



Continuous Professional Development Strategy in Improving the Competence of Arabic Language Teachers in Islamic Boarding School

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Abstract:

The professional development of Arabic language teachers is a strategic priority in Islamic educational institutions to ensure instructional quality and pedagogical relevance. This study investigates the implementation of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) strategies in enhancing teacher competence at Al-Mashduqiah Islamic Boarding School, Probolinggo. Employing a descriptive qualitative method, data were collected through interviews with caregivers and teachers, classroom observations, and analysis of institutional documents. The findings reveal that Arabic language teachers at the pesantren demonstrate four core competencies pedagogical, professional, personal, and social as mandated by national education standards. CPD at Al-Mashduqiah is systematically implemented through self-development programs, scientific publications, and innovative instructional practices. Supporting factors include a conducive Arabic-speaking environment, regular training sessions, and the integration of Arabic in daily communication. However, challenges such as high teacher workload, limited technological integration, and external teaching assignments persist. This study concludes that the CPD model at Al-Mashduqiah offers a viable and sustainable framework for enhancing Arabic language teacher competence and serves as a reference for similar Islamic educational settings aiming to strengthen professional teaching capacity.

Keywords: Arabic Teacher Competence, Continuous Professional Development, Islamic Boarding School.

Abstrak:

Pengembangan profesional guru bahasa Arab merupakan prioritas strategis di lembaga pendidikan Islam untuk memastikan kualitas pengajaran dan relevansi pedagogis. Penelitian ini menyelidiki penerapan strategi Pengembangan Profesional Berkelanjutan (CPD) dalam meningkatkan kompetensi guru di Pondok Pesantren Al-Mashduqiah, Probolinggo. Dengan menggunakan metode kualitatif deskriptif, data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara dengan pengasuh dan guru, observasi kelas, dan analisis dokumen kelembagaan. Temuan penelitian mengungkapkan bahwa guru bahasa Arab di pesantren menunjukkan empat kompetensi inti pedagogis, profesional, pribadi, dan sosial sebagaimana diamanatkan oleh standar pendidikan nasional. CPD di Al-Mashduqiah dilaksanakan secara sistematis melalui program pengembangan diri, publikasi ilmiah, dan praktik pengajaran yang inovatif. Faktor pendukungnya meliputi lingkungan berbahasa Arab yang kondusif, sesi pelatihan rutin, dan integrasi bahasa Arab dalam komunikasi sehari-hari. Namun, tantangan seperti beban kerja guru yang tinggi, integrasi teknologi yang terbatas, dan tugas mengajar eksternal tetap ada. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa model CPD di Al-Mashduqiah menawarkan kerangka kerja yang layak dan berkelanjutan untuk meningkatkan kompetensi guru bahasa Arab dan berfungsi sebagai referensi bagi lingkungan pendidikan Islam serupa yang bertujuan untuk memperkuat kapasitas pengajaran profesional.

Kata Kunci: Kompetensi Guru Bahasa Arab, Pengembangan Profesional Berkelanjutan, Pesantren.

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INTRODUCTION

Continuous Professional Development (CPD) is a systematic approach to continuously improve teacher competence through various activities such as training, mentoring, evaluation, and learning innovation. The purpose of CPD is not only limited to mastering teaching materials, but also includes the development of pedagogical, professional, social, and personality skills of teachers to be in line with the demands of the times (Ramdani et al., 2024; Rawal, 2024; Zreik, 2024). This process emphasizes the importance of teachers to continue to adapt to changes in the dynamic educational environment. In this context, CPD is directed at reducing the gap between the knowledge, skills, and social and personality competencies that teachers currently have and those needed in the future, especially in relation to the demands of professionalism in education (Isoda et al., 2021; Rozali et al., 2024; Zhang et al., 2024). Through this approach, teachers can become more adaptive, reflective, and proactive in carrying out their strategic role in improving the quality of education.

The implementation of continuous professional development activities is expected to be able to produce professional teachers who not only master broad knowledge, but also have mature personalities and high integrity. Such teachers will be able to guide and develop students' interests and talents optimally according to their respective potentials and fields (Anggarina et al., 2024; Bamat et al., 2024). In the 21st century, teachers are required to be lifelong learners who can follow developments in science, technology, and art actively and critically. With these provisions, teachers not only act as conveyors of information, but also as learning facilitators who are able to instill knowledge, skills, and attitudes that are in accordance with the competency standards that students must have (Castillo-Núñez et al., 2024; Sánchez-Montecinos et al., 2023). This makes teachers agents of change in creating a superior generation that is adaptive to global challenges.

Teacher competence is one of the factors that influence the achievement of learning and education goals at school, but teacher competence does not stand alone, but is influenced by factors of educational background, teaching experience, and length of teaching (Litoiu & Oproiu, 2021). Teacher competence can be considered important as a selection tool in the acceptance of prospective teachers, it can also be used as a guideline in the context of coaching and developing the teaching force. In addition, it is also important in relation to teaching and learning activities and student learning outcomes (Soto Lillo, 2024). According to Mulyasa, quoted from Jejen Musfah in his book *Improving Teacher Competence*, teacher competence is a combination of personal, scientific, technological, social, and spiritual abilities that kafah form the standard competencies of the teaching profession, which includes mastery of material, understanding of students, educational learning, personal development and professionalism.

Improving teacher competence is critical to improving the quality of education and student learning outcomes. Effective strategies for improving teacher competence include continuing professional development programs, collaborative practices and strong leadership support. Continuing professional development programs, such as ongoing

training and workshops, help teachers adapt to new educational demands and technologies and encourage innovation in teaching methods and classroom management skills (Yelfianita, 2023). In addition, collaboration among teachers strengthens professional growth and improves teaching strategies, leading to better student engagement and optimized learning outcomes (Anna, 2023; Hadziq, 2024). In addition, mentoring and supervision can create a work environment that supports teachers' competence.

Al-Mashdquiah Islamic Boarding School is one of the institutions that implements a sustainable professional development strategy in improving the competence of Arabic language teachers, where Arabic language teachers must explain the material using Arabic during teaching and learning activities. This strategy aims to improve teaching quality through a mentorship program that involves senior teachers or Arabic language experts to guide more junior teachers. Al-Mashdquiah also created lesson study activities where teachers collaboratively design, observe and evaluate lessons to improve the quality of learning. More than just that, Al-Mashdquiah creates an environment that supports daily conversations using Arabic. Teachers are encouraged to share ideas and effective teaching methods, creating a dynamic and inspiring learning atmosphere. Through these various programs, it is hoped that educators can inspire the younger generation with useful knowledge and values, creating a brighter future for the nation.

Based on previous research, it shows that the implementation of teachers' continuing professional development focuses more on the components of teacher self-development compared to the components of scientific publications and innovative work. Other research shows that the Professional Competence of Teachers in Arabic Learning at Pondok Pesantren Ihya' Ulum highlights the importance of professional development of Arabic language teachers to anticipate changes and demands in the teaching profession. Although not specifically discussing Pondok Pesantren Al-Mashdquiah, these studies can be a reference in designing a sustainable professional development strategy in improving the competence of Arabic language teachers at the institution.

This research focuses on sustainable professional development strategies in improving the competence of Arabic language teachers at Al-Mashdquiah Islamic Boarding School. The main objective is to identify the needs of teachers in the aspect of their competence, as well as analyzing the strategies applied. Besides. This research also reveals the challenges and opportunities faced in the implementation of continuing professional development, as well as the solutions applied to overcome these obstacles, so as to provide relevant recommendations for teachers' professional development and improve the quality of Arabic learning and support the overall vision of pesantren education.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study applies a qualitative approach with a case study design to explore the implementation of continuous professional development in improving the competence of Arabic language teachers in Islamic boarding schools. As stated by Kim et al. (2024), qualitative research aims to understand phenomena in depth through contextual interpretation and analysis. The case study method was chosen to allow intensive exploration of teacher development practices within a specific institutional setting. Data collection techniques include observation, interviews, and documentation

(Assyakurrohim et al., 2022). Participant observation was conducted because the researcher was actively involved in mentoring activities with caregivers, principals, and Arabic teachers. This was supported by structured observation that had been prepared in a systematic framework to capture relevant teaching and development activities directly related to the professional growth of the teachers involved.

The observation used in this study is participant observation on the grounds that the researcher participates directly in improving teacher competence with caregivers, directors and teachers who are used as sources of research data and structured observations that have been systematically designed. The type of interview chosen is structured interview. Structured interviews are used to focus on extracting data in order to obtain synchronous, consistent and objective data related to sustainable professional development strategies in improving the competence of Arabic language teachers. Documentation is done by collecting various data sources needed, identifying data, interpreting and drawing conclusions. The data analysis technique used in this research is the analysis technique of Miles and Huberman, namely, data reduction, data presentation and conclusion drawing. Data validation was carried out using source triangulation and theory triangulation techniques.

Data were collected using three techniques: observation, interviews, and documentation. Participant observation was used because the researcher was directly involved in teacher development activities alongside caregivers, school leaders, and Arabic language teachers. This was complemented with structured observation, designed systematically to capture key behaviors and activities relevant to the study focus. Interviews were conducted using a structured format to ensure consistent and focused data collection regarding the implementation and impact of continuous professional development strategies. Meanwhile, documentation involved the collection and analysis of relevant written sources such as training reports, lesson plans, and institutional policies. The data analysis followed the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, which consists of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification. To ensure the credibility and validity of the data, triangulation techniques were applied both source triangulation (by comparing data from different informants and events) and theory triangulation (by interpreting findings through multiple theoretical lenses).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Competence of Arabic Language Teachers in Al-Mashduqiah Al-Mashduqiah Islamic Boarding School Probolinggo

The pedagogical competence of Arabic language teachers at Al-Mashduqiah Islamic Boarding School is demonstrated through their deep understanding of learning theories and the ability to apply teaching strategies that align with the students' cognitive and emotional characteristics. During observations on January 25, 2025, teachers were seen applying varied methods such as the direct method, cooperative discussions, and contextual practices. This diversity allows students with different learning styles to engage meaningfully in the learning process. Lesson planning is done systematically, following both the pesantren curriculum and principles of effective instruction. As emphasized by the caretaker, Mukhlisin Sa'ad, in an interview, mastery of teaching strategies and lesson plan design are key indicators of pedagogical quality. This confirms that the teachers are not only aware of how students learn but also responsive to their socio-cultural context,

which is essential in the pesantren-based educational environment where character and language development are intertwined.

Professional competence at Al-Mashduqiah is reflected in the teachers' mastery of Arabic linguistic components especially nahwu, sharaf, fluency across all skills, and the ability to interpret classical and modern texts. Teachers are expected to not only teach but also demonstrate fluency in speaking, listening, reading, and writing. This proficiency is accompanied by the use of reflection as a tool for professional growth. Based on the interview with Arabic teacher Mu'tasim Billah, the pesantren places emphasis on the teacher's ability to translate, explain, and contextualize Arabic materials. Moreover, technology is gradually being used to enhance teaching, showing teachers' openness to innovative learning tools. This combination of content mastery and reflective teaching aligns with the principles of lifelong learning and continuous self-improvement, indicating that professional competence is not static but dynamically maintained in response to evolving educational demands.

In the domain of personality competence, teachers exhibit sincerity, discipline, and patience, serving as moral exemplars for students. These traits are highly valued in pesantren culture, where character education is integral to academic instruction. Teachers are not only instructors but also figures of ethical and spiritual leadership. The director of HAMIM Al-Mashduqiah, Ahmat Tijani, explained that traits like honesty, dedication, and humility form the foundation of the teachers' influence. This moral authority enhances student engagement and respect. Social competence is equally evident in teachers' ability to build meaningful communication with students, colleagues, and parents. Their adaptability to pesantren traditions such as communal living and spiritual routines creates a supportive and harmonious environment. Teachers' capacity to mediate between traditional values and modern educational goals allows them to function as bridges between institutional expectations and student needs, fostering a culturally responsive and empathetic pedagogy.

The research findings affirm that Arabic teachers at Al-Mashduqiah possess the four core competencies outlined in national education policy: pedagogical, professional, personality, and social competence. These competencies not only align with Government Regulation No. 19 of 2005 on National Education Standards but also respond to the unique context of Islamic boarding schools. The implications of these findings are multifaceted. For teachers, there is a need for continuous development through training and curriculum enhancement. For the pesantren, institutional mechanisms for recruitment, evaluation, and inter-institutional collaboration must be strengthened. The presence of competent teachers directly benefits santri, who gain from improved learning experiences in both language proficiency and character building. Ultimately, the study underscores that teacher competence in pesantren is a holistic construct one that merges academic mastery with ethical leadership, cultural awareness, and pedagogical innovation to produce transformative educational outcomes.

Implementation of Continuous Professional Development Strategies in improving the Competence of Arabic Language Teachers at Al-Mashduqiah *Islamic Boarding School Probolinggo*

The implementation of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) strategies at Al-Mashduqiah Islamic Boarding School demonstrates a well-structured, context-sensitive, and sustainable model for advancing Arabic teacher competence. Based on field

observations and interviews, the CPD program is organized around three core components self-development, scientific publication, and innovative work. These components are interwoven with institutional goals and are supported by the active participation of pesantren leaders and teachers. Weekly ta'hil sessions, collaborative discussions, and scheduled-supervision cycles represent the backbone of the self-development process. Teachers undergo peer-evaluation and receive feedback in routine meetings, creating a culture of reflection and shared learning. One senior staff member noted, "The supervision results are shared every Thursday to improve quality." This statement indicates that CPD is not treated as a formal requirement, but as a continuous, evolving professional ecosystem. Such systematic approaches foster sustained pedagogical improvement and strengthen teaching identity.

Scientific publications form the second pillar of CPD at Al-Mashduqiah. Teachers are encouraged to pursue higher education and contribute scholarly work in the fields of Arabic education and pesantren values. Field data confirmed that Arabic teachers have produced research theses, collaborative journal articles, and contributed to educational seminars. A key example includes a co-authored paper by the director and caregiver titled "Implementation of Contextual Teaching And Learning in Improving Student Learning Achievement in Arabic Language Material". Such publications represent more than academic formality they function as documentation of pedagogical innovation and institutional reflection. "Teachers are required to continue their studies and write based on their educational background," explained the pesantren caregiver. While not all publications focus directly on Arabic pedagogy, they indicate a growing research culture. This aligns with national standards for teacher functional positions, where academic contribution is integral to long-term competence development and institutional credibility.

The third key finding involves teachers' innovative contributions in Arabic instruction, which include the creation of tailored learning media and adaptive teaching methods. Field observations revealed the use of student-made vocabulary books titled "جامع المفردات والجمل اليومية", systematic lesson preparation via i'dad darsi, and engaging techniques like storytelling and role-play. These efforts indicate a shift from traditional instruction to learner-centered, contextualized approaches that resonate with students' daily realities. As one Arabic teacher shared, "We created a vocabulary book and use role-playing to make Arabic more alive." This reflects how CPD not only improves teacher competence but also enriches the instructional ecosystem. The innovative practices serve as both pedagogical tools and evidence of teachers' creative agency. Through this, the pesantren fosters a learning environment where Arabic becomes a lived, practiced language, rather than a static subject.

Table 1. Field Findings on CPD Implementation at Al-Mashduqiah

| CPD Component | Observed Practices | Impact on Teacher Competence | Supporting Quotes |
|-------------------------------|--|---|--|
| Self-Development Activities | Weekly ta'hil, peer teaching evaluations, scheduled & unscheduled supervision | Improved planning, teaching strategy refinement, reflective practice | "The supervision results are shared every Thursday to improve quality." – Deputy Director |
| Scientific Publication Output | Encouragement for higher education; publication of journals, theses, collaborative research papers | Strengthened academic identity and integration of Arabic content into educational discourse | "Teachers are required to continue their studies and write based on their educational background." |
| Innovative Work | Vocabulary books, i'dad | Enhanced student | "We created a vocabulary |

| | | | |
|---------------|---|---|--|
| Contributions | darsi, direct method, storytelling, role-play | engagement, contextual learning, and teaching diversity | book and use role-playing to make Arabic more alive.” – Arabic Teacher |
|---------------|---|---|--|

The implications of these findings extend to institutional, pedagogical, and policy levels. For the institution, structured CPD reinforces its role as a modern, adaptive pesantren. For teachers, it cultivates continuous improvement in competence, creativity, and academic engagement. For students (santri), competent teachers create a more motivating and effective Arabic learning environment. Finally, as a model, this CPD framework aligns with the Ministerial Regulation No. 16/2009 which defines CPD through three key elements: self-development, publication, and innovation. Unlike previous studies that noted limited implementation in the publication or innovation components, Al-Mashduqiah demonstrates notable efforts in all three. This positions the pesantren as a potential benchmark for CPD application in other Islamic educational institutions, especially those aiming to advance Arabic language pedagogy through integrated, contextual strategies.

Supporting and inhibiting factors in the implementation of sustainable professional development strategies in improving the competence of Arabic language teachers at Al-Mashduqiah Islamic boarding school.

Based on the results of interviews with the caregiver of Al-Mashduqiah Islamic Boarding School that the supporting factor in this activity is the pesantren environment which supports intensive Arabic language learning, both in formal teaching and daily communication. In addition, the availability of training once a week without leaving their teaching duties. As for the inhibiting factors, namely Arabic language teachers who live in the boarding school, they are preoccupied with taking care of other boarding school programs so that they have little time for training or continuous professional development activities.

The Arabic teacher also provided information about the factors of the implementation of this continuous professional development strategy in the interview, as follows: *"In the implementation of this continuous professional development program, there are supporting factors, namely the existence of classical books, modern books and other reference sources that help teachers improve their mastery of Arabic. In addition, students and teachers are required to use the Arar language in daily communication both in class and outside the classroom which helps in improving language skills. The inhibiting factor is that this boarding school still does not use technology such as e-learning, language applications that can increase the effectiveness of Arabic language learning"* (M. Saifillah, Arabic Language Teacher, interview on January 25, 2025).

Based on observations and interviews that have been conducted and analyzed in depth, the following are some of the supporting and inhibiting factors in the implementation of sustainable professional development strategies in improving the competence of Arabic language teachers at Al-Mashduqiah Islamic Boarding School Probolinggo. Supporting Factors are the Supportive Pesantren Environment, Routine

Training, Availability of Classical Books and Reference Sources, and the Use of Arabic in Daily Life. The inhibiting factors are the workload of teachers who live in the Pondok, the teaching schedule outside the Pondok, and not using technology in learning.

The implications of the results of this study provide important directions for various parties-both pesantren managers, teachers, and education policy makers-in developing strategies to improve the competence of Arabic language teachers in a pesantren environment such as Al-Mashduqiah Islamic Boarding School. For pesantren managers, it is necessary to rearrange teachers' schedules so that they have sufficient time to participate in continuing professional development activities, improve training facilities and infrastructure, and support learning technology programs through investment in digitalization. Meanwhile, for teachers, it is important to optimize existing resources such as classical books and daily Arabic communication, and increase self-awareness and independence in learning through small learning communities. On the other hand, the government and educational institutions are expected to provide policy support in the form of affordable professional training and establish partnerships with higher education institutions or digital platforms to provide relevant online training. As for future research, the results of this study open up opportunities for further studies on the integration of technology in Arabic language learning in pesantren, as well as evaluating the effectiveness of sustainable professional development strategies in traditional environments that still rely on conventional methods.

Discussion

The findings of this study at Al-Mashduqiah Islamic Boarding School Probolinggo reveal a comprehensive integration of pedagogical competence and sustainable professional development among Arabic language teachers. Two major themes emerge from the data: (1) the multi-dimensional realization of teacher competence (pedagogical, professional, personality, and social), and (2) the contextualized implementation of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) strategies to sustain and elevate those competencies. Together, these themes exemplify a culturally embedded yet progressive model of teacher professionalism within the pesantren ecosystem.

First, the competence of Arabic language teachers at Al-Mashduqiah resonates with holistic education theories that prioritize both cognitive and moral development. Teachers demonstrate strong pedagogical capacity through systematic lesson planning and the application of varied instructional strategies suited to the students' learning profiles. This aligns with Chunkenova et al. (2021) framework of pedagogical content knowledge, where understanding of content is merged with methods of delivery tailored to learners' contexts. Observed use of direct instruction, contextual application, and cooperative learning reflect constructivist orientations, enabling students to participate actively in meaning-making processes (Abdullah, 2024; Hina, 2024; Munawwaroh, 2024). Simultaneously, the professional dimension of competence is manifested in mastery of

linguistic elements and reflective teaching, consistent with lifelong learning principles (Davydenko et al., 2021; Polyakova, 2024). Teachers show openness to technological tools, albeit modestly, which indicates a readiness to integrate innovation while remaining grounded in traditional scholarship.

Second, the institutionalization of CPD at Al-Mashduqiah aligns with global best practices in teacher development, yet is adapted to the pesantren context. CPD activities at the pesantren follow the tripartite structure outlined in Ministerial Regulation No. 16/2009: self-development, scientific publication, and innovative work. Weekly ta'hib sessions and supervision foster continuous peer learning and reflective improvement, echoing the collegial professional culture advocated by Gurgenidze et al. (2022). Scientific publications not only mark academic engagement but serve as institutional narratives of pedagogical experimentation and reform. Innovative contributions, such as tailored vocabulary books and contextual role-playing methods, reflect both teacher agency and responsiveness to learner needs (Nisa' & R, 2024; Sain, 2025; Setiawan Putri et al., 2024). These practices confirm that CPD is not a bureaucratic obligation but a dynamic platform for professional identity building and instructional enhancement.

Third, the interplay between the teachers' competencies and CPD efforts is supported and constrained by contextual factors. Supportive pesantren culture, access to reference materials, and habitual Arabic usage create an immersive linguistic environment conducive to competence development (Bagachuk & Berseneva, 2022; Besonia, 2024; Hernawan & Bosra, 2020). This mirrors Vygotsky's sociocultural theory where learning is mediated by cultural tools and community interaction. However, limitations such as teacher workload, lack of digital integration, and logistical constraints challenge the full optimization of CPD programs (Halász, 2023; Putri, 2024; Zaragoza Alvarado, 2022). Teachers' time is split between teaching and other boarding school obligations, and the absence of e-learning tools suggests untapped potential for blended CPD models. As observed by M. Saifullah, while traditional resources are rich, the lack of technological mediation limits scalability and personalization in professional learning.

Finally, the implications of this study extend across institutional, instructional, and policy domains. Institutionally, the pesantren must refine CPD scheduling, improve infrastructure, and invest in educational technologies. Instructionally, Arabic teachers are encouraged to strengthen collaborative inquiry and innovate context-responsive pedagogies. At the policy level, there is a pressing need for integrated support systems involving governmental, academic, and technological stakeholders to develop cost-effective, flexible, and culturally aligned CPD frameworks. These should include online platforms, remote mentorship programs, and accreditation incentives. Future research might explore hybrid CPD models or investigate the longitudinal impact of such strategies on student achievement and teacher retention.

In conclusion, the Al-Mashduqiah case illustrates that Arabic teacher competence is a dynamic construct shaped by professional commitment, institutional support, and

cultural context. The implementation of CPD strategies grounded in reflective practice, academic contribution, and pedagogical innovation reaffirms the pesantren's potential to lead in educational transformation. This study not only informs localized policy-making but also contributes to broader discourses on culturally sensitive and sustainability-oriented teacher development within Islamic educational traditions.

CONCLUSION

Arabic teacher competence includes four main aspects that complement each other, namely: pedagogic, professional, personality, and social. The competence of Arabic teachers at Al-Mashduqiah Islamic Boarding School has met the standards of effective learning. This success cannot be separated from the selective teacher recruitment process, continuous competency improvement programs, and the application of innovative and adaptive learning methods to the times. The implementation of continuing professional development is divided into three main components: 1) self-development, 2) scientific publications, 3) innovative work. The implementation of sustainable professional development strategies at Al-Mashduqiah Islamic Boarding School has made a significant contribution to improving the competence of Arabic language teachers. This shows the synergy between the institutional structure of the pesantren and the commitment of teachers in improving the quality of Arabic language education in a sustainable manner. The successful implementation of the Continuous Professional Development strategy at Al-Mashduqiah Islamic Boarding School is determined by the synergy between the spirit of individual teachers, institutional support, and strengthening of educational infrastructure, and the need for strategic steps to overcome various existing obstacles.

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