



Arabic Language Learning Based on Behaviorism Theory at Madrasah Tsanawiyah

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Abstract:

Arabic language learning in madrasahs has a strategic role in developing communicative skills as well as understanding of Arabic culture inherent in the language. This study aims to analyze the application of behaviorism theory in Arabic language learning in Madrasah Tsanawiah and its contribution to improving student learning outcomes. The background of this study is the need for effective and adaptive learning strategies for student characteristics to improve the quality of Arabic language learning. By focusing on the principles of repetition, intensive practice, and positive reinforcement, behaviorism theory is considered capable of forming systematic and sustainable learning behavior patterns. This study uses a qualitative approach with descriptive methods and collects data through participatory observation, structured interviews with teachers, students, and madrasah leaders, and documentation of learning activities. The findings show that positive reinforcement strategies such as praise and giving small gifts can significantly increase student learning motivation. Meanwhile, the application of repetitive practice (drill) has been shown to strengthen students' long-term memory of Arabic vocabulary and sentence structures. Practically, this study suggests that the application of behaviorist principles in Arabic language learning design can increase students' active involvement and accelerate the process of internalizing the material. The implications of this study indicate that behaviorism can be an effective pedagogical foundation in developing Arabic language learning strategies that are more measurable, applicable, and appropriate to the context of secondary madrasahs.

Keywords: *Arabic Language Learning, Behaviorism Theory, Positive Reinforcement, Repetitive Practice*

Abstrak:

Pembelajaran bahasa Arab di madrasah memiliki peran strategis dalam mengembangkan kemampuan komunikatif sekaligus pemahaman budaya Arab yang melekat pada bahasa tersebut. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis penerapan teori behaviorisme dalam pembelajaran bahasa Arab di Madrasah Tsanawiah serta kontribusinya terhadap peningkatan hasil belajar siswa. Latar belakang penelitian ini adalah perlunya strategi pembelajaran yang efektif dan adaptif terhadap karakteristik siswa untuk meningkatkan kualitas pembelajaran bahasa Arab. Dengan berfokus pada prinsip pengulangan, latihan intensif, dan penguatan positif, teori behaviorisme dinilai mampu membentuk pola perilaku belajar yang sistematis dan berkelanjutan. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode deskriptif, serta mengumpulkan data melalui observasi partisipatif, wawancara terstruktur dengan guru, siswa, dan pimpinan madrasah, serta dokumentasi aktivitas pembelajaran. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa strategi penguatan positif seperti pujian dan pemberian hadiah kecil mampu meningkatkan motivasi belajar siswa secara signifikan. Sementara itu, penerapan latihan berulang (drill) terbukti memperkuat memori jangka panjang siswa terhadap kosakata dan struktur kalimat bahasa Arab. Secara praktis, penelitian ini menyarankan bahwa penerapan prinsip-prinsip behavioristik dalam desain pembelajaran bahasa Arab dapat meningkatkan keterlibatan aktif siswa dan mempercepat proses internalisasi materi. Implikasi dari studi ini menunjukkan bahwa behaviorisme dapat menjadi landasan pedagogis yang efektif dalam pengembangan strategi pembelajaran bahasa Arab yang lebih terukur, aplikatif, dan sesuai dengan konteks madrasah tingkat menengah.

Kata Kunci: *Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab, Teori Behaviorisme, Penguatan Positif, Latihan Berulang*

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INTRODUCTION / المقدمة

Learning is a planned process that involves conscious and gradual changes in student behavior, including cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects (Aziz & Sain, 2025; Mhlanga, 2023; Setiawan Putri, Widiyarsari, & Zahro, 2024). In this process, the interaction between individuals and the physical and social environment plays an important role in forming meaningful learning experiences. An effective learning environment not only provides facilities and resources but also creates situations that support repetition, reinforcement, and active involvement of students in the learning process (Heru & Bali, 2024; Sain, 2025; W. Zhang & Lu, 2022). The resulting behavioral changes are also sustainable and directed towards achieving clear learning goals.

Arabic language learning in madrasahs is a form of education that not only emphasizes linguistic aspects but also aims to foster communicative skills and an understanding of Arabic culture inherent in the language (Leeder, 2022; McCloskey & Silvestri, 2021; O'Shea, 2022). In Madrasah Tsanawiah, the Arabic language learning process is generally designed systematically so that students can master four basic language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing, and can use the language actively in everyday life (Baderin, 2023; Shen & Wang, 2022; C. Zhang, Dong, Zhang, & Guan, 2021). The success of this process is highly dependent on the effectiveness of the learning methods and media used by teachers in the classroom.

The phenomenon that occurred at MTs Al-Adli Palembang shows that the application of behaviorism theory in Arabic language learning has a significant impact on improving student learning outcomes. Before the implementation of the behaviorist strategy, the learning outcomes of grade VII students tended to be low. However, after the application of the principle of repeating material, intensive practice, and positive reinforcement, there was a significant increase in student academic achievement (Baharun, 2023; Faisol, 2024; Hasanah, 2024; Putri, 2024). MT Al-Adli Palembang was chosen as the research location because this madrasah actively applies the principle of behaviorism in Arabic language learning, both through curriculum design and educator competencies that encourage repetitive and structured learning practices.

In the context of learning, choosing the right method is a key factor in achieving optimal learning outcomes. Methods are understood as a series of systematic steps that help teachers deliver material efficiently and can be well-received by students. More than just teaching techniques, methods include approaches, interactions, and activity strategies that are relevant to student characteristics and learning objectives (Lahmadi, 2024; Moghtader, 2024; Sihabuddin, 2024). In addition, teaching materials also play a crucial role as learning resources that support competency achievement. Good teaching materials must be by the curriculum, interesting, easy to understand, and able to encourage student learning independence.

Theoretically, learning is also influenced by the scientific approach used to

understand and direct the learning process. One influential approach is the theory of behaviorism, which emphasizes the importance of the relationship between stimulus and response in shaping learning behavior (Hidayah, 2024; Huda, 2020; Stager, 2024; Riwanda, 2024). In this view, repetition, practice, and positive reinforcement are the main mechanisms in forming effective learning habits. The principles of behaviorism have been widely applied in language teaching, including in Arabic language learning, to help students form response patterns that are appropriate to the stimulus given by the teacher (Bahhari, 2023; Iversen, 2024; Ribeiro Daquila, 2020; Rohmah, 2024).

This study aims to analyze the application of behaviorism theory in Arabic language learning at MTs Al-Adli Palembang and evaluate its contribution to improving student learning outcomes. Specifically, this study examines the teaching strategies used by teachers in implementing the principles of behaviorism, their impact on the formation of students' learning habits, and the supporting and inhibiting factors faced in the implementation process. With this approach, this study is expected to provide theoretical and practical contributions in the development of Arabic language learning strategies based on relevant educational psychology theories.

This study has an important original contribution in the context of developing Arabic language learning strategies based on educational psychology theory, especially behaviorism, which is still rarely studied in depth in junior high school madrasah environments. The novelty of this study lies in its approach, which not only describes the implementation of behavioristic principles conceptually but also empirically evaluates its impact on student learning outcomes at MTs Al-Adli Palembang. By integrating repetition practices, positive reinforcement, and intensive practice (drill), this study proves that behaviorism theory can be an effective practical foundation in Arabic language learning, especially in forming positive linguistic habits among students. This approach provides an applicable and measurable alternative for Arabic language teachers in designing learning strategies that are more adaptive to student characteristics in madrasahs, while enriching the literature on the application of learning theories in the context of language education in Indonesia.

RESEARCH METHOD / المنهجية

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive method to describe in depth the characteristics of the phenomenon of Arabic language learning based on behaviorism theory in the MTs Al-Adli Palembang environment (Arifin, Khoiroh, Aini, & Sahidah, 2024; Thalib, 2022). This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to study naturally, without manipulation, various learning processes that occur directly in their original context. This study focuses on grade VII students who take Arabic lessons as the main subject. The location of the study is at MTs Al-Adli Palembang, precisely on Jl. Kol. H. Burlan Km 6.5, which strategically represents the practice of Arabic language learning at the junior high school level.

Data collection techniques in this study include observation, interviews, and documentation. Observations were conducted directly, openly, and participatively, where researchers were involved in the learning process to understand students' learning behavior based on behaviorist principles such as repetition and reinforcement. Interviews were conducted face-to-face using a structured format with 30 respondents consisting of 21 grade VII students, 1 Arabic teacher, 5 subject teachers, 1 BK teacher, and 2 vice principals for curriculum. The selection of respondents was carried out purposively to

ensure that the information obtained was relevant and in-depth, with the focus on the study. The students interviewed were selected based on their active involvement in the learning process, while teachers and vice principals have key roles in planning and implementing Arabic language learning strategies. Documentation was used to complement field data through the collection of learning activity notes, photos, reports, and other documents related to the application of behaviorist theory in teaching Arabic in grade VII.

Data analysis in this study follows the Miles and Huberman model, which consists of three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion (Nurhayati, Apriyanto, Ahsan, & Hidayah, 2024; Soesana et al., 2023). Data reduction is carried out to filter and select important information according to the focus of the study, then the data is presented in the form of a systematic narrative to facilitate thematic analysis. The final stage is drawing conclusions, which are carried out in stages through cross-verification of data to ensure validity and depth of meaning. To increase the validity of the data, this study also applies source and method triangulation techniques and confirms the results (member checking) with informants to ensure the accuracy of the findings. This methodological approach allows researchers to gain a comprehensive understanding of the application of behaviorism theory in Arabic language learning and its impact on student learning outcomes at MTs Al-Adli Palembang.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION / نتائج البحث و المناقشة

Finding

Positive Reinforcement in Arabic Language Learning

The application of behaviorism theory in Arabic language learning at MTs Al-Adli Palembang is evident through the use of positive reinforcement by teachers. This strategy is the main focus in creating a conducive learning atmosphere while motivating students to actively repeat and remember the lesson material. Positive reinforcement given by teachers is in the form of verbal praise, giving additional points or scores, and small gifts to students who show improvement or perseverance in learning Arabic. One teacher said, "Every time a student can pronounce the vocabulary or construct a sentence correctly, we give praise or a small reward such as a star sticker. They become enthusiastic about learning because they feel appreciated." This statement illustrates that positive reinforcement can build students' internal drive to learn consistently and enthusiastically. In addition to increasing motivation, positive reinforcement also helps teachers in forming structured learning habits. When students know that their efforts are appreciated, they will form a disciplined and enthusiastic attitude towards the Arabic language learning process. In learning activities, teachers routinely provide positive feedback every time students show an understanding of the material, either in verbal form, such as "good," or in writing through notes in their assignment books. Another teacher added, "Children memorize faster if we immediately give them praise. They feel successful and want to keep repeating." This kind of reinforcement strengthens the relationship between stimulus (*lesson material*) and student response (active participation), by the basic principles of behaviorism.

Thus, the use of positive reinforcement at MTs Al-Adli Palembang has proven effective in fostering students' enthusiasm for learning and increasing their active participation in class activities. This strategy not only accelerates the process of

understanding the material but also creates a supportive and enjoyable learning environment. The effectiveness of this strategy is evident from the increased involvement of students in answering questions, doing exercises, and interacting with Arabic actively. The application of positive reinforcement is an important foundation in the behaviorist approach, where habits that are consistently reinforced will form the learning behavior expected by the teacher.

From the interviews above, how that the positive reinforcement strategy is systematically applied in Arabic classes at MTs Al-Adli. By giving rewards to students' correct responses, the teacher forms a repetitive learning pattern that triggers similar responses in the future. This system creates a constructive learning climate, where students feel safe to try and are motivated to repeat the same learning behavior. As a result, the process of internalizing the material becomes faster because it is supported by a classroom atmosphere full of emotional and social support. Based on interview and observation data, it can be concluded that the use of positive reinforcement is an effective strategy in implementing behaviorism theory in Arabic language classes. Through this approach, teachers do not only focus on learning outcomes, but also pay attention to the process of character formation and student learning motivation. The success of this strategy shows that simple interventions such as praise or rewards can have a major impact on student enthusiasm and learning performance.

Repetition of Drills as a Dominant Teaching Pattern

The use of repetition exercises (drills) in Arabic language learning at MTs Al-Adli Palembang is a dominant pattern that directly reflects the application of behaviorism theory. Based on the results of observations during several meetings, teachers consistently repeat materials in the form of vocabulary, sentence patterns, and simple conversations. This activity is carried out in the form of repetition, together by the whole class or individually, to strengthen students' long-term memory of the language being learned. This pattern is in line with the principle of stimulus-response behaviorism, where repetition strengthens the association between material and student responses.

Teachers are seen leading the repetition verbally every time they introduce new vocabulary. After that, students are asked to repeat together up to five to seven times. This exercise is then followed by a quick question-and-answer session to test their memory. A teacher stated in the observation notes, "Repetition is important so that students can automatically answer without thinking for long. Especially for children who are not yet familiar with Arabic letters." In addition to increasing the speed of students' responses, this exercise also helps them get used to the sentence structure in Arabic, which is different from Indonesian.

Table 1. Practice Repetition Patterns in Arabic Language Learning

Repetition Activity	Implementation Form	Observation Notes
Daily Vocabulary	Repeated together 5-7 times at the beginning and end of the lesson.	Students memorize and remember faster if it is start with repetition.
Simple Dialogue	Students are asked to practice in pairs and then repeat as a class.	Student responses increase when the practice is repeated with a question-and-answer model.
Rewrite Assignment	Students copy vocabulary and sentence patterns three	The goal is to form structural habits in understanding Arabic.

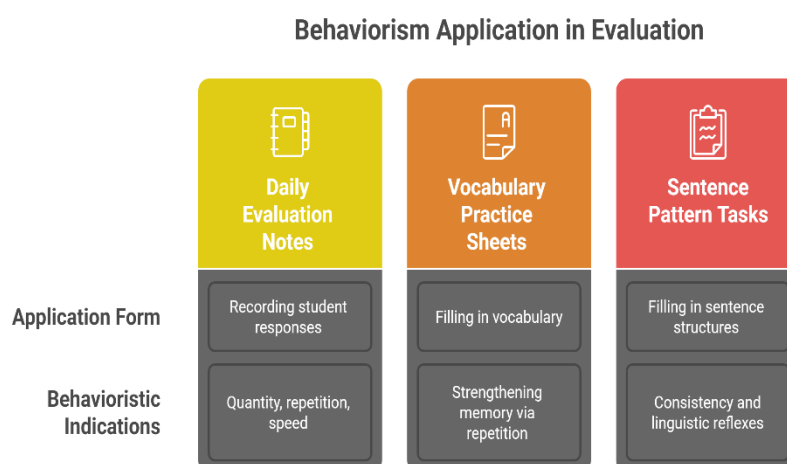
Table 1 shows how repetition of exercises is used as the main strategy in teaching Arabic. This process is carried out systematically and gradually, starting from oral repetition, pair practice, to written assignments. Observations show that students find it easier to remember material when it is given repeatedly in a pleasant and pressure-free atmosphere. In addition, the teacher gives cues or signs when students make mistakes, then directs them to repeat until they are correct. This teaching pattern is evidence that the behavioristic principle that emphasizes reinforcement through repetition is truly applied in the context of Arabic language learning in madrasas. When stimuli (materials) are given repeatedly and student responses are directed consistently, an automatic learning reflex will be formed. The teacher not only acts as a facilitator but also as a controller and reinforcer of the systematic learning process.

Overall, repetition of exercises or drills is a core method that is very suitable for application in foreign language learning, especially in the early stages of Arabic language mastery at MTs Al-Adli Palembang. The effectiveness of this method can be seen from students' ability to remember and practice the material independently after several repetitions. Therefore, the behaviorism-based drill strategy is worth maintaining and developing as a direct practice-based teaching approach that emphasizes the formation of consistent learning habits.

Student Evaluation Notes and Activity Sheets Based on Behaviorism

Documentation in the form of student evaluation notes and learning activity sheets used at MTs Al-Adli Palembang shows the consistency of the application of behaviorism theory in Arabic language learning. In the documents collected, it can be seen that learning evaluation is not only oriented towards the final result, but rather emphasizes repetition, reinforcement, and continuous provision of stimulus to encourage changes in student learning behavior.

Evaluation is carried out periodically and directly after practice activities or drills. This is reflected in the structure of the evaluation sheet which contains an achievement rubric, the number of practice repetitions, and correction notes from the teacher. Student activity sheets are also designed to stimulate quick responses through simple questions, vocabulary repetition, and filling in sentence patterns systematically. In each worksheet, the teacher includes explicit instructions that students must follow sequentially and without complex reasoning, reflecting behaviorist principles that focus on stimulus-response-reinforcement.



Picture 1. Evaluation Documentation and Activity Sheets Based on Behaviorism

Figure 1 shows that the documents used in the learning process at MTs Al-Adli are designed not only as administrative tools but also as pedagogical instruments that emphasize the application of behaviorism theory. For example, in the daily student evaluation records, there is a repetition column, a score column for each response, and notes on improvements from the teacher. This supports the principle that every stimulus (question or exercise) must receive quick feedback from the teacher as a reinforcement of the expected behavior.

The activity sheets used also show a consistent pattern: one form of question is repeated in several numbers with slightly different contexts, but still emphasizes the same sentence structure pattern. Students who show the correct response repeatedly will be given a "reinforcement" mark by the teacher in the form of additional marks or written praise. This is in line with the concept of positive reinforcement in behaviorism. Furthermore, the teacher also includes a remedial scheme for students who do not show response development as expected. This scheme is carried out by providing additional exercises that are strictly controlled both in quantity and duration, ensuring that each student receives treatment that is adjusted to their level of response to the learning stimulus.

Overall, the documentation analyzed proves that the behaviorist approach is not only applied in classroom practice orally, but is also strongly reflected in the form of learning administration. Documents such as evaluation notes and worksheets function as tools to control student learning behavior, as well as being a reflection instrument for teachers to monitor the effectiveness of targeted stimuli and responses. With systematic documentation that is oriented towards behavioral change, the Arabic language learning process at MTs Al-Adli becomes more focused, measurable, and consistent with the behaviorist approach that emphasizes the formation of learning habits gradually.

Discussion

The implementation of behaviorist principles in Arabic language learning at MTs Al-Adli Palembang is prominently reflected in three main instructional strategies: positive reinforcement, repetition of drills, and structured documentation through evaluation and activity sheets. Each of these components demonstrates a strong alignment with the stimulus-response reinforcement model central to behaviorist theory. The synergy between classroom interaction, student motivation, and learning evaluation shows a

systematic and comprehensive approach in forming consistent learning behaviors among students (Chow, Meerhoff, Choo, Button, & Tan, 2023; Filben et al., 2021; Kaminski et al., 2020).

First, the use of positive reinforcement becomes a cornerstone in shaping student enthusiasm and persistence. Teachers frequently apply verbal praises, symbolic rewards (e.g., star stickers), and extra points to encourage correct responses and perseverance. These actions, rooted in Skinner's concept of operant conditioning, foster an emotionally supportive learning atmosphere where students feel appreciated and are thus more likely to repeat the desired behaviors (Armani et al., 2024; Harper, Aron, & Soangra, 2023; Landa-Carpinteyro, Hernandez-Rios, & Penaloza, 2024; Li, Ma, & Xie, 2024). Students reportedly became more motivated and engaged in class after receiving praise or small tokens for correct answers. This pattern confirms that the external stimuli provided by the teacher successfully trigger and reinforce internal motivation.

Second, repetition of drills serves as the dominant teaching pattern in the classroom. Vocabulary, sentence patterns, and dialogues are repeated orally and in writing to ensure memorization and automaticity. These drills reflect Thorndike's law of exercise, where repeated stimulus-response connections become stronger over time. Through consistent repetition, both choral and individual students gradually internalize linguistic structures (Abdullah, 2024; Akinyamoju et al., 2021; Munawwaroh, 2024). Observation data show that this repetition pattern helps accelerate recall and encourages students to respond confidently without overthinking, an essential strategy in early foreign language acquisition.

Third, evaluation documentation and learning activity sheets function not merely as administrative requirements but as pedagogical tools grounded in behaviorist practice. These instruments are systematically designed to track repetitions, response accuracy, and improvement notes. They also provide space for reinforcement symbols and additional remedial drills tailored to students who do not yet meet expected learning outcomes. By integrating stimulus-response tracking into written documentation, teachers maintain consistency in feedback and reinforcement, making the learning process more transparent and manageable (Herlina, 2024; Hina, 2024; Safitri & Zawawi, 2025). This approach supports individualized attention while still adhering to a structured behaviorist framework.

Collectively, these findings illustrate that the Arabic language learning process at MTs Al-Adli is deeply rooted in the principles of behaviorism. The combined use of praise, drills, and structured documentation shows a well-integrated system where learning habits are developed through consistent stimulus and reinforcement (Cowan, 2022; Farrokhnia, Baggen, Biemans, & Noroozi, 2022; Hashim, Yunus, & Norman, 2022). These strategies ensure that both motivation and performance are sustained and measurable across different student abilities. Moreover, the teacher's role extends beyond content delivery to behavioral shaping, reinforcing that language learning success depends as much on methodical practice as on content mastery.

In conclusion, the behaviorist approach implemented at MTs Al-Adli through positive reinforcement, repetitive drills, and structured evaluation has proven to be effective in enhancing student engagement and learning outcomes. The combination of affective support and structured habit formation allows students to develop both confidence and competence in Arabic (Mercader-Rubio, Gutiérrez Ángel, Silva, Moisés, & Brito-Costa, 2023). These findings reaffirm that simple, consistent, and responsive strategies aligned

with behaviorism can yield significant improvements in language acquisition, particularly at the beginner level. This pedagogical model can thus serve as a reference for similar institutions aiming to strengthen foundational language learning through behaviorist principles.

CONCLUSION / الخلاصة

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that the application of behaviorism theory in Arabic language learning at MTs Al-Adli Palembang provides a significant contribution to improving student learning outcomes. Positive reinforcement strategies used by teachers, such as giving praise, additional scores, and simple gifts, have proven effective in building students' intrinsic motivation and creating structured learning patterns. In addition, the consistent application of repetitive exercises (drills) at each meeting can strengthen students' long-term memory of vocabulary and sentence structures in Arabic. The systematic use of the stimulus-response approach in learning activities not only accelerates the process of understanding the material but also creates a learning environment that is fun, conducive, and emotionally supportive. Support from teachers through positive feedback and repetition routines helps form good and sustainable learning habits.

On the other hand, students' active involvement in repetitive practice also shows that behaviorist strategies can form Arabic language skills gradually and comprehensively. Overall, the implementation of behaviorism theory in Arabic language learning at MTs Al-Adli Palembang has proven its effectiveness in increasing student participation, forming disciplined learning characters, and strengthening communicative language skills. This finding provides a positive contribution to the development of Arabic language learning strategies based on educational psychology that apply and adaptive to the characteristics of secondary school students.

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