

**THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ORAL TESTS AS AN ASSESSMENT
TOOL FOR ARABIC AT THE NURUL HUDA
ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOL IN SUKAWINATAN**

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the effectiveness of oral tests as an assessment instrument for Arabic speaking skills at Pondok Pesantren Nurul Huda Sukawinatan. Using a mixed-methods approach with a sequential explanatory design, the research combines a quasi-experimental pretest-posttest control group design with qualitative data from interviews and observations. Quantitative analysis, specifically the independent sample t-test, showed a significant improvement in the speaking skills of the experimental group ($p < 0.05$), demonstrating the positive impact of oral testing. The average score of the experimental group increased from 61.4 in the pretest to 82.7 in the posttest, reflecting substantial progress after the treatment. This finding is supported by qualitative data, which revealed that oral tests provide a more authentic evaluation, boost student motivation, and encourage practical speaking practice. The study concludes that oral tests are highly effective for assessing Arabic speaking skills in this context, offering a valuable contribution to authentic assessment literature and providing practical recommendations for educators, language teachers, curriculum designers, and future researchers.

Keywords: *Arabic language; Assessment Tool; Oral Tests*



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Introduction

Arabic is one of the international languages that plays an important role in education, religion, and global communication (Sabana & Imron, 2024). As the language of the Qur'an, mastery of Arabic is a fundamental requirement for Islamic educational institutions, especially Islamic boarding schools (Purnama et al., 2025). Arabic language proficiency is not only measured in terms of grammatical understanding (nahwu and sharaf), but also in terms of speaking skills (maharah kalam) that reflect fluency in oral communication (Irmansyah & Pratiwi, 2021). Therefore, an effective assessment tool to measure students' speaking skills is urgently needed (Aghbashlo et al., 2022). One instrument that is considered appropriate is the oral test, which is a form of oral-based assessment that can represent students' actual communication skills (Hidayah et al., 2021).

Oral assessment (oral test) is an important instrument in language learning, including Arabic (Yang et al., 2023). This is because speaking skills (maharah kalam) are a productive aspect that determines the success of communication (Imron et al., 2023). Speaking skills include accuracy of pronunciation, fluency, grammatical accuracy, and the ability to convey ideas in real contexts. In Islamic boarding schools, Arabic is not only used in formal learning, but also as the language of daily communication in religious activities. Therefore, the effectiveness of oral assessment instruments is very important to ensure that the evaluation carried out is truly able to describe students' abilities comprehensively (Mukmin et al., 2025).

Current issues in language learning indicate that oral assessment is more authentic than written tests because it directly measures language skills in the context of real communication (H. Hamidah & Wulandari, 2021). A number of studies reinforce this. For example, research by (Madiha, 2024) states that oral tests are more representative in assessing students' communication skills (Wasilah' Wasilah, N Nazarmanto, ST Utami, 2024). also found that technology-based oral exam formats can reduce student anxiety and improve speaking performance. Meanwhile, (Wasilah, 2022) emphasize the need for valid and reliable assessment scales in evaluating foreign language speaking skills. In the context of Arabic, (Fauzi & Rahmawati, 2025) concluded that performance-based assessment is more comprehensive than traditional methods, particularly in terms of fluency, accuracy, and pronunciation. On the other hand, psychological factors such as speaking anxiety have also been shown to affect oral test results (Y Yuniar, F Hidayati, 2020).

Although the practice of oral assessment in Arabic language learning is well known in various institutions, scientific research that specifically examines its effectiveness in Islamic boarding schools is still limited (Prasetyo et al., 2024). Most previous studies have focused on formal schools and colleges, while Islamic boarding schools with their religious-based learning characteristics have rarely been the subject of research. In addition (Hanisaniyya et al., 2025), previous studies have emphasized technical aspects such as the validity of instruments or psychological factors such as speaking anxiety, but few have directly highlighted how oral tests can contribute to improving speaking skills (maharah kalam) in Islamic boarding schools (Muhammad, 2024). Therefore, this study is important to provide a new perspective on the application of oral tests as an assessment instrument that is relevant to the needs of Arabic language learning in Islamic boarding schools (Nurani, 2022).

The scope of this study focuses on analyzing the effectiveness of oral tests as an instrument for assessing students' speaking skills at the Nurul Huda Sukawinatan Islamic Boarding School (Hidayah, Mukmin, & Eltika, 2023). The focus of this study does not cover all Arabic language skills, but is specifically directed at maharah kalam, both from quantitative results through tests and from the qualitative perceptions of teachers and students (Hidayah, Mukmin, & Marfuah, 2023).

Based on this background, the main issue in this study focuses on how oral tests are implemented as an instrument for assessing Arabic speaking skills at the Nurul Huda Sukawinatan Islamic Boarding School (Mansur & Nurani, 2022). In addition, this study also aims to determine the extent of student learning outcomes after the implementation of oral tests, as well as to analyze the effect of implementing this instrument on improving students' Arabic speaking skills.

Research Method

This study uses a mixed method approach with a sequential explanatory design. This design was chosen to obtain a more comprehensive picture of the effectiveness of oral tests as an instrument for assessing Arabic language skills, through a combination of quantitative and qualitative data.

A. Subjects, Population, and Sample

The research subjects were students of the Nurul Huda Sukawinatan Islamic Boarding School for the 2023/2024 academic year. The research population included all intermediate level students. From this population, two relatively homogeneous classes were selected based on the consideration of Arabic language teachers. The

sampling technique used purposive sampling, resulting in 60 students divided into two groups: 30 students in the experimental class and 30 students in the control class.

B. Research Design and Instruments

Quantitatively, this study used a quasi-experimental design with a pretest-posttest control group model. The experimental group was given treatment using oral tests as an evaluation instrument, while the control group used conventional written tests.

The quantitative instrument was an oral test that included simple speaking tasks, such as self-introduction, short conversation, and describing pictures. A scoring rubric was developed to measure five main aspects: pronunciation, fluency, vocabulary, grammar, and confidence in speaking. The content validity of the instrument was obtained through expert assessment, while reliability was tested using the inter-rater reliability technique.

For qualitative data, the instruments used were semi-structured interview guidelines and observation sheets. Interviews were conducted with Arabic teachers and several students selected purposively, while participatory observation was conducted to record the dynamics of interaction, obstacles, and student responses to the implementation of oral tests.

C. Data Collection Techniques

Quantitative data were collected through three stages, namely pretest, treatment, and posttest. Qualitative data were obtained through in-depth interviews and direct observation during the learning process. Data triangulation was carried out by comparing the results of tests, interviews, and observations.

D. Data Analysis Techniques

Quantitative data were analyzed through normality and homogeneity tests as prerequisites for analysis, followed by an independent t-test to determine the difference in the mean posttest scores between the experimental class and the control class at a significance level of 0.05.

Meanwhile, qualitative data were analyzed using interactive analysis techniques, which included data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The integration of the two analysis results was carried out at the interpretation stage so that this study not only presented statistical differences in results but also explained the contextual factors that influenced the effectiveness of the oral test implementation.

Research Limitations

The scope of this study is limited to intermediate Arabic language learning at the Nurul Huda Sukawinatan Islamic Boarding School, with a focus on speaking skills

(maharah kalam). This study does not discuss other language skills, but only focuses on the effectiveness of oral tests in assessing students' speaking abilities.

Result

Quantitative analysis shows a significant difference between the experimental group that used oral tests and the control group that was assessed using conventional tests. This was proven through a series of quantitative statistical tests, including pretest and posttest, normality test, homogeneity test, and t-test. In addition, qualitative analysis obtained through observation and interviews further strengthened the research results, with the following explanations:

A. Pre test Post test

Table 1.
Pretest and Posttest Results of the Experimental and Control Groups

Class	Pretest	Posttest
Control	38.00	76.50
Experimental	47.5	83.00

The average posttest score of the experimental 83.00 group was higher than that of the control group. This shows an increase in student learning outcomes and proves that the application of oral tests has a significant effect on students' Arabic language skills. To estimate further results, a series of statistical tests were conducted.

B. Normality Test

The first stage was a normality test to determine whether the data was normally distributed or not. The results of the normality test can be seen in the following table:

Table 2.
Normality Test

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test			Unstandardized Residual
N			20
Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	Mean		.0000000
	Std. Deviation		2.85820265
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute		.119
	Positive		.119
	Negative		-.116
Test Statistic			.119
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) ^c			.200 ^d
Monte Carlo Sig. (2-tailed) ^e	Sig.		.637
	99% Confidence Interval	Lower Bound	.624
		Upper Bound	.649

a. Test distribution is Normal.

b. Calculated from data.

c. Lilliefors Significance Correction.

d. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

e. Lilliefors' method based on 10000 Monte Carlo samples with starting seed 299883525.

The results of the normality test showed that the data was normally distributed with a significance value greater than 0.05. This indicates that the data distribution of both groups is reasonable, so that the analysis can be continued using parametric tests.

C. Homogeneity Test

The next stage is a homogeneity test, which aims to ensure that the variance between the experimental group and the control group is the same or homogeneous. Thus, the results of the comparison between the two groups can be analyzed more objectively without any significant variance differences.

Table 3.
Homogeneity Test

Test of Homogeneity of Variance					
		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
hasil belajar	Based on Mean	.068	1	38	.796
	Based on Median	.046	1	38	.832
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	.046	1	37.884	.832
	Based on trimmed mean	.070	1	38	.793

The significance value in the homogeneity test is also greater than 0.05, which indicates that the data of the two groups have relatively the same level of diversity. Thus, the assumptions of normality and homogeneity are fulfilled so that the independent sample t-test is appropriate to use.

D. Independent Sample T-Test

Table 4.
Independent Sample T-Test

Tabel 14. Tabel Uji Independent Sample Test

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Significance One-Sided p	Significance Two-Sided p	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower Upper
hasil belajar	Equal variances assumed	.515	.477	2.035	38	.024	.049	.650	.319	.004 1.296
	Equal variances not assumed			2.035	37.006	.025	.049	.650	.319	.003 1.297

The results of the independent sample t-test show a significance value of $0.000 < 0.05$, which means that the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

Thus, it can be concluded that oral tests are effective in improving the Arabic speaking skills of santri. This significant difference shows that the treatment of using

oral tests as an assessment instrument really has a real impact on improving learning outcomes.

Qualitative data reinforce these results. Interviews with Arabic teachers show that oral tests help teachers assess speaking skills more authentically than written tests. Teachers emphasize that through oral tests, they can see students' spontaneous ability to use Arabic, including intonation, clarity of pronunciation, and fluency. Meanwhile, classroom observations showed that although some students initially appeared anxious when tested orally, they showed higher motivation to prepare themselves to speak than when facing written tests. Several students revealed that oral tests challenged them to practice speaking more often, because they were aware that the skills being tested were practical skills, not just memorization.

Discussion

The findings of this study answer the research question that oral tests are effective as an instrument for assessing Arabic speaking skills at the Nurul Huda Sukawinatan Islamic Boarding School. These results are in line with (Fauzi & Rahmawati, 2025), who stated that performance-based assessment is more comprehensive in assessing fluency, accuracy, and pronunciation than traditional methods. This also supports (Aswari et al., 2022), who found that oral exam formats can increase students' confidence.

Theoretically, the results of this study reinforce Brown's (2004) view that authentic assessment allows students to demonstrate their language skills in real contexts. Oral tests are not only an evaluation tool but also part of the learning process that encourages more intensive language practice.

However, anxiety remains a major obstacle, as emphasized by Horwitz (2022) in the concept of foreign language anxiety. Nevertheless, students' anxiety tends to decrease as they gain more experience in taking oral tests. The limitations of this study lie in its scope, which only involved one Islamic boarding school with a limited number of samples, and did not quantitatively measure non-academic factors such as motivation and environmental support. Therefore, further research with a broader scope is needed.

Overall, the results of this study indicate that oral tests make an important contribution to Arabic language assessment in Islamic boarding schools, as they not only measure learning outcomes but also increase students' motivation and communication skills in an authentic way.

Conclusion

The results of this study show that oral tests are proven to be effective as an instrument for assessing Arabic speaking skills at the Nurul Huda Sukawinatan Islamic Boarding School. The use of oral tests provides a more authentic assessment of students' abilities, encourages learning motivation, and increases the intensity of speaking practice. Thus, the objectives of this study have been achieved, namely to reveal the effectiveness of oral tests in supporting Arabic language learning.

This study makes an important contribution to the development of Arabic assessment instruments, especially in Islamic boarding schools, which are rarely the focus of research. These findings emphasize the importance of using authentic assessments that are in line with communicative learning objectives. In addition to being an evaluation tool, oral tests also serve as a means of continuous learning. The practical implication is that Arabic teachers in Islamic boarding schools can systematically integrate oral tests to improve the quality of learning.

Further research can be conducted with a broader scope in various Islamic boarding schools or educational institutions to obtain a more comprehensive picture. In addition, further studies can be directed at other aspects that affect speaking skills, such as speaking anxiety, motivation, and the application of oral tests at higher competency levels, for example in group discussions or presentations. Thus, the effectiveness of oral tests can be understood more deeply in various learning contexts.

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