, learners often allocate more cognitive and emotional investment to that language, potentially reducing engagement with others (Dörnyei & Al-Hoorie, 2017; Henry, 2019).

In many pesantren contexts, Arabic holds a high symbolic and functional status because of its central role in religious study. Institutional policies often encourage daily Arabic use in both formal instruction and informal communication. While this environment successfully promotes Arabic proficiency, it may unintentionally marginalize English learning. Previous studies have suggested that

students' perception of language relevance strongly shapes their motivational intensity (Lamb, 2017; Papi et al., 2019). When English is perceived as less immediately meaningful than Arabic, students may demonstrate lower intrinsic motivation toward English despite its inclusion in the formal curriculum.

Preliminary observation conducted at the selected Islamic boarding school revealed patterns consistent with this concern. Classroom monitoring indicated that many students showed limited participation during English lessons compared with Arabic sessions. Teacher records suggested that a substantial proportion of students were reluctant to volunteer answers in English classes, and informal interviews revealed that students tended to prioritize Arabic study time. These patterns point to a potential motivational imbalance within the multilingual learning environment and highlight the need for closer investigation.

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) provides a useful theoretical lens for analyzing this issue. SDT distinguishes between intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and amotivation, emphasizing that learners' engagement is strengthened when their needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are supported (Ryan & Deci, 2020). In language education, SDT has been widely used to explain why some learners actively pursue language mastery while others remain disengaged. Al-Hoorie and MacIntyre (2020) argue that motivational quality, not merely motivational quantity, determines sustained language learning behavior. In Arabic-dominant pesantren contexts, the institutional positioning of languages may influence how these psychological needs are fulfilled in English learning.

Several studies in Indonesian EFL settings have examined students' motivation and its relationship with language achievement. For example, Lamb (2017) found that contextual relevance and future vision significantly affect Indonesian students' English motivation. Similarly, Papi et al. (2019) reported that perceived value and learning environment strongly predict motivational persistence in foreign language classrooms. However, most of these studies were conducted in general secondary schools or university settings. Research focusing specifically on motivation dynamics within Islamic boarding schools remains relatively scarce.

Existing pesantren research tends to focus more heavily on Arabic acquisition, religious curriculum integration, or general language policy rather than on the interaction between Arabic dominance and English learning motivation. Studies that do address English in pesantren contexts often describe instructional practices without deeply analyzing students' motivational profiles. Consequently, there is still limited empirical evidence explaining how an Arabic-dominant curriculum influences students' motivation to learn English in Islamic boarding schools.

Addressing this gap is pedagogically important for several reasons. First, many pesantren are expanding their general education programs to prepare students for broader academic and professional pathways that require English competence. Second, understanding students' motivational conditions can help teachers design more balanced multilingual instruction that supports both religious and global language goals. Third, motivation-sensitive pedagogy is particularly crucial in environments where multiple foreign languages compete for students' attention and effort.

Therefore, the present study aims to analyze students' motivation in learning English within an Arabic-dominant curriculum at an Islamic boarding school. By examining students' motivational levels and the factors shaping them, this study seeks to contribute to the growing body of research on multilingual motivation in EFL contexts. The findings are expected to provide practical insights for English teachers, curriculum designers, and pesantren administrators who seek to strengthen students' engagement with English while maintaining the institution's strong Arabic tradition.

Literature Review

a. Motivation in EFL Learning

Motivation has long been recognized as a decisive factor influencing success in foreign language acquisition. It shapes learners' effort, persistence, and strategic engagement throughout the learning process. In EFL contexts, motivated students tend to demonstrate higher participation rates and better language outcomes compared with less motivated peers (Gardner, 2010). Motivation also affects how learners respond to classroom challenges, particularly when dealing with complex skills such as reading and speaking.

Contemporary perspectives view motivation as dynamic and context-sensitive rather than a fixed learner trait. Ushioda (2016) emphasizes that learners' motivation develops through ongoing interaction between individual goals and the surrounding learning environment. This perspective is particularly relevant in multilingual educational settings where learners must distribute their attention across multiple languages. When the learning environment strongly prioritizes one language, students' motivational investment in other languages may decline.

Empirical evidence from EFL classrooms shows that motivational quality significantly predicts learners' engagement and achievement. Noels et al. (2019) found that students who reported higher autonomous motivation demonstrated stronger persistence and strategy use in language learning tasks. Similarly, Boo et al. (2015) highlight that motivation research in second language acquisition increasingly emphasizes psychological processes and contextual influences rather than purely attitudinal factors. These findings suggest the importance of examining motivation within specific institutional contexts such as Islamic boarding schools.

b. Self-Determination Theory in Language Learning

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) provides a robust framework for understanding different types of learning motivation. According to Deci and Ryan (2000), motivation exists along a continuum from intrinsic motivation, through various forms of extrinsic motivation, to amotivation. Intrinsic motivation reflects engagement driven by genuine interest, whereas extrinsic motivation is regulated by external rewards or pressures. The theory further proposes that motivation becomes more self-determined when learners' basic psychological needs are fulfilled.

Within SDT, three psychological needs are central: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Autonomy refers to learners' sense of volitional control, competence involves perceived capability to succeed, and relatedness reflects social connectedness within the learning environment. When these needs are supported, learners tend to demonstrate deeper engagement and more sustained learning behavior (Deci & Ryan, 2000). In contrast, controlling or highly pressured environments may weaken intrinsic motivation and reduce learner persistence.

In the field of language education, SDT has been widely applied to explain variation in students' engagement across different learning contexts. Noels (2013) argues that language classrooms that promote learner autonomy and supportive teacher–student relationships tend to foster more self-determined forms of motivation. Furthermore, Reeve (2012) emphasizes that instructional environments that support autonomy can significantly enhance students' academic motivation and participation. These theoretical insights make SDT particularly suitable for examining English learning motivation in structured and potentially hierarchical settings such as pesantren.

c. Motivation in Multilingual Educational Contexts

Motivation becomes more complex in multilingual learning environments where several languages coexist with different institutional functions. Research in multilingualism suggests that learners often develop differentiated motivational orientations toward each language depending on perceived relevance and contextual support. Mercer and Dörnyei (2020) note that learners' language motivation systems are interconnected and can either reinforce or compete with one another.

In religious boarding school contexts, the sociocultural status of Arabic may strongly shape students' language priorities. When one language is closely tied to identity, religious obligation, or institutional prestige, learners may naturally invest more effort in that language. Ushioda (2016) emphasizes that learners' motivational trajectories are deeply embedded in their sociocultural environment. Therefore, understanding English motivation in pesantren requires attention not only to individual psychology but also to institutional language ecology.

Previous studies in Indonesian Islamic education have mostly examined curriculum structure or language policy rather than students' motivational profiles. While some research acknowledges the strong role of Arabic in pesantren, few studies systematically analyze how this dominance influences students' engagement with English through established motivational frameworks. This limitation indicates the need for more context-sensitive investigation.

Although motivation research in EFL has expanded significantly, several important gaps remain. First, many SDT-based studies have been conducted in general school or university settings, with

limited focus on Islamic boarding schools. Second, existing multilingual motivation research rarely examines the specific interaction between Arabic dominance and English learning motivation in pesantren environments. Third, empirical studies that combine SDT analysis with the unique sociolinguistic ecology of Islamic boarding schools remain scarce. Given the growing role of English in global communication and the continued importance of Arabic in religious education, understanding how students balance their motivational investment across languages is increasingly important. Therefore, the present study investigates students' English learning motivation within an Arabic-dominant pesantren context using Self-Determination Theory as the analytical framework.

Methodology

This study employed a qualitative descriptive design to investigate students' motivation in learning English within an Arabic-dominant Islamic boarding school environment. A qualitative approach was selected because the study aimed to explore students' motivational experiences, perceptions, and contextual influences in depth rather than to test causal relationships. This design allowed the researcher to capture the complexity of motivation as it naturally occurred in the pesantren setting. The research was conducted at an Islamic boarding school in Indonesia during the 2024/2025 academic year. The participants consisted of students who were actively enrolled in the secondary-level English program. Participants were selected using purposive sampling to ensure that they had direct experience learning English within the Arabic-dominant curriculum. The inclusion criteria required that participants (1) were registered students in the pesantren, (2) had studied English for at least one academic semester, and (3) were willing to participate voluntarily in interviews and questionnaire completion. A total of participants meeting these criteria were involved in the study. Prior to data collection, permission was obtained from the school administration, and informed consent was secured from all participants to ensure ethical compliance.

Data were collected using three primary instruments: a motivation questionnaire, semi-structured interviews, and classroom observation. The motivation questionnaire was designed based on the Self-Determination Theory framework, covering indicators of intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and amotivation. The instrument used a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. To ensure content validity, the questionnaire was reviewed by two experts in English education and educational psychology. Revisions were made to improve clarity, relevance, and linguistic appropriateness. The reliability of the questionnaire was examined using Cronbach's alpha, which indicated acceptable internal consistency for the motivation scale. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to obtain deeper insights into students' motivational experiences. An interview guide was developed to explore students' perceptions of English learning, their attitudes toward Arabic and English, and the factors influencing their learning effort. The semi-structured format allowed the researcher to maintain focus while still providing flexibility to probe emerging responses. All interviews were conducted in a language comfortable for participants and were audio-recorded with permission. The recordings were then transcribed verbatim for analysis. Classroom observation was used to capture students' behavioral engagement during English lessons. An observation checklist was developed focusing on participation patterns, responsiveness to teacher prompts, and visible indicators of learning motivation. Field notes were written during each observation session to document classroom dynamics and contextual factors that might influence motivation. The observational data served as triangulation to strengthen the credibility of questionnaire and interview findings.

Data analysis followed a thematic analysis procedure. First, questionnaire data were tabulated to describe overall motivational tendencies. Next, interview transcripts were read repeatedly to achieve familiarization with the data. Initial codes were generated by identifying meaningful units related to motivational constructs. These codes were then grouped into broader themes reflecting intrinsic motivation, extrinsic regulation, and contextual influences within the Arabic-dominant environment. To enhance trustworthiness, coding consistency was checked through peer debriefing with a fellow researcher. Triangulation across questionnaire results, interview data, and classroom observations was conducted to ensure interpretive validity. To maintain research rigor, the study applied several trustworthiness strategies. Credibility was supported through data triangulation and member checking, in which selected participants reviewed summaries of their interview responses. Dependability was addressed by maintaining an audit trail documenting data collection and analysis procedures.

Confirmability was strengthened by keeping reflective notes to minimize researcher bias. Transferability was supported by providing detailed contextual description of the pesantren environment.

Result

Students Experience of Motivation in English Learning

The questionnaire data were collected from ten male students of Grade 3 TMI at Al-Ghuroba Modern Islamic Institution who actively participate in daily Arabic and English language learning activities. The questionnaire consisted of ten Likert-scale items designed to measure students' motivation in learning English.

Table 4.2 : The Classification of Students' Motivation Score

| Classification | Range | Frequency (F) | Percentage (P) |
|----------------|---------|---------------|----------------|
| Very High | 41 – 50 | 1 | 10% |
| High | 31 – 40 | 8 | 80% |
| Fair | 21 – 30 | 1 | 10% |
| Low | 11 – 20 | 0 | 0% |
| Very Low | 1 – 10 | 0 | 0% |
| Total | | 10 | 100% |

Based on the analysis, the total scores for each item ranged from 28 to 40. The highest total score was found in Item 8 (total score = 40), indicating that most students enjoy the process of learning English rather than just focusing on grades. Other items with high scores included Item 7, Item 9, and Item 10 (each with a total score of 37), showing positive attitudes regarding students' satisfaction in understanding vocabulary, their interest in Islamic English texts, and the supportive role of Arabic learning in their English motivation. Meanwhile, Item 1 received the lowest total score (28), suggesting that the motivation to learn English as a tool to understand other subjects is still relatively low compared to other factors.

The classification of students' motivation revealed that one student (10%) reached the Very High motivation category, while the majority, consisting of eight students (80%), fell into the High motivation category. Only one student (10%) was categorized as having Fair motivation, and no students were found in the Low or Very Low categories. Overall, these findings suggest that the students demonstrate high levels of motivation in learning English, indicating a constructive learning environment that supports language development at Al-Ghuroba Modern Islamic Institution.

Students Perception of English Learning

1. English Learning Activities

Based on the interview results, English learning activities at Al-Ghuroba Modern Islamic Institution are generally perceived as enjoyable, although students' experiences vary. Most students described the English lessons as "enjoyable," "quite enjoyable," or "sometimes enjoyable," indicating that the learning atmosphere is relatively positive. Students such as Aswan, Nefarellu, Rafa, and Ainal expressed that English classes were pleasant, suggesting that classroom interactions and learning routines support student engagement.

However, several students reported less positive experiences. Muhammad Attaih, Muh. Nasdin, Safril, and Aditya described English learning as "less enjoyable," "less interesting," or "less exciting." These responses indicate that while English instruction is generally acceptable, not all students experience the same level of enthusiasm. The variation in responses suggests that students' enjoyment is influenced by individual interests, learning preferences, and possibly their confidence in using English.

Some students also described English learning as "sometimes enjoyable" or "quite enjoyable," which reflects a fluctuating learning experience. This implies that enjoyment in English learning at Al-Ghuroba is often activity-dependent rather than consistently experienced across all lessons. When

learning activities are engaging and interactive, students tend to feel more positive; however, when lessons become more demanding or less interactive, their interest may decrease.

2. Interest in English Lesson that Always Waited and Enjoyed

The interview results show that the part of the English lesson most eagerly awaited and enjoyed by students is vocabulary learning activities. Almost all students mentioned vocabulary distribution as the most interesting session because it allows them to learn new words and expand their English knowledge. Students such as Aswan, Muhammad Attaih, Nefarellu, and Muh. Nasdin expressed that learning vocabulary was enjoyable because it helped them gain new vocabulary, which made English learning feel more meaningful and achievable.

Several students also emphasized that vocabulary learning became more enjoyable when it was combined with games or interactive activities. Rafa and Aditya stated that they enjoyed vocabulary sessions because games were involved, making the learning process more fun and less monotonous. This suggests that students are more motivated when learning activities include elements of play, which reduce boredom and increase engagement.

In addition to vocabulary activities, some students expressed interest in interactive classroom interactions such as question-and-answer sessions. Safril and Kane mentioned that they enjoyed asking and answering questions because these activities felt engaging and enjoyable. These responses indicate that students appreciate opportunities to actively participate in the lesson rather than passively receive information. However, not all students showed strong interest in English lessons. Ainal stated that there was no specific part of the English lesson he enjoyed because he did not like English. This response highlights that personal attitudes toward the subject can significantly influence student interest, regardless of the teaching methods used.

3. Confusion and Difficulties in Learning English

The interview findings indicate that all students have experienced confusion or difficulties while learning English. The most commonly reported challenge relates to translation and sentence construction. Many students stated that translating from Indonesian into English was particularly difficult. Students such as Muhammad Attaih, Nefarellu, Ainal, Safril, and Kane mentioned that they often struggled when translating sentences, especially due to differences in vocabulary usage and sentence structure between the two languages.

In addition to translation difficulties, several students reported challenges in arranging or constructing sentences correctly. Aswan and Salman explained that they felt confused when arranging sentences according to grammatical rules. Salman specifically mentioned that grammar made sentence construction more difficult, indicating that understanding and applying grammatical structures remains a major obstacle for students.

Some students also experienced difficulties when they were asked to explain ideas or create sentences independently. Rafa and Aditya stated that they struggled when asked to explain or make sentences, which suggests that productive language skills, particularly speaking and writing, require more support and practice. These difficulties may stem from limited vocabulary mastery and uncertainty about correct grammatical forms.

4. The Influence of The Arabic Lesson on English Learning

Based on the interview results, students have different perceptions regarding the influence of Arabic lessons on their English learning at Al-Ghuroba. Several students stated that their English learning is influenced by their Arabic lessons. Students such as Aswan, Rafa, Muh. Nasdin, and Salman clearly mentioned that Arabic learning affects the way they learn English. This influence may occur because both Arabic and English are foreign languages learned within the same educational environment, which can shape students' learning habits, vocabulary awareness, and language sensitivity.

On the other hand, some students reported that Arabic lessons do not influence their English learning. Muhammad Attaih, Ainal, and Aditya stated that there was no influence, while others such as Nefarellu, Safril, and Kane felt that the influence was minimal or "not really." These responses suggest that not all students experience cross-language effects in the same way.

The varied responses indicate that the influence of Arabic on English learning depends on individual learning experiences and cognitive differences among students. For some students, learning

Arabic may help them become more familiar with learning a foreign language, while for others, English and Arabic are treated as separate subjects with different learning processes.

5. The Situation where English is Useful in Daily Activities

The interview results show that students are able to recognize the usefulness of English in their daily activities at Al-Ghuroba. Most students mentioned that English becomes meaningful when it is used in practical and real situations, especially during school-based activities and competitions. Several students, such as Aswan, stated that English was useful during an English singing competition, while others, including Muhammad Attaih, Rafa, Muh. Nasdin, Salman, and Safril, mentioned speech competitions or speech practice as situations where English was applied.

In addition to speech activities, some students highlighted the use of English during drama performances. Ainal and Aditya explained that they experienced the usefulness of English when participating in drama contests or drama practice. These activities require students to use English in a more expressive and communicative way, which helps them understand the practical function of the language beyond classroom learning.

Kane also mentioned that English was useful during regular lessons, indicating that daily classroom activities contribute to students' awareness of the language's importance. These responses suggest that students perceive English as more valuable when it is connected to performance-based or communicative activities rather than only textbook exercises.

6. Imagining Fluent English and its Changes for Oneself in the Future

Based on the interview results, all students expressed positive views when imagining themselves being fluent in English. Although their responses were brief, they reflected a shared belief that English proficiency could bring meaningful changes to their lives and future. Many students used expressions such as "it would change me," "it would be useful," or "it would be very possible," indicating optimism about the role of English in personal development.

Several students, including Muhammad Attaih, Nefarellu, Salman, Safril, Kane, and Aditya, stated that being fluent in English would "change" them. This suggests that students associate English proficiency with self-improvement, increased confidence, and new opportunities, even if they do not yet clearly articulate specific future goals. Other students, such as Aswan and Muh. Nasdin, believed that fluency in English was "very possible," reflecting a sense of confidence and belief in their potential to master the language.

Ainal described English fluency as "useful," which indicates a practical perspective on the benefits of English. These responses show that students generally perceive English as more than just a school subject; instead, they view it as a valuable skill that can support their future academic or personal aspirations.

7. Favorite Activities in Learning English

The interview results indicate that students have varied preferences regarding English learning activities, reflecting different learning styles and interests. Many students expressed a preference for speaking activities. Students such as Aswan, Rafa, and Kane stated that they enjoyed speaking because it was fun and helped them practice using English actively. Speaking activities were perceived as enjoyable and useful for improving pronunciation and confidence in using the language.

Several other students preferred writing activities. Nefarellu, Muh. Nasdin, and Salman explained that writing helped them understand English better, especially in learning how to write words and sentences correctly. This preference suggests that these students feel more comfortable learning English through structured and individual activities, where they can focus on accuracy and clarity.

Games were also mentioned as a favorite learning activity by several students. Muhammad Attaih, Ainal, Safril, and Aditya stated that learning through games was fun, exciting, and not boring. These responses indicate that game-based learning plays an important role in maintaining students' motivation and reducing learning anxiety. Games make English lessons feel less demanding and more enjoyable, especially for students who may struggle with traditional learning methods.

Overall, the interviews show that students at Al-Ghuroba generally have a positive view of English learning, especially when the activities involve vocabulary, games, or real-life application. However, they still face challenges in translation and sentence construction, and they have mixed opinions about the influence of Arabic. Their awareness of the future benefits of English and their

enthusiasm for interactive activities highlight the importance of designing lessons that are meaningful, motivating, and aligned with students' needs and preferences.

Discussion

Based on the field observation, the English learning process at Al-Ghuroba shows a fairly consistent pattern. The learning activities are conducted in a simple manner, focusing on strengthening daily vocabulary, question-and-answer sessions, and reading exercises. The teacher primarily uses short lectures combined with vocabulary-distribution activities, while communication-based activities such as dialogues or language games are present but not conducted regularly. The classroom atmosphere is generally conducive, yet the level of interaction between the teacher and students varies; some students appear active, while others seem to participate only by following along with minimal engagement.

The observations also indicate that students appear more enthusiastic when the activities involve games or small competitions, whereas during tasks that require translation or sentence construction, some students seem to struggle and lack confidence. These field conditions provide an important foundation for understanding how students' motivation and perceptions are formed through their daily learning experiences.

The findings of this study show that the students at Al-Ghuroba generally have a positive attitude toward learning English, even though most of them fall into the moderate motivation category. This pattern suggests that the students are willing to learn and participate, but they still need consistent encouragement and activities that match their interests. These results reflect the idea in Self-Determination Theory developed by Deci and Ryan that students feel more motivated when learning activities make them feel interested, capable, and involved. Many of the students mentioned that they enjoyed learning vocabulary or joining games in class, which indicates that their motivation grows when the activities are enjoyable rather than when they feel pressured. This is a sign of intrinsic motivation, where learning becomes more meaningful because the activity itself feels engaging.

Students' responses also connect well with the ARCS model by John M. Keller, which explains how attention, relevance, confidence, and satisfaction influence motivation. Activities that involved games and vocabulary learning clearly caught the students' attention, while gaining new vocabulary made the lessons feel more relevant to them. When students experienced success in these tasks, they also felt more confident, which helped strengthen their willingness to learn. This may be one of the reasons why the highest questionnaire scores appeared in items related to enjoyment and confidence.

Even though many students expressed positive feelings toward English, they also shared several challenges they faced, especially with translation, grammar, and sentence construction. These difficulties are common among young learners because these skills require not only memory but also understanding of structure and rules.

Another finding that appeared in the interviews is the different ways students view the influence of Arabic on their English learning. Some felt that Arabic affected the way they learned English, while others felt there was no connection at all. This difference is understandable because the effect of one language on another depends on each student's way of processing language. Since Arabic and English have very different structures, some students might find the differences confusing, while others may separate the two languages completely without feeling any impact.

Students also showed that they understand the usefulness of English in their daily school activities. Many of them gave examples of when they used English during speech contests, singing competitions, or drama practice. When students see English being used in real situations, they tend to value it more because it becomes meaningful and not just a subject to study. This also explains why many of the students believed that being fluent in English would benefit them in the future. Several of them mentioned that English could "change" or "help" them, which shows that they see the language as something important for their personal development.

In terms of learning preferences, the students showed a variety of choices. Some preferred speaking activities because they found them enjoyable and helpful for practicing pronunciation. Others felt more comfortable with writing tasks because writing helped them learn how to spell and structure words correctly. A large number of students preferred games because games made the lessons more lively and helped prevent boredom. These preferences highlight the need for varied teaching methods so that all students can stay motivated and engaged. The students' strong preference for game-based

learning also supports the idea that young learners benefit from interactive and enjoyable classroom activities.

When the interview and questionnaire results are examined together with the students' academic scores, the overall picture of English learning at Al-Ghuroba becomes clearer. The class average score is only 50.5, with most students falling into the low to moderate categories. Students who have positive perceptions and enjoy vocabulary activities tend to achieve higher scores, whereas those who frequently mention difficulties in translation or sentence construction generally have lower scores. When students feel incapable or often confused, their motivation decreases and this affects their academic performance.

Conversely, students who feel that the learning process is enjoyable and relevant demonstrate better academic outcomes. This reinforces the ARCS model by John M. Keller, which states that attention, relevance, and confidence play important roles in producing optimal learning results. In addition, literature on the relationship between curriculum and perception shows that a curriculum that lacks contextualization or interactivity can lead to low scores and negative perceptions. This is evident among students who feel that the lessons are "less interesting" and consequently achieve lower academic outcomes.

Overall, the results of this study suggest that the students at Al-Ghuroba respond well to English learning when the activities are enjoyable, interactive, and connected to their real experiences. While they already show motivation especially in vocabulary learning they still need more support when dealing with grammar and sentence construction. Their motivation is shaped by enjoyment, usefulness, and the opportunities they have to use English in real situations. Based on these findings, English learning at Al-Ghuroba can be strengthened by providing more communicative activities, clearer guidance in grammar, and continued use of engaging strategies such as games and vocabulary-based tasks.

Conclusion

This study was conducted to understand how the implementation of the Arabic curriculum shapes students' motivation and perceptions in learning English at Al-Ghuroba Modern Islamic Boarding School. Starting from the proposal stage, the research was designed to examine whether the strong presence of Arabic in students' daily learning experiences influences their attitudes, challenges, and preferences toward English. Through a qualitative approach supported by questionnaire data and in-depth interviews, this research provides a clearer picture of how students actually experience English learning within a multilingual school environment. The findings show that the students generally demonstrate moderate to high motivation in learning English. They tend to enjoy activities that are interactive and meaningful, particularly vocabulary learning and game-based tasks. These activities help them feel more interested and confident, which aligns with motivational theories suggesting that learners are more engaged when learning feels enjoyable and relevant. At the same time, the study also reveals that students still face notable difficulties, especially in grammar, translation, and sentence construction, indicating the need for more guided and contextualized practice.

Students' perceptions regarding the influence of Arabic on their English learning vary from one student to another, showing that the impact of multilingual exposure is not uniform and largely depends on individual learning experiences. Despite these differences, most students recognize the usefulness of English both in classroom activities and school events, and they believe that fluency in English can positively impact their future. This research concludes that English learning at Al-Ghuroba can be strengthened by maintaining enjoyable and interactive learning strategies, while also providing clearer scaffolding for areas that students find challenging. The insights gained from this research are expected to contribute to better instructional practices and support the development of an English learning environment that is motivating, meaningful, and responsive to students' needs.

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