



## THE COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH ENHANCING SPEAKING SKILL: IMPLEMENTATION IN THE MATRICULATION CLASS OF DARUSSALAM GONTOR UNIVERSITY

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### Abstract

**Background:** Arabic learning at Islamic Religious Colleges focuses on speaking proficiency, but matriculation students often face obstacles when adapting. To overcome this, communicative methods are needed that emphasize active interaction and practical language practice, both in the classroom and in the dormitory. **Research Objectives:** This study aims to reveal the effectiveness of applying communicative methods in improving Arabic speaking skills among matriculation class students at Darussalam Gontor University. **Methodology:** This research employs a qualitative approach with a case study design. Data were collected through observation and semi-structured interviews. Informants were selected purposively and consisted of the language development directorate, lecturers, tutors, students, and dormitory managers. The data were analyzed systematically to understand the implementation process and its impact on students' speaking abilities. **Results:** The findings indicate that the application of communicative methods improves students' Arabic speaking skills and encourages active participation throughout the learning process. Students become more confident in using Arabic in classroom interaction and daily communication. Supporting elements such as the language environment, daily vocabulary programs, and learning motivation strengthen the effectiveness of the method. However, several challenges appear, particularly the heterogeneous educational backgrounds of students which influence their initial language proficiency. **Unique Contribution:** This study provides empirical insight into how communicative methods function in an intensive language environment that integrates classroom learning with dormitory-based language practice. The research highlights the role of institutional language policies and daily vocabulary programs in supporting communicative language learning. **Conclusion:** The study confirms that a consistently implemented communicative approach can increase students' confidence and improve Arabic speaking skills naturally. Continuous interaction and contextual language use play a central role in developing students' oral proficiency. **Recommendations:** Educational institutions should design Arabic language curricula that integrate communicative learning strategies with a structured language environment. Institutions should also provide consistent speaking practice, vocabulary enrichment programs, and motivational support to accommodate students with diverse educational backgrounds.

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#### Keywords:

Communicative Approach; Speaking Skill; Matriculation Class; Darussalam Gontor University.

## Introduction

Low participation in Arabic speaking activities remains a persistent problem in many matriculation classrooms. While many students possess adequate vocabulary and basic grammatical knowledge, they frequently hesitate to express ideas orally during learning activities. This condition often occurs in foreign language classrooms where students understand linguistic forms but lack and increases students' confidence while providing more opportunities for active communication in the target language. Research shows that speaking proficiency is influenced not only by linguistic competence but also by classroom interactions and communicative activities that facilitate the use of language in meaningful contexts.<sup>1</sup> In the matriculation class of Darussalam Gontor University, this situation becomes more visible because novice learners are adapting to a rigorous academic and linguistic environment. Some students actively seek opportunities to speak and engage in classroom interaction, while others remain silent even when they understand the material. This gap indicates that linguistic competence alone does not automatically lead to active oral communication, because effective speaking development requires interactive learning environments that stimulate real communication among learners.<sup>2</sup>

This study examines how far the communicative approach influences students' speaking development and classroom interaction in language learning can enhance Arabic speaking skills in the beginner class at Darussalam Gontor University. The communicative approach emphasizes meaningful interaction, authentic communication, and student participation as central elements in language learning.<sup>3</sup> Prior research shows that communicative language teaching improves students' speaking performance through learning activities such as role playing, discussion, and pair work that reflect real communication situations.<sup>4</sup>

Through such communicative tasks, students receive more opportunities to practice speaking, negotiate meaning, and build confidence in using the target language.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, this study focuses on how communicative learning activities affect students' willingness to communicate (WTC) and their active participation in classroom interaction and the development of their oral expression. The paper also

<sup>1</sup> Ibragimova Iroda Artikmashrabovna, "Functions of Language Tools," *World Bulletin of Social Sciences* 9 (April 2022), <https://scholarexpress.net/index.php/wbss/article/view/812>; Radinsa Yola Candadila and Desi Puspitasari, "Communicative Language Teaching (CLT): A Strategy to Enhance Students' Speaking Skills and Motivation," *Aisyah Journal of English Language Teaching (AIJELT)* 4, no. 1 (2025), <https://journal.aisyahuniversity.ac.id/index.php/AIJELT/article/view/1995>.

<sup>2</sup> Muhammad Yusuf Salam and Yovan Luksfinanto, "A Comprehensive Review of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in Modern Classrooms," *Lingeduca: Journal of Language and Education Studies* 3, no. 1 (2024): 58–70, <https://doi.org/10.70177/lingeduca.v3i1.1338>.

<sup>3</sup> Nurul Kamaliah and Rahmati, "The Effect of Communicative Language Teaching on Students' Speaking Skills: A Systematic Literature Review," *Jurnal Eksperimental : Media Ilmiah Pendidikan* 14, no. 2 (2025), <https://journal.stitalhilalsigli.ac.id/index.php/eksperimental/article/view/725>.

<sup>4</sup> Achmad Basir, "Students' Speaking Skills through Communicative Language Teaching," *BATARA DIDI : English Language Journal* 3, no. 1 (2024): 1–12, <https://doi.org/10.56209/badi.v3i1.97>.

<sup>5</sup> Lely Khusnul Khowatim et al., "The Effectiveness of Using Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) Techniques on Students' Speaking Skill," *Journal of Research in Foreign Language Teaching (JRFLT)* 3, no. 2 (2022), <https://journal.unipdu.ac.id/index.php/jr/article/view/3310>.

examines how classroom practices, interaction patterns, and learning tasks shape students' engagement in speaking activities. Through this investigation, This study seeks to explore how the use of the communicative approach facilitates the development of Arabic speaking skills among beginner-level university students.

Therefore, in foreign or second language instruction, speaking should be prioritised as the primary skill to develop. In the Indonesian context, Arabic language learning has historically prioritized grammatical knowledge and reading ability over active communication. The main objective of language education is to develop learners' communicative competence in the target language and to strengthen their ability to use the language effectively in communication. communicative competence instead of merely expanding their knowledge of linguistic structures.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, speaking should be prioritized in foreign and second language instruction because acts as an important factor in developing language proficiency and supporting effective communication.<sup>7</sup> The The main goal of language education is to develop learners' ability to use the language effectively, rather than simply increasing their theoretical understanding of it, particularly in expressing ideas fluently and accurately in real communicative contexts.<sup>8</sup> The goal of language instruction is to develop communicative competence, which includes linguistic, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competencies related to speaking ability.<sup>9</sup> With greater emphasis on speaking, learners can communicate more effectively in actual situations and use the language in meaningful contexts, as speaking facilitates the practical application of language knowledge in authentic situations is considered a fundamental skill for interaction and social engagement.<sup>10</sup>

The primary aim of Communicative Language Teaching is to develop students' communicative competence. To reach this goal, several core features appear in teacher–student interaction during communicative classroom activities.<sup>11</sup> Applying in the classroom should be taken into account. Classroom applications should be

<sup>6</sup> Muhammad Fariq Heemal Attruk, "The Development of Speaking Skills in Arabic Language Learning in Indonesia: A Literature Review," *EDUCATUM: Scientific Journal of Education* 3, no. 3 (2025): 104–11, <https://doi.org/10.59165/educatum.v3i3.193>.

<sup>7</sup> 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>.

<sup>8</sup> Sugirma Sugirma et al., "Analysis of Speaking Skill Learning Difficulties in Students of the Arabic Language Education Study Program at State Islamic Institute," *Arabiyatuna: Jurnal Bahasa Arab* 8, no. 2 (2024): 579–96, <https://doi.org/10.29240/jba.v8i2.10903>.

<sup>9</sup> M. Dzikrul Hakim Al Ghozali et al., "Developing a Model for Teaching Speaking Skills Based on Cooperative and Contextual Learning," *IJ-ATL (International Journal of Arabic Teaching and Learning)* 7, no. 2 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.33650/ijat.v7i2.6740>.

<sup>10</sup> Amar Faryat, "Developing Speaking Skills in Arabic Learners Who Are Non-Native Speakers: A Descriptive and Analytical Study," *Journal of Arabic Language Learning and Teaching (JALLT)* 3, no. 1 (2025): 69–88, <https://doi.org/10.23971/jallt.v3i1.290>.

<sup>11</sup> Yuyan Zhao, "An Analysis of Communicative Language Teaching Approach Based on the International Researches," paper presented at 2022 3rd International Conference on Language, Art and Cultural Exchange (ICLACE 2022), 2022, <https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.220706.010>.



carefully considered, as CLT is a pedagogical framework that aligns with student-centered approaches.<sup>12</sup>

Historically, CLT emerged from linguists' dissatisfaction with traditional methods that emphasized rote grammar memorization. This method emerged in the 1970s. At that time, the strong emphasis on grammar in language teaching was widely questioned because language proficiency was understood to involve more than grammatical competence alone.<sup>13</sup> This approach is widely considered an effective framework for fostering learners' communicative competence in various global contexts.<sup>14</sup>

The communicative method is considered one of the most appropriate approaches for teaching speaking skills because it emphasises students' creativity during practice and learning activities. Through this approach, learners receive greater opportunities to speak and actively use the language in communication.<sup>15</sup> This approach is considered the most effective for improving speaking skills in Arabic and has a positive impact on the speaking skills of both introverted and extroverted students.<sup>16</sup> It emphasizes language mastery over grammatical structure and provides constructive feedback before errors become fossilized. This approach helps learners express themselves more naturally in the target language and maintains their engagement in authentic communication to strengthen their communicative abilities.<sup>17</sup>

Every Arabic language education institution needs to address the issue of students' basic skills. Universities with Arabic language departments should prioritize this, as Arabic proficiency is a core competency for graduates, particularly in Islamic universities that use Arabic as the medium of instruction and daily communication. This is especially evident in Islamic universities where Arabic serves as the medium of instruction and daily communication. Mastery of teaching methodology is very important, but this must begin with fulfilling Arabic language competency first in implementing policies that require the use of Arabic as a

<sup>12</sup> Mohammad Abraham Akbar Eisenring and Margana Margana, "The Importance of Teacher – Students Interaction in Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)," *PRASASTI: Journal of Linguistics* 4, no. 1 (2019): 46, <https://doi.org/10.20961/prasasti.v4i1.17052>.

<sup>13</sup> Jack C. Richards, *Communicative Language Teaching Today* (Cambridge University Press, 2006).

<sup>14</sup> Arzu Babayeva, "Successfully Overcoming Challenges in the Process of Implementing Communicative Approach to Teaching English Language," *Ancient Land* 5, no. 6 (2023): 11–16, <https://doi.org/10.36719/2706-6185/24/11-16>.

<sup>15</sup> Sulton Firdaus, "Arabic Speaking Skill Learning Using the Experiential Learning Theory-Based Learning Model and Its Role in Learning Model Development | Ta'lim Mahārat al-Kalām 'alā Ḍaw' Nazariyyat al-Ta'allum al-Tajrībī Wa-Tawzīfuhā Fī l'dād Namūdhaj Ta'līmihā," *Al-Ta'rib : Jurnal Ilmiah Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Arab IAIN Palangka Raya* 12, no. 1 (2024): 189–202, <https://doi.org/10.23971/altarib.v12i1.7353>.

<sup>16</sup> La Ode Nggawu and Nguyen Thi Phuong Thao, "The Impact of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) Approach on Students' Speaking Ability in a Public Indonesian University: Comparison between Introverts and Extrovert Groups," *International Journal of Language Education* 7, no. 3 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.26858/ijole.v7i3.50617>.

<sup>17</sup> Maha Sourani et al., "Exploring the Challenges of the Communicative Language Teaching Approach in the EFL Context of Arab Learners," *Teaching English Language (IR)* 17, no. 2 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.22132/tel.2024.427424.1535>.

mandatory language at the university. The Arabic language learning process at this institution applies the communicative approach.<sup>18</sup> In CLT, one instructional solution for promoting target language use in large EFL classrooms is to engage learners in meaningful tasks such as information-gap activities and role play exercises.<sup>19</sup>

Authentic communication, learner participation, and real-world language use are prioritized by CLT above grammar-focused instruction and rote memorization. However, pedagogical principles, Teacher training and educational environmental conditions serve an important role in the successful application of this framework.<sup>20</sup> It is a common misconception that most teachers use the method of memorizing material from textbooks and guidance centers, despite the emphasis on the importance of having good communication skills in Arabic and the efforts of some teachers to use a communicative approach in teaching the language.

Differences in language proficiency arise from variations in educational backgrounds. Alumni students are generally familiar with learning environments that emphasize the development of Arabic language skills, whereas non-alumni students often need additional time to adapt to such conditions. Students' basic Arabic language skills are often a problem at the beginning of their studies, due to their different educational backgrounds. While learners from Islamic boarding schools are generally more fluent, those from general or vocational secondary schools often lack foundational Arabic skills. This condition reflects a frequent challenge encountered by many Islamic boarding schools, when emphasis on the content of the activity, than on overt language learning, which involves focusing on the subject matter and using language as a tool to access understand and communicate the content. Implicit language acquisition, engages learners and develops transferable skills.<sup>21</sup>

The Communicative Approach is implemented to meet students' communicative needs, with curriculum, learner needs, and facilities supporting its use in orientation classes at Darussalam Gontor University. This approach views the main function of language as communication. This means that Arabic teaching materials must be practical and pragmatic, i.e., materials that are commonly used and can be communicated by students both spoken and written.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Elyatul Mu'awanah et al., "Analyzing the Historical Traces of Arabic Language Education as a Basis for Developing Innovative Learning Approaches in the Era of Society 5.0," *Al-Lisan* 10, no. 1 (2025): 85–100, <https://doi.org/10.30603/al.v10i1.5822>.

<sup>19</sup> Approach Akhmedjanova Farida Djavairovna, "Communicative Language Teaching," *Oriental Renaissance: Innovative, Educational, Natural and Social Sciences* 2, no. 1 (2022), <https://oriens.uz/en/journal/article/communicative-language-teaching-approach/>.

<sup>20</sup> Angelie Caparida et al., "Evaluating the Challenges and Opportunities in Implementing Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in Filipino Primary Schools: A Paper Review," *International Multidisciplinary Journal of Research for Innovation, Sustainability, and Excellence (IMJRISE)* 2, no. 4 (2025), <https://risejournals.org/index.php/imjrise/article/view/1069>.

<sup>21</sup> Sijia Wang, "The Evaluation of Communicative Language Teaching," *Scientific Journal of Technology* 7, no. 3 (2025): 289–93, <https://doi.org/10.54691/h7g4e498>.

<sup>22</sup> Dita Puspita Dewi et al., "Analysis of Arab-Islamic Cultural Integration in Arabic Language Teaching Materials Based on Book *Idā'at Li Mu'allimi Al-Lughah Al-'arabīyah Li Ghayr Al-Nāṭiqīn Bihā*," *Abjadia: International Journal of Education* 10, no. 3 (2025): 595–610, <https://doi.org/10.18860/abj.v10i3.33399>.

Faculty members continuously develop various methods to help students close the gap between competence and performance. Lecturers attend workshops and language training courses to refine their grasp of communicative methodologies. This exposure allows them to gain a clearer understanding of pedagogical intent, ensuring they consciously select certain methods based on situational needs rather than following a rigid syllabus.

Furthermore, The process of learning and acquiring English is often hindered by a lack of confidence and anxiety when speaking a second language.<sup>23</sup> Limited opportunities for speaking practice in daily life, along with students' preference for using their native language in class, further hinder the development of effective communication skills.<sup>24</sup>

Some linguists contend that an individual's language proficiency is solely determined by their vocabulary mastery. Enhancing Arabic language learning in educational institutions requires innovative strategies and appropriate instructional approaches by lecturers to achieve effective learning outcomes.<sup>25</sup> Speaking skills require consistent practice so that students become accustomed to using Arabic in their daily routines and gradually internalize the language for effective interpersonal communication.<sup>26</sup>

In fact, several factors support the integration of communicative methods in language instruction particularly in developing Arabic speaking skills. Given this significance, the research seeks to identify and examine how Arabic is taught in matriculation classes and how the communicative approach improves students' Arabic speaking skills.<sup>27</sup> Based on the background above, this study addresses three main questions: how Arabic speaking skills are taught in matriculation classes at Darussalam Gontor University, what supporting and inhibiting factors affect the teaching process, and how the communicative approach contributes to improving students' Arabic speaking skills.

This study reviewed six journal articles as prior research related to Arabic language teacher identity. Thoriq and colleagues conducted a study using a t-test and reported that e-Arabic learning media significantly enhanced students'

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<sup>23</sup> Gautama Veri Vetiana, "The Role of the Center for Language Improvement in Enhancing Speaking Skills of The Class One of The Modern Islamic Boarding School Darussalam Gontor at The Girls' Second Campuss (Ar)," *Al-Ta'rib : Jurnal Ilmiah Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Arab IAIN Palangka Raya* 7, no. 2 (2019): 111–20, <https://doi.org/10.23971/altarib.v7i2.1518>.

<sup>24</sup> Suaibatul Aslamiah Ishak and Azlina Abdul Aziz, "Role Play to Improve ESL Learners' Communication Skills: A Systematic Review," *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences* 12, no. 10 (2022): Pages 884-892, <https://doi.org/10.6007/IJARBS/v12-i10/14851>.

<sup>25</sup> Rahmat Hidayat et al., "Effectiveness of the Station Rotation Blended Learning Model in Mastering Mufradat," *Arabiyatuna: Jurnal Bahasa Arab* 9, no. 1 (2025): 133–48, <https://doi.org/10.29240/jba.v9i1.12431>.

<sup>26</sup> Mohammad H. Al-khresheh et al., "The Efficiency of Using Pictures in Teaching Speaking Skills of Non-Native Arabic Beginner Students," *Universal Journal of Educational Research* 8, no. 3 (2020): 872–78, <https://doi.org/10.13189/ujer.2020.080318>.

<sup>27</sup> Nanda Intan Kholifiana Kholifia et al., "Enhancing Arabic Speaking Skills: The Potential of Gamification in Reducing Language Anxiety," *Arabiyatuna: Jurnal Bahasa Arab* 9, no. 1 (2025): 289–306, <https://doi.org/10.29240/jba.v9i1.12217>.

language skills and was highly suitable for classroom instruction.<sup>28</sup> Ibrahim and Tama's study found the Arabic preparatory program conducted at Ummul Quro Al-Islamy Islamic Boarding School was developed by adapting a learning model from Umm Al-Qura University. The program has been implemented for several months and is delivered in the boarding school setting for tenth-grade high school students.<sup>29</sup>

Furthermore, Mislawiyadi explored the practical implications of CLT approach at Ibrahimy University, and emphasizes student-centered learning and authentic communications, suggesting that these factors enhance speaking proficiency in academic and professional settings.<sup>30</sup> The results of Muammar's research investigate a communicative teaching model's effectiveness in primary education, and Findings suggest the model is practical, effective, and validated by experts, fostering positive classroom environments and enhancing language skills.<sup>31</sup>

Another similar study states that the communicative method builds a positive atmosphere in the classroom, where both students and teachers accept the approach favorably. Moreover, these methods improve students' international communication skills and increase student enthusiasm.<sup>32</sup> These findings indicate integrating the communicative approach into the Arabic curriculum and teaching strategies to improve learning effectiveness and relevance.<sup>33</sup>

There is a lack of specific focus on matriculation classes in current research. Most existing studies tend to address broad educational contexts rather than examining matriculation programs, which function as a critical transitional phase before students enter higher education. This gap limits our understanding of how specialized instructional programs can effectively address the distinctive academic and linguistic needs of matriculating students.

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<sup>28</sup> Muhammad Ahsan Thoriq et al., "The Development of Innovative Arabic Matriculation Learning Media Based on Google Sites to Improve The Arabic Proficiency of MAN 1 Pasuruan Students," *Jurnal Al-Azhar Indonesia Seri Humaniora* 8, no. 2 (2023): 154, <https://doi.org/10.36722/sh.v8i2.1898>.

<sup>29</sup> Moh Ibrahim and Abbas Mansur Tamam, "Arabic Language Matriculation Program for High School Tenth Grade Students Based on Boarding School (A Case Study of Ummul Quro al-Islamy Islamic Boarding School)," *Intiqad: Jurnal Agama Dan Pendidikan Islam* 15, no. 2 (2023): 444–62, <https://doi.org/10.30596/17550>.

<sup>30</sup> Mislawiyadi Mislawiyadi, "Using a Communicative Approach to Teaching Speaking Skills at Ibrahimy University," *Jurnal Multidisiplin Ibrahimy* 1, no. 1 (2023): 36–52, <https://doi.org/10.35316/jummy.v1i1.3536>.

<sup>31</sup> Muammar Muammar et al., "Developing Communicative-Based Instructional Model Of Speaking Skill In Elementary School," *Al-Bidayah: Jurnal Pendidikan Dasar Islam* 12, no. 2 (2021): 199–220, <https://doi.org/10.14421/al-bidayah.v12i2.588>.

<sup>32</sup> Desi Qoriah and Ghaida Farisyah, "Communicative Language Teaching (Clt) Method Combined with Total Physical Response (Tpr) Method on Upgrading Communication Skill on English Laboratory," *Journal Civics and Social Studies* 6, no. 2 (2022): 120–29, <https://doi.org/10.31980/civicos.v6i2.2319>.

<sup>33</sup> Isop Syafei et al., "The Communicative Approach in Arabic Language Learning (Theoretical and Practical Perspectives)," *Gunung Djati Conference Series* 55, no. 1 (2025), <https://conferences.uinsgd.ac.id/index.php/gdcs/article/view/2906>.

Furthermore, there is limited integration of teaching approaches with contextual themes. While the literature addresses various teaching methodologies, there is insufficient exploration of how these approaches are tailored to align with local cultural and educational contexts, especially in Indonesia. The focus generally remains on theoretical frameworks without in-depth analysis of their applicability within specific educational environments.

Practical implementation challenges remain insufficiently explored in the existing literature. Although numerous studies have discussed the theoretical basis of CLT, in-depth empirical research on its implementation across varied educational contexts remains limited. This gap is particularly evident in Islamic boarding school-based higher education institutions, such as Darussalam Gontor University, where unique sociocultural, linguistic, and institutional characteristics may significantly influence how CLT is enacted in practice.

Similarly, studies in Indonesian contexts reveal persistent challenges including teacher readiness, cultural mismatch, and unequal student proficiency levels. Even in Islamic boarding school settings, existing research tends to emphasize effectiveness rather than critically examining implementation barriers.<sup>34</sup> Therefore, The originality of this study is based on its emphasis on examining Islamic boarding school based university, i.e., Gontor, and matriculation or preparatory phase, which is rarely addressed and detailed exploration of practical implementation challenges, rather than merely theoretical discussion or outcome measurement.

This study helps bridge the gap between theory and practice by providing a context-based analysis of CLT implementation. Despite longstanding debates, CLT remains highly relevant, particularly in contexts like Gontor. Contemporary studies consistently affirm that CLT plays a crucial role in developing communicative competence, learner engagement, and real-life language use.

In Islamic higher education, where traditional grammar-translation approaches still dominate, CLT offers a necessary shift toward communicative and functional language use. Moreover, empirical evidence from Indonesian Islamic boarding schools shows that CLT significantly improves students' speaking abilities through interactive activities including activities like role-playing exercises and group discussions. However, ongoing implementation challenges, including cultural expectations, institutional limitations, and differences in student proficiency, indicate that CLT needs to be adapted to its context rather than applied directly. Therefore, CLT remains relevant in the Gontor setting because it (1) supports the development of communicative competence, particularly in Arabic learning, (2) responds to the weaknesses of grammar-centered teaching, (3) fits the immersive language environment of the boarding school system, and (4) offers a flexible approach that can be adjusted to local pedagogical and cultural conditions.

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<sup>34</sup> Selamat Husni Hasibuan et al., "Communicative Language Teaching: Improving EFL Students' Speaking Skills in an Indonesian Islamic Boarding School Context," *Journal of Communication in Scientific Inquiry (JCSI)* 3, no. 2 (2021), <https://ejournal.unimap.edu.my/index.php/jcsi/article/view/1073>.

## Method

This study uses a qualitative case study design to deliver a detailed and in-depth description and analysis of the phenomenon.<sup>35</sup> Qualitative research is particularly suitable for exploring complex educational environments through naturalistic approaches.<sup>36</sup> The researcher selected the students of the Matriculation Class conducted at the Darussalam Gontor University. The research site was selected for its relevance and accessibility. This study aims to examine strategies to improve speaking skills and develop the professional identity of Arabic language learners.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and participatory observation focusing on the implementation of communicative methods, the learning process, and the use of an Arabic language environment in matriculation classes at the University of Darussalam Gontor. Primary data were collected from 12 key informants who were directly involved in the matriculation program. The participants were purposively selected to represent a comprehensive view of the program, including: (1) the Director of the Directorate of Language Development; (2) the lecturer of Arabiyah Bayna Yadayk; (3) the lecturer of Durusulughah; (4) the lecturer of Al-Qur'an Tajwid; (5) the lecturer of Maharotul Qiroah; (6–7) two dormitory administrators; (8–10) three matriculation students; and (11–12) two alumni of the matriculation program.

Participants were selected using snowball sampling to ensure they had relevant experience knowledge. The data collection process lasted three months. This period allowed the researcher to conduct in-depth interviews, classroom observations, and data validation. Participants were selected by applying a snowball sampling method, with special focus on individuals who failed to have a background in Arabic language education to obtain a range of different perspectives. In addition, Secondary data were collected from brochures and relevant literature related to the research topic. Primary data were collected through direct observation during matriculation classes, focusing on the learning environment and instructional processes, as well as through in-depth semi-structured interviews at the University of Darussalam Gontor. Data analysis was conducted qualitatively through several stages, including data collection, coding, and categorization based on strategies applied in Arabic language development.<sup>37</sup>

Data reduction was used to select key information from informants. The data were then coded and categorized to organize findings from interviews and documentation. The analysis focused on identifying strategies for developing Arabic language teachers' professional identity, while data validity was ensured through credibility and transferability.

<sup>35</sup> Brylialfi Wahyu Furidha, "Comprehension of the Descriptive Qualitative Research Method: A Critical Assessment of the Literature," *Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*, January 12, 2024, 1–8, <https://doi.org/10.56943/jmr.v2i4.443>.

<sup>36</sup> Weng Marc Lim, "What Is Qualitative Research? An Overview and Guidelines," *Australasian Marketing Journal* 33, no. 2 (2025): 199–229, <https://doi.org/10.1177/14413582241264619>.

<sup>37</sup> Prokopis A. Christou, "How to Use Thematic Analysis in Qualitative Research," *Journal of Qualitative Research in Tourism* 3, no. 2 (2022): 79–95, <https://doi.org/10.4337/jqrt.2023.0006>.

## Result and Discussion

### Implementation of Arabic Speaking Skills Learning through a Communicative Approach at Matriculation Classes as Beginner

The focus on matriculation classes in this study is grounded in their strategic role as a transitional phase for students entering higher education at Darussalam Gontor University. As highlighted in the introduction, matriculation programs are designed to bridge disparities in students' prior educational backgrounds, particularly in Arabic language proficiency. Many students come from diverse schooling systems with varying levels of exposure to Arabic, which directly affects their speaking ability. Therefore, the matriculation stage serves as a critical period for establishing foundational communicative competence, especially in speaking skills. Investigating the implementation of a communicative approach at this level is essential, as it provides insights into how early pedagogical interventions can address gaps in oral proficiency and support students' readiness for subsequent academic demands.

The term "matriculation" refers to the equalization of knowledge aimed at students who lack sufficient scientific foundations to attend lectures; it serves as a mechanism to prepare and verify students' basic linguistic knowledge.<sup>38</sup> Matriculation is a learning program for new students that aims to equalize the competencies of students with different educational backgrounds to facilitate their future lectures, and support in encouraging the continuous development of Arabic language skills.<sup>39</sup> At Darussalam Gontor University, the educational backgrounds of new students vary greatly each year. (*Observation 1 July 2025*)

This disparity significantly impacts students' initial comprehension and basic abilities. Alumni of Islamic boarding schools and madrasas generally possess a basic foundation in Arabic, although it is often insufficient for advanced academic discourse. Conversely, graduates of general and vocational high schools frequently have no prior exposure to Arabic. The exception is for those who have taken Arabic courses before college and are graduates of Modern Darussalam Gontor Boarding School. (*Interview 8 July 2025*)

To achieve optimal results in foreign language communication, there is a close relationship with five supporting factors: (1) the professional competence of teaching staff, (2) students' foundational Arabic competencies, (3) the availability of adequate reference books, (4) the use of learning media, and (5) the clarity of learning objectives.

Arabic language learning in Indonesia has improved through the adoption of the communicative approach. Arabic is a skill-based discipline that requires environmental adaptation; relying solely on linguistic theory is insufficient to

<sup>38</sup> Nina Afrida et al., "The Role of 'Matriculation' as Influential Factor Contributing to the Students' English Performance," *ELITE Journal* 1, no. 2 (2019), <https://elitejournal.org/index.php/ELITE/article/view/24>.

<sup>39</sup> Muhammad Jundi and Renni Hasibuan, "Enhancing Arabic Language Proficiency among Students: A Case Study of Language Matriculation Strategies at Al-Hasyimiyah Darul Ulum Sipaho Islamic Boarding School," *Kilmatuna: Journal Of Arabic Education* 3, no. 2 (2023): 114–29, <https://doi.org/10.55352/pba.v3i2.619>.

improve students' oral proficiency. Linguistic theory is not sufficient to improve students' Arabic language skills, especially speaking ability. Through the communicative approach, learning objectives, curriculum design, classroom activities, teacher and student roles, learning materials, and the Arabic language environment collectively support a shift from structural language learning to functional language use.<sup>40</sup> Therefore, to achieve these objectives, it is expected that education administrators, including schools, madrasahs, Islamic boarding schools, and especially universities with an Islamic boarding school system, must carefully attend to these factors.

According to the analysis of Roziqi, ineffective instruction often arises from students' low proficiency in speaking Arabic and their difficulty in expressing themselves orally. Several factors contribute to this problem, including the use of inappropriate instructional methods such as the *al-Qawā'id wa al-Tarjamah* (grammar–translation) method, lecture-based instruction, and reading-focused activities. In addition, the use of monotonous and limited teaching strategies reduces student engagement. The situation is further aggravated when teachers are unable to apply varied and enjoyable learning methods, which results in classrooms where teachers dominate the learning process while students remain passive.<sup>41</sup>

Therefore, instructors are expected to utilize communicative methods to internalize lesson material, carefully select teaching resources, and encourage students to form peer groups that prioritize active communication. This collaborative approach allows students to more quickly achieve the communicative objectives formulated by the institution.

This approach is based on the goal of enabling students to develop communication skills by applying Arabic in different situations and contexts. With this approach, it is hoped that someone learning Arabic can use patterns that are appropriate to the demands of specific situations and conditions. "The learning approach focuses on how to teach or how to make it easy for students to learn and be motivated by their own desire to learn what is actualized in the curriculum according to the needs of the students. Furthermore, Taufiqurrachman, This study embedding how environmental values in Arabic language teaching practices and highlights their important role in developing students' environmental awareness.<sup>42</sup>

A communicative approach in the language learning process particularly for Arabic—places high demands on instructors. Active communication fosters a learner's spirit, especially in *muhadassah* (conversation) sessions, enabling

<sup>40</sup> Nuriana Irfan, "Literature Study of Communicative Approaches in Arabic Learning," *Al-Lughah: Jurnal Bahasa* 11, no. 1 (2022): 16, <https://doi.org/10.29300/lughah.v11i1.6448>.

<sup>41</sup> Muhammad Ainur Roziqi et al., "Mapping Of Strategies And Methods For Learning Arabic Speaking Skills," *Ijaz Arabi Journal of Arabic Learning* 8, no. 1 (2025), <https://doi.org/10.18860/ijazarabi.v8i1.26939>.

<sup>42</sup> Raden Taufiqurrochman, "Linking Environmental Education and Arabic Language Teaching: Curriculum Analysis of Madrasa and Pesantren in Indonesia," *Studia Ecologiae et Bioethicae* 23, no. 2 (2025): 73–85, <https://doi.org/10.21697/seb.5845>.



meaningful interaction even through simple expressions.<sup>43</sup> The mastery and application of various methods are essential; professional educators strive to understand their students' cognitive and emotional states, ensuring that lessons align with their level of understanding. Professional teachers/lecturers always strive to understand the condition of their students, whether they have understood and can practice what has been conveyed, whether they have undergone the learning process, whether the lessons are in accordance with their (students') level of understanding, as well as In the Arabic language learning process, attention is given to how well students master the learning materials. It also emphasizes the importance of applying learning principles that recognize learners as individuals with diverse characteristics, enabling active and dynamic communicative interaction in Arabic learning.

Furthermore, Noor Mala Ibrahim explains that a key characteristic of communicative language learning is its systematic focus on both the functional and structural aspects of language, involving two essential dimensions : (1) the formulation of skill objectives that move beyond isolated language structures to include the ability to connect these structures to communication functions within specific social contexts; and (2) the implementation of learning activities that promote automaticity and spontaneity in language use.<sup>44</sup>

Based on the two dimensions above, it can be understood that proficiency in language use In real communication contexts, the capability to use language appropriately in communication is more important for students than merely understanding grammatical rules, as emphasized in the structural approach. Therefore, the communicative approach prioritizes meaningful language use in authentic situations. facilitates a shift from a structural to a functional paradigm, where language is primarily regarded as a means of communication and action and the expression of meaning rather than a collection of disparate elements.

Thus, the use of language for specific purposes, such as greeting, apologizing, advising, praising, or conveying a specific message, occurs in communication activities. The student-oriented nature of CLT does not diminish the importance of the teacher; rather, the instructor functions as a facilitator, a manager of group processes, and a counselor. (*Interview: August 03, 2025*)

Communicative competence is a key element of professional competence and training. It combines social, psychological, pedagogical, reflective, and interpersonal abilities that enable individuals to communicate effectively within professional teams and achieve shared goals. This competence develops through structured communication practice, such as simulated communicative situations and training activities that strengthen self-confidence, assertiveness, and social engagement.

<sup>43</sup> Ervin Jauharoh et al., "The Use of Expressions in Improving Kalam Skill in Learning Arabic for MTSN 2 Kediri Students," *Asalibuna* 5, no. 02 (2021): 53–61, <https://doi.org/10.30762/asalibuna.v5i02.586>.

<sup>44</sup> Ghazi Mohammad Takal et al., "Communicative Language Teaching in Public Universities in Afghanistan: Perceptions and Challenges," *Theory and Practice in Language Studies* 11, no. 11 (2021): 1434–44, <https://doi.org/10.17507/tpis.1111.11>.

Communicative competence consists of several components: cognitive, regulatory, and reflective. The cognitive component involves professional knowledge, communication strategies, rhetorical techniques, and reflective listening skills. The regulatory component refers to the ability to manage dialogue, persuade others, adjust communication strategies, and respond appropriately in different situations. The reflective component involves self-awareness, awareness of one's role and available resources, and the capability to respond to changing communication contexts.

The development of communicative competence is closely linked to personal qualities such as empathy, self-control, reflexivity, and assertiveness. Without structured support in education, these qualities tend to develop only at a limited level. Therefore, communicative competence grows through a gradual and systematic process that builds both communication skills and relevant personal traits.<sup>45</sup> However, psychological barriers such as shyness or language anxiety are consistently present in matriculation classes, often stemming from a perceived lack of experience in speaking Arabic.<sup>46</sup>

In this case, To address this, Darussalam Gontor University prioritizes the creation of a specially organized learning environment. This involves interactive teaching that expands joint work among students and engages their emotions and communicative experiences. Ultimately, communicative competence acts as a subset of social competence. The ability to collaborate, resolve conflicts, and manage interactions is essential for professionalization. These competencies evolve with life experience, and their development is indispensable for students entering professions that require high-level interpersonal engagement.

#### **Factors supporting and inhibiting the ability to develop speaking proficiency**

Several characteristics of the communicative approach in language teaching include curriculum design, classroom activities, learning materials, and assignments, together with the roles of both teachers and students. All components that can help researchers explore the support in improving the speaking skills of matriculation students. Based on field observations, the researchers identified several key supporting factors, most notably the structured vocabulary acquisition managed by dormitory administrators and lecturers every morning after dawn prayers.

In memorizing vocabulary, students were assigned to create as many sentences as possible using the vocabulary provided daily. After memorizing three vocabulary words, speaking practice was carried out to immediately implement the morning's vocabulary. (*Interview: 1 July 2025*)

This exercise is typically performed as a dyadic dialogue, while other students are tasked with active listening. This daily consistency is instrumental in improving

<sup>45</sup> Owen G. Mordaunt et al., "The Communicative Method as a Model for Language Teaching," *International Journal of Language & Literature* 7, no. 2 (2019), <https://doi.org/10.15640/ijll.v7n2a12>.

<sup>46</sup> 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. 01 (2023): 14–33, <https://doi.org/10.30762/asalibuna.v7i01.848>.

students' fluency and lexical retrieval. Furthermore, a weekly review and evaluation are conducted to ensure the retention of both nouns and verbs.

Besides receiving new vocabulary every morning, students were also encouraged to consistently communicate in Arabic in daily activities. The enforcement of this policy is a significant driver of communicative frequency. If students are caught speaking regional languages or Indonesian, they receive educational sanctions. The punishment was educational in nature, i.e., it provided benefits or added value for the children. The sanctions take the form of creating structured sentences using vocabulary that has not been provided in the morning, memorizing and reciting them. This finding aligns with previous research by Sherry Guo and Martin East, which indicates that vocabulary acquisition plays a key role in developing oral communication skills.<sup>47</sup>

It also resonates with Suryadarma et al.'s research, which states language environment serves a vital function in language development learning. Learners are often exposed to multiple languages and may use more than one language in daily interaction. As a result, they not only acquire their mother tongue but also have the opportunity to learn foreign languages. Individuals who stay abroad or interact with speakers of other languages tend to show strong motivation because they have a strong need to communicate and express their messages. A limited vocabulary is one of the main factors that prevents learners from speaking effectively. Arabic inside and outside the classroom.<sup>48</sup>

### **Tasks and Materials Communicative**

Communicative tasks give learners opportunities to actively engage in language use and interaction to express ideas and use the target language in meaningful ways. Through the use of communicative learning materials, students engage in learning environments where language appears in authentic contexts, with real time constraints and situations that reflect everyday communication.

According to Jack C. Richards and Theodore S. Rodgers, three main types of materials support the communicative strategy in language instruction. First, authentic materials introduce real language from the outside world into the classroom. These materials expose learners to natural language used in different contexts and situations. Second, Task-based materials allow learners to use the target language in practical contexts while carrying out specific roles or completing communicative tasks. Third, text-based materials present themes, task analyses, or descriptions of practice situations that guide learners in using language during communication with others. Together, These materials promote the development of communicative competence by offering meaningful contexts for language use.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>47</sup> Junyan Guo and Martin East, "The Role of Vocabulary in Speaking: Voices from Learners and Raters," *Language Assessment Quarterly* 21, nos. 4–5 (2024): 452–72, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15434303.2024.2440887>.

<sup>48</sup> Yoke Suryadarma et al., "Musykilah At-Thulab Fi Ta'alum Al-Lughah Al-Arabiyah Li al-Fashl At-Tahdiri Bi Jamiah Darussalam Gontor / Student Problems in Learning Arabic In the Matriculation Class at Darussalam Gontor University," *Loghat Arabi : Jurnal Bahasa Arab Dan Pendidikan Bahasa Arab* 4, no. 2 (2023): 189, <https://doi.org/10.36915/la.v4i2.123>.

<sup>49</sup> Jack C. Richards and Theodore S. Rodgers, *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching* (Cambridge University Press, 2014).

### The Roles of Teacher and Learners

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) centers the learning process on students, with teachers functioning mainly as facilitators who create conditions that encourage meaningful use of the target language. Teachers develop communicative lesson plans and implement them through interactive activities that foster active student participation. These activities promote learner interaction, allowing students to practice the target language through authentic communication. (*Observation: 5 August 2025*)

The learner's role in CLT is paramount, as students are the primary communicators within the instructional process. As communicators, they are expected to take responsibility in expressing and understanding messages for negotiating, interpreting the messages of others, and applying their emerging linguistic competence to achieve successful interaction.<sup>50</sup>

According to David Nunan, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) focuses on developing learners' ability to communicate effectively in real-life situations and is broadly seen as language teaching over the past two decades.<sup>51</sup> Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is widely regarded as an approach that emphasizes communicative competence as the primary objective of language instruction, including Arabic language teaching. is considered appropriate for the teaching context in the Arabic Department, particularly in the Phonetics concentration at University of Darussalam Gontor. Its relevance appears in several aspects, including curriculum design, students' learning needs, and the availability of instructional facilities.

Within this perspective, language is no longer considered solely as a system of abstract grammatical rules. Instead, it is understood as a tool used in social contexts. Language learning therefore involves not only grammar but also communicative functions and notions. In current language education practice, few educators question this perspective. The emergence of CLT represents a significant shift in the philosophy of language teaching, moving from a focus on grammatical rules toward principles that prioritise effective communication.

In its implementation, communication rules, students with less experience in public speaking may face more difficulties than those who are already accustomed to it. Earlier language teaching methods were widely criticised for limiting students' ability to communicate. These approaches often removed language from its real context. As a result, learners were not exposed to authentic language use, including appropriate social norms, gestures, and expressions. Traditional classroom practices rarely provided such contextual information. For this reason, the presence of context is essential in teaching Arabic speaking skills.

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<sup>50</sup> María Dueñas Vinuesa, "Diane Larsen-Freeman. 2000. Techniques and Principles in Language Teaching. Second Edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 189 Pp.," *Journal of English Studies*, May 29, 2002, 277–81, <https://doi.org/10.18172/jes.83>.

<sup>51</sup> David Nunan, *Task-Based Language Teaching*, 1st ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2004), <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511667336>.



To address this issue, proponents of CLT as methodology in language education emphasise the need to develop students' communicative competence. This concept integrates language learning with the broader components of communication. In contemporary language education, communicative competence commonly includes five elements: linguistic competence, sociocultural competence, actional competence, strategic competence, and discourse competence.

This perspective also requires a shift in instructional practice. Language teaching should move beyond the simple presentation of grammatical rules and focus instead on communicative activities in the classroom. These activities involve the four fundamental skills of language acquisition tasks that simulate real communication. Through such activities, the five components of communicative competence become integrated into each communicative performance.<sup>52</sup>

### Matriculation Class Syllabus

It represents a structured plan designed to guide the broader process of teaching. A syllabus that adopts the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) enables language teachers to design instructional materials and classroom activities within lesson plans that emphasize the target language. According to Qinghong, the CLT syllabus comprises six core communicative functions: (1) conveying and requesting factual information; (2) expressing and identifying intellectual attitudes; (3) expressing and recognizing emotional attitudes; (4) expressing and understanding moral attitudes; (5) accomplishing practical tasks; and (6) engaging in social interaction. These functions support the implementation of CLT in language instruction through varied forms of communication, depending on the roles of participants and the specific situations in which language is used.<sup>53</sup>

Table 1. Matriculation Class Syllabus

Weeks	Learning Materials	Learning Methods	Assessment
1	Introduction to Language - Definition of Language - The Importance of Language Proficiency	Face-to-face lectures	Short quiz and participation assessment to evaluate students' understanding of basic language concepts
2	Listening Skills - Active listening techniques - Simple dialogue listening exercises	Face-to-face lectures, Exercises	Listening comprehension test and evaluation of students' responses to dialogue exercises
3	Speaking Skills - Introduction to basic vocabulary - Speaking practice in everyday situations	Face-to-face lectures, Discussions	Oral practice evaluation based on vocabulary use, pronunciation, and participation in discussions
4	Discussion: Reading Skills- Speed reading techniques- Reading simple texts	Face-to-face lectures, Exercises	Reading comprehension test and assessment of students' ability to identify key information in texts
5	Writing Skills - Basic Sentence Structure - Simple Paragraph Writing Practice	Face-to-face lectures, Exercises	Written assignment evaluation focusing on sentence structure, coherence, and clarity
6	Basic Grammar - Introduction to tenses in Arabic - Grammar in Arabic	Face-to-face lectures, Discussions	Grammar quiz and analysis of students' ability to apply grammatical rules in sentences

<sup>52</sup> Qorih and Farisya, "Communicative Language Teaching (Clt) Method Combined with Total Physical Response (Tpr) Method on Upgrading Communication Skill on English Laboratory."

<sup>53</sup> Qinghong MA, "Key Elements in Conducting Communicative Approach to Language Teaching," *Canadian Social Science* 5, no. 02 (2009), <https://doi.org/10.3968/j.css.1923669720090502.007>.

Weeks	Learning Materials	Learning Methods	Assessment
7	Discussion and Presentation - Effective presentation techniques - Group discussion	Face-to-face lectures, Discussions	Assessment of group presentation, communication skills, and active participation in discussion
8	Midterm Exam - Evaluation of listening and speaking skills	Examination	Midterm test assessing listening comprehension and oral communication skills
9-14	Advanced Practice - Reading and writing skills exercises - Conversation simulations	Individual Practice, Discussion	Continuous assessment through assignments, speaking simulations, and written exercises
15	Final Exam - Overall language skills assessment Exam	Examination	Final examination evaluating listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills

### Classroom Activities

The exchange of information in various social contexts and roles enables learners to internalize not only the language aspects of Arabic but also a comprehensive understanding of its practical application in sociocultural dimensions, as communication inherently involves cultural awareness, experience, and motivation. In line with the communicative approach, different interactive instructional activities such as group-based discussions, simulations, and etc. were implemented in the matriculation classes. Observational findings revealed that discussions were conducted in multiple formats, including pair work, small group interaction, and whole-class engagement, all of which contributed to improving students' collaboration and communication skills.

Despite the interactive design, classroom observations indicated varying levels of participation. During discussions, a noticeable disparity emerged; some students appeared hesitant, preferring to rely on more confident peers to articulate arguments. As one student stated, *"Sometimes I understand the topic, but I am afraid of making mistakes when speaking, so I let my friend speak first"* (NC, 2025). Another student added, *"I still lack vocabulary, so it is difficult to express my opinion directly in Arabic"* (NPP, 2025).

This reluctance was commonly linked to inadequate vocabulary, fear of errors, and low confidence when speaking Arabic. Even so, frequent exposure to communicative activities gradually increased students' willingness to participate. These included guiding questions, pre-teaching key vocabulary, and positive reinforcement. A lecturer noted, *"We usually provide key vocabulary before discussion so that students feel more confident to speak"* (ARA, 2025). These practices reflect the core principles of CLT proposed by Canale and Swain, particularly in the development of grammatical, sociolinguistic, and strategic competences.<sup>54</sup>

Furthermore, the effectiveness of these classroom activities was reinforced by a supportive language environment beyond the classroom. The dormitory system played a crucial role in sustaining students' speaking practice, as students were encouraged to use Arabic in daily interactions. Dormitory administrators actively monitored language use and organized informal speaking activities, creating a continuous immersive environment.

One dormitory supervisor explained, *"We encourage students to speak Arabic every day, not only in class but also in the dormitory, so they get used to it"* (NS, 2025).

<sup>54</sup> M. Canale and M. Swain, "Theoretical Bases of Communicative Approaches to Second Language Teaching and Testing," *Applied Linguistics* I, no. 1 (1980): 1–47, <https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/I.1.1>.

In addition, a student mentioned, “*Living in the dormitory helps me practice speaking more because my friends also use Arabic*” (SU, 2025).

This integration between classroom instruction and the residential language environment significantly contributed to enhancing students’ speaking confidence and fluency over time, reflecting the broader CLT principle that language learning is most effective when supported by meaningful interaction in authentic contexts. In classroom discussions, activities can be implemented in pairs, small groups, or whole-class settings, supporting learners’ collaboration and communication abilities. Classroom observations indicated that pair work was the most effective for promoting participation particularly among less confident learners. In contrast, group discussions often resulted in unequal involvement, as more proficient students tended to take the lead. In whole-class discussion only a small number of students actively participated, while the others remained passive.

Additionally, while students initially relied on simple structures and occasionally resorted to their L1 (Indonesian) when facing difficulties, continuous practice and lecturer prompts helped them transition toward more complex output. Simulations, including everyday tasks like ordering food or requesting directions, allowed students to use functional expressions naturally. While some students still relied on formulaic or memorized phrases, these activities significantly increased overall engagement and prepared them for spontaneous real-world interaction.

Similarly, role-plays involve adopting specific identities and help students explore various communicative contexts. More confident students performed more fluently and creatively, while others relied on scripts or peer assistance. However, with repeated practice and lecturer support, students progressively developed greater confidence and willingness to participate in speaking tasks. (*Observation: 11 August 2025*)

**Table 2.** The initial stage of our interactive lesson

<b>Methods</b>	:	Discussion
<b>Receptions</b>	:	Reflection and clarification questions
<b>Means</b>	:	Literature, films, CDs, musical fragments, computer programs
<b>Result</b>	:	The teacher does not provide all the information to the students. Instead, the students wait for the topic and participate in an interactive Arabic language lesson

Researchers have thoroughly examined the supporting factors for improving the speaking skills of matriculation students, while several inhibiting factors include the external factors such as student heterogeneity with various backgrounds. As well as time constraints, while internal factors vary considerably, ranging from panic, lack of preparation, fear of making mistakes, and lack of motivation and self-confidence. (*Interview 27 July 2025*)

## Conclusion

The outcomes of this study show that a communicative approach to Arabic instruction encourages learners to engage actively throughout the learning process both in class with the lecturer teaching the material and outside of class with dormitory staff, thereby acquiring vocabulary. By providing opportunities for discussion, debate, and interaction, students become more engaged, motivated, and active in speaking. This model draws attention to the key importance of speaking practice in real-life contexts. Through simulations of everyday situations, students can practice speaking in relevant contexts, thereby improving their communication skills. This includes the development of social skills where students learn to communicate effectively with others, listen, and respond appropriately.

Key supporting factors for Arabic speaking proficiency at Darussalam Gontor University include a rigorous linguistic environment. This model underscores the need to supply organized vocabulary routines each day and to apply functional grammar rules consistently and intensively. Frequent practice within this supportive ecosystem serves to mitigate student anxiety and shyness, directly correlating with an increase in speaking confidence. This helps increase their confidence in speaking Arabic. This communicative approach allows teachers to tailor teaching materials and methods to the diverse needs and backgrounds of learners. This is particularly important in the context of entrance exam preparation classes, which consist of students from diverse backgrounds. Despite several external and internal obstacles, there are still supporting factors, including interactive teaching practices and a favorable learning environment intended to foster students' Arabic speaking fluency and accuracy.

Despite these promising findings, matriculation classes require further growth and support provided by the institution. The main issues include the need for better variety in language learning support programs, both inside and beyond the classroom, with greater student engagement outside class. Moreover, learning needs to be intensive, and the enhancement of accommodation and facilities for matriculation classes is crucial for optimizing learning outcomes.

On a broad scale, this study aligns with international research affirming that the communicative approach significantly impacts learner interest and motivation. Specifically, it deepens this understanding in beginner learners, namely matriculation classes, by revealing the learning process and strategic supporting and inhibiting factors behind the improvement of Arabic speaking skills at Darussalam Gontor University, as a boarding school-based university. This study highlights the potential of language matriculation classes in preparing students to enter study programs in the coming year.

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for improving language skills programmes organised by the Directorate of Language Development.

### Author Contribution Statement

GVV conducted the field research and collected the data, following the research methodology and considering guidance from UM and DC. UF and NT analysed the data, with support from MBAB. As a result, each contributor is responsible for this study and contributes to completing this written work.

### Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors state that they state the absence of competing interests. This research was carried out independently and not affected by external factors that might have impacted the empirical findings or how they were interpreted.

### AI Writing Statement

The author states that no AI tools were used to prepare this manuscript. The author independently handled the writing, data processing, analysis, and compilation, following academic standards and publication ethics.

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