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Research Trends And Emerging Directions In Arabic Language Learning In Early Childhood Education: A Systematic Literature Review

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Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi tren penelitian, tema-tema utama, kesenjangan penelitian, serta arah perkembangan studi mengenai pembelajaran bahasa Arab dalam pendidikan anak usia dini. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode *Systematic Literature Review* (SLR) dengan berpedoman pada PRISMA 2020. Data diperoleh dari artikel jurnal ilmiah yang terindeks di Scopus, SINTA, dan DOAJ melalui pencarian menggunakan kombinasi kata kunci yang berkaitan dengan pembelajaran bahasa Arab dan pendidikan anak usia dini. Dari 179 artikel yang teridentifikasi, sebanyak 29 artikel dipilih berdasarkan relevansi topik, periode publikasi 2020–2026, ketersediaan teks lengkap, dan kriteria inklusi yang telah ditetapkan. Data dianalisis menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif dan tematik untuk memetakan tren publikasi, metodologi penelitian, fokus kajian, dan tema-tema utama. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya peningkatan publikasi mengenai pembelajaran bahasa Arab pada anak usia dini, dengan jumlah tertinggi pada tahun 2025. Pendekatan kualitatif merupakan metode yang paling dominan digunakan, sedangkan penelitian kuantitatif dan penelitian pengembangan (*Research and Development*/R&D) masih relatif terbatas. Tema utama yang diidentifikasi meliputi media pembelajaran, metode dan strategi pengajaran, pendekatan pembelajaran, kompetensi dan keyakinan guru, serta kurikulum. Kesenjangan penelitian ditemukan pada masih terbatasnya studi longitudinal, penelitian eksperimental, kajian dalam konteks multibahasa, pelibatan keluarga, serta penelitian mengenai dampak jangka panjang pembelajaran bahasa Arab terhadap kemampuan komunikasi anak. Oleh karena itu, penelitian selanjutnya berpeluang diarahkan pada pengembangan teknologi digital, gamifikasi, kecerdasan buatan (*artificial intelligence*), serta pendekatan pembelajaran yang lebih personal dan berpusat pada anak.

Kata kunci: *Anak Usia Dini, Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab, Systematic Literature Review, Tren Penelitian*

***Abstract*:** *This study aims to identify research trends, major themes, research gaps, and emerging directions in studies on Arabic language learning in early childhood education. It employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach guided by the PRISMA 2020 guidelines. Data were obtained from scientific journal articles indexed in Scopus, SINTA, and DOAJ through keyword searches combining terms related to Arabic language learning and early childhood education. Of the 179 articles identified, 29 were selected based on topic relevance, publication period (2020–2026), full-text availability, and other predetermined inclusion criteria. Descriptive and thematic approaches were employed to analyze the data and map publication trends, research methodologies, research focuses, and major themes. The findings indicate an increase in publications on Arabic language learning in early childhood education, with the highest number recorded in 2025. Qualitative approaches were the most frequently employed research methods, while quantitative studies and Research and Development (R&D) studies remained relatively limited. The major themes identified included learning media, teaching methods and strategies, learning approaches, teacher competence and beliefs, and curriculum. The identified research gaps included the limited availability of longitudinal studies, experimental research, investigations in multilingual contexts, studies involving family participation, and research examining the long-term effects of Arabic language learning on children's communication skills. Future research opportunities include the development and*

investigation of digital technologies, gamification, artificial intelligence (AI), and more personalized, child-centered learning approaches.

Keywords: *Arabic Language Learning, Early Childhood, Research Trends, Systematic Literature Review*

A. Introduction

One way to develop multilingual skills at an early age is through foreign language learning, such as Arabic (Sitorus et al., 2022). Early childhood is considered the golden age for establishing the initial foundations of literacy development across cognitive, social, physical, and language domains. Therefore, children should be introduced to basic foreign language skills, such as Persian and Arabic, during this critical period (Melawati & Eli, 2023; Muzammil, 2022; Norilah et al., 2022). Additionally, the Arabic language is highly relevant to Indonesian Muslim communities because it enables children to understand the Qur'an and participate in religious practices, while also contributing to their identity formation and linguistic development (Honorable, 2024). Numerous researchers over the past five years have investigated Arabic language learning in early childhood (Angellina & Sofa, 2026; Mohd Hamidin et al., 2024; Muzammil, 2022; Norilah et al., 2022; Novanto et al., 2026; Rohimah, I., 2026; Sarip et al., 2024; Sitorus et al., 2022). However, research on Arabic language learning in early childhood appears to be fragmented across various areas of study, including the use of songs and learning media, family parenting practices, and other related aspects. This fragmentation highlights the need for a systematic mapping of research areas, methods employed, and limitations in existing findings. Although general reviews of Arabic language learning indicate the need for greater attention to the preschool level, studies examining trends in Arabic language instruction have typically focused on broader age groups and/or educational settings (Slamet Riyadi, Hadi Munawwar, 2024; Zikriah & Mauludiyah, 2024). Thus, a systematic literature review focusing specifically on early childhood can help elucidate the development of this research area, identify underexplored topics, and establish directions for future research.

In the field of language acquisition and development, various theoretical approaches have been proposed. Noam Chomsky introduced the concept of the *Language Acquisition Device* (LAD) (Chomsky, 2006), which suggests that every individual has an innate capacity for language acquisition. Therefore, early childhood represents a critical period for developing linguistic abilities. Jean Piaget's theory of cognitive development supports this perspective by emphasizing that children's learning processes depend on their stages of intellectual development and their understanding of the surrounding environment. In addition, Lev Vygotsky's sociocultural theory (Cole et al., 2019) reinforces the notion that children's language development occurs through social interaction, particularly with the support of adults, such as educators, who facilitate learning within educational environments. Based on an analysis of these three theories, it can be concluded that Arabic language acquisition in early childhood is not merely a matter of repetitive practice but rather a complex process involving cognitive, social, and educational dimensions. Therefore, a comprehensive systematic literature review is necessary to identify recent

developments and emerging research topics related to Arabic language acquisition in early childhood education.

This paper seeks to address the following research questions:

RQ1 : What are the research trends in Arabic language learning in early childhood education in terms of publication year, geographical distribution, research methods, and research focus?

RQ2 : What are the major themes and research focuses investigated in Arabic language learning in early childhood education?

RQ3 : What research gaps and emerging directions can inform future studies on Arabic language learning in early childhood education?

The findings of this study are expected to provide an evidence-based foundation for researchers, educators, curriculum designers, and early childhood education managers in developing more effective and sustainable Arabic language learning systems.

B. Literature Review

Learning Arabic from an early age refers to the introduction and development of Arabic language skills in accordance with children's needs, characteristics, and developmental stages (Muhammad Tareh Aziz, 2025; Retisfa Khairanis, 2025). At the Early Childhood Education (ECE) level, Arabic language learning is not primarily aimed at mastering grammatical structures but rather at developing children's familiarity with basic Arabic sounds and everyday vocabulary. This is achieved through the introduction of simple vocabulary, short phrases, songs, and stories, as well as opportunities for children to express themselves through daily activities involving play and direct experiences (Muzammil, 2022; Rohimah, I., 2026). Therefore, the objectives of Arabic language learning at this stage extend beyond vocabulary memorization to providing children with positive initial experiences of Arabic, enabling them to perceive the language as a meaningful and enjoyable part of their lives.

Language instruction for young children should take into account how children acquire and develop language. Children's language learning is influenced by three interrelated dimensions: biological, cognitive, and social-environmental factors. From a social constructivist perspective, children actively construct knowledge through social interaction and shared experiences with others. Learning is therefore not simply the transfer of information from teachers to children but a process through which understanding develops through communication, collaboration, and meaningful participation. Closely related to this perspective, Vygotsky's sociocultural theory emphasizes the role of social interaction, cultural context, and language as mediating tools in children's learning and development (Vygotsky, 1978). One important concept within this theory is the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which refers to the distance between what children can accomplish independently and what they can achieve with guidance from adults or more capable peers. Through this process, interactions with teachers, family members, and peers provide opportunities for children to experience language, develop their understanding of linguistic structures, and enhance their communication skills (Sawyer et al., 2018; Smidt, 2009; Sulistyorini

& Faizah, 2024). Consequently, instruction should not merely focus on introducing linguistic forms but should also create a language-rich environment that encourages children's active participation in the learning process.

These characteristics support the use of learning approaches that are concrete, interactive, and consistent with children's natural inclination toward play. In Arabic language learning, songs accompanied by movements and games can help children recognize and remember vocabulary, while visual media and role-playing activities provide meaningful contexts for practicing pronunciation and using simple expressions (Khoiruddin, 2017; Novanto et al., 2026; Slamet Riyadi, Hadi Munawwar, 2024). Interactions with teachers and peers also function as forms of learning scaffolding. Teachers model language use, provide guidance, and adjust their support according to children's needs, while conversations with peers create opportunities to acquire and use vocabulary within social contexts (Erdemir & Brutt-Griffler, 2022; Koyuncu et al., 2024).

In addition to sociocultural approaches, child-centered learning provides another important perspective for understanding Arabic language instruction in early childhood education. This approach positions children as active participants in the learning process by emphasizing their interests, needs, experiences, and developmental readiness. Rather than relying entirely on teacher-directed instruction, child-centered learning provides opportunities for children to explore, make choices, interact, and construct meaning through play and meaningful experiences. In this context, teachers act as facilitators who design developmentally appropriate activities, provide guidance, and create opportunities for children to engage actively in learning (NAEYC, 2020). Thus, the theoretical framework of this study integrates child development perspectives, social constructivism, sociocultural theory, and child-centered learning principles. This framework enables findings concerning songs, games, learning media, and social interactions to be interpreted not merely as variations in instructional techniques but as strategies for providing meaningful language input, fostering children's engagement, and supporting language use in social contexts (Marni & Rahmi, 2025). At the same time, this framework guides the evaluation of previous studies by focusing on the alignment of learning activities with children's developmental stages, the quality of teacher facilitation, and the opportunities provided for children to use language actively.

C. Research Methodology

This study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach guided by the *Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses* (PRISMA) 2020 guidelines, which consist of four main stages: identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and inclusion of studies. The PRISMA guidelines were adopted to ensure that the literature search and article selection processes were conducted systematically, transparently, and reproducibly, allowing other researchers to trace the procedures and evaluate the selection process (Page et al., 2021).

The data sources for this study consisted of scientific articles retrieved from three academic indexing platforms: Scopus, the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), and Science and Technology Index (SINTA), managed by Indonesia's Ministry

of Higher Education, Science, and Technology. The literature search was conducted using the Publish or Perish application to assist in retrieving and organizing bibliographic records, with Indonesian and English keywords. The search terms included combinations of the following keywords: *"Arabic language learning," "Arabic language teaching," "Arabic education," "early childhood education," "preschool," "kindergarten,"* and *"early childhood."* Boolean operators (AND and OR) were applied to combine the keywords and refine the search results. The selected publications were limited to articles published between 2020 and 2026 to capture recent developments and emerging issues in Arabic language learning in early childhood education.

Article selection was conducted based on predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria. The inclusion criteria were as follows: (1) articles discussing Arabic language learning or teaching in early childhood education settings, including Early Childhood Education (PAUD), Islamic Kindergarten (RA), and Kindergarten (TK); (2) articles published between 2020 and 2026; (3) articles written in Indonesian or English; (4) articles available in full-text format; and (5) articles published in journals indexed by Scopus, DOAJ, or SINTA. The exclusion criteria comprised: (1) articles that did not specifically address Arabic language learning or teaching in early childhood education; (2) opinion papers, editorials, and other non-research publications; (3) duplicate publications; and (4) articles published in journals that were not indexed by Scopus, DOAJ, or SINTA.

The data collection procedure involved several structured and documented stages. First, the researchers formulated the research questions to establish the scope and direction of the review. The research questions were as follows: (1) What are the research trends in Arabic language learning in early childhood education in terms of publication year, geographical distribution, research methods, and research focus? (2) What are the major themes and research focuses investigated in Arabic language learning in early childhood education? and (3) What research gaps and emerging directions can inform future studies on Arabic language learning in early childhood education?

Second, the researchers developed a review protocol comprising the research background, objectives, research questions, search keywords, inclusion and exclusion criteria, selected databases and indexing platforms, and data analysis procedures. This protocol served as a reference to maintain consistency throughout the literature search and selection processes.

Third, the literature search was conducted using combinations of the predetermined Indonesian and English keywords, assisted by the Publish or Perish application. Boolean operators (AND and OR) were used to broaden or narrow the search results according to the research objectives. The retrieved bibliographic records were subsequently organized for further screening.

Fourth, the retrieved articles were screened based on their titles and abstracts to identify their relevance to the research focus, particularly whether they explicitly addressed Arabic language learning or teaching in early childhood education settings (PAUD, RA, or TK). At this stage, duplicate records were identified and removed. The indexing status of the journals was also verified through the Scopus, DOAJ, and SINTA platforms to ensure compliance with the established inclusion criteria.

Fifth, the articles that passed the initial screening were examined in full text to assess their eligibility based on the predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria. The eligible articles were then documented in a data extraction table containing information about the authors, publication year, journal name, research objectives, research design and methods, characteristics of the educational institutions and participants, and key findings concerning the implementation, effectiveness, and challenges of Arabic language learning in early childhood education.

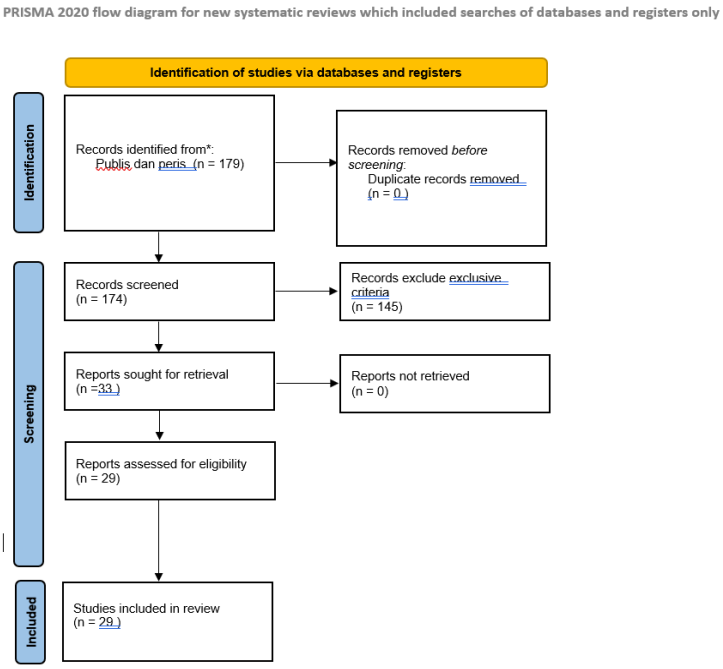


Figure 1. PRISMA 2020 Flow Diagram of the Study Selection Process

Data from the selected articles were extracted and analyzed using descriptive and thematic analysis. The extracted information included the authors, publication year, country or research location, research objectives, subjects or participants, research designs and methods, data collection techniques, research themes, and key findings. Descriptive analysis was employed to map publication trends, geographical distribution, and research methodologies, while thematic analysis was used to identify recurring patterns, dominant themes, and emerging issues across the selected studies. The thematic analysis focused on several aspects, including play-based learning approaches, songs and stories, the use of visual media, flashcards, educational games, digital technology, learning applications, teacher and parental involvement, and challenges in implementing Arabic language learning in early childhood education. Furthermore, the findings were synthesized to identify research gaps and emerging directions for future investigations, particularly in relation to pedagogical approaches, learning strategies, and the development of Arabic language learning in early childhood education.

D. Research Trends And Emerging Directions In Arabic Language Learning

The literature search conducted using the Publish or Perish application identified 179 records. These records were examined individually based on their

thematic relevance and the indexing status of their respective journals in SINTA, DOAJ, or Scopus. Following the screening and eligibility assessment processes, 29 articles met the established inclusion criteria and were included in this review (see Figure 1).

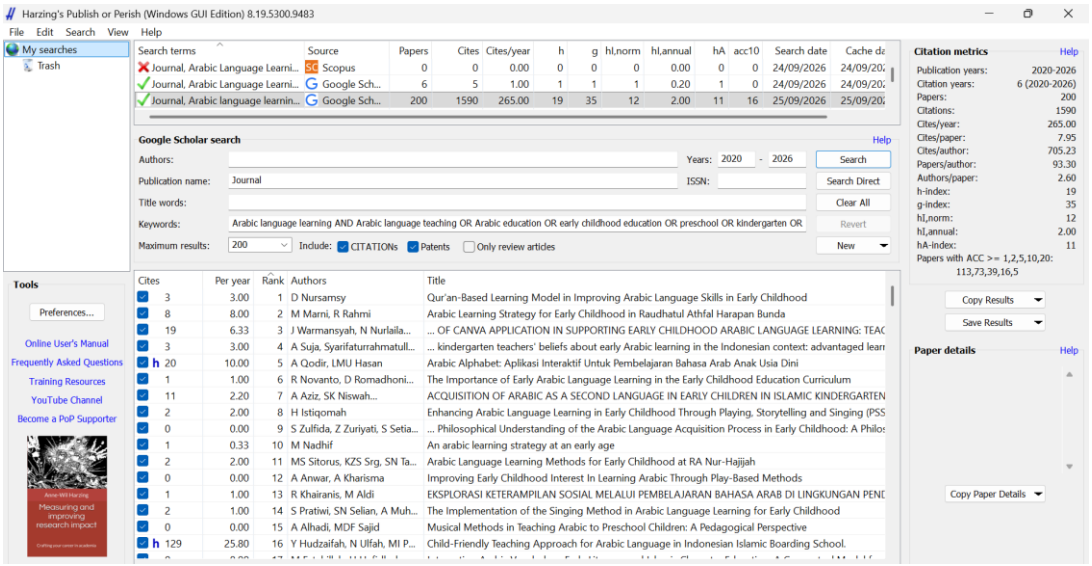


Figure 1. Literature Search Process Using the Publish or Perish Application

Table 1. Summary of Previous Studies on Arabic Language Learning in Early Childhood Education

No	Year	Authors	Research Methods	Research Focus	Research Location	Research Participants
1	2020	Mohammad Fauziddin, Makhyatul Fikriya	• Classroom Action Research design consisting of two cycles with two meetings each. • Data collection: observation and documentation. • Data analysis: percentage techniques.	Investigating the improvement of Arabic vocabulary recognition in early childhood using Hijaiyah letter card games.	TKIT Al Mumtaz, Kampar Regency	Eighteen children from Group B at the integrated Islamic kindergarten.

No	Year	Authors	Research Methods	Research Focus	Research Location	Research Participants
2	2021	Riska Lailatul Andiri, Zahrotun Nikmah, Majidatun Ahmala	Descriptive method exploring online learning models for Arabic language instruction at TK Al-Farobi Surabaya.	• Implementation methods of online Arabic language assignments. • Results of Arabic language assignments on early childhood development.	TK Al-Farobi Surabaya	Kindergarten B teachers as the main interview sources. - Student guardians/parents as respondents.
3	2021	Abdul Aziz, Siti Khoirun Niswah, Faisal Mahmuoud Adam Ibrahim	• Qualitative approach using descriptive research and case study methods. • Interviews, observations, and documentation. • Credibility tests, triangulation, and discussion. • Data reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing.	• How early childhood children at Daarut Tahfidz acquire a second language. • Media used for second-language acquisition. • Languages obtained by the children.	Daarut Tahfidz lil Athfal Malang.	• 20 students. • 3 teachers. • Head of Daarut Tahfidz lil Athfal.

No	Year	Authors	Research Methods	Research Focus	Research Location	Research Participants
4	2021	Meutia Rahmah, Ade Tursina, Nuraisyah	• Classroom Action Research (CAR) using the Kemmis and Taggart model. • Two cycles; each included planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. • Interviews, observation, and documentation.	Describing how the singing method enriches Arabic vocabulary mastery in early childhood.	Geuduba ng Aceh Village, Langsa Baro District, Langsa City	6 children aged 5–6 years: 4 boys and 2 girls.
5	2021	Mahyudin Ritonga, Talqis Nurdianto, Rahmawati	• Descriptive qualitative research. • Observation, interviews, and documentation study.	Strategy undertaken by Pondok Pesantren Darussalam Pameraan in developing an Arabic language environment.	Darussalam Islamic Boarding School, Parmeraan Village, Dolok District, North Padang Lawas Regency, North Sumatra	• Manager of the Islamic boarding school. • Students. • Teachers and other staff.
6	2022	Duwi Meilina	Classroom Action Research design consisting of planning, implementation, observation, and reflection across cycles.	Enhancing Arabic letter recognition using flashcard media among early childhood learners at RA Nurul Iman.	RA Nurul Iman, Tanjung Bulan Village, Kasui District, Way Kanan Regency, Lampung	• Early childhood learners. • Group B children aged 4–5 years.

No	Year	Authors	Research Methods	Research Focus	Research Location	Research Participants
7	2022	Faliqul Isbah, Ahmad Taufiq, Ahmad Jamaludin, Misbahul Munir	• Library-based research using descriptive qualitative methodology. • Document analysis of books, journals, and related articles.	Investigating learning strategies for early childhood education regarding Arabic language skills.	Not addressed in the paper.	Not addressed in the paper.
8	2022	Dian Risky Amalia, Vina Anggraini, Adrian Rodgers	Qualitative approach describing the implementation of the singing method.	Implementation of the singing method in Arabic learning at Atlantic Kindergarten, South Lampung.	Atlantic Kindergarten, South Lampung	19 students from Permata Atlantic Kindergarten in South Lampung.
9	2023	Yenni Yunita, Siti Quratul Aini, Ary Antony Putra, Rukia Siregar, Nur Annisa	• Community service involving learning assistance and Arabic vocabulary introduction. • Varied lecture method using colorful images and animations.	Learning assistance through Arabic vocabulary introduction for early childhood.	TAUD Tahfizh Al-Fatih School, Jl. Rasamala No. 500, Sidomulyo Timur Village, Marpoyan Damai District, Pekanbaru City	30 children participated in the community service activity.

No	Year	Authors	Research Methods	Research Focus	Research Location	Research Participants
10	2023	Jhoni Warmansyah, Nurlaila, Adam Mudinillah, Ananta Dwina Fitri	• Quantitative survey approach. • Online questionnaire distributed via Google Form. • Quantitative descriptive analysis.	Exploring and analyzing the potential use of Canva as a medium for early childhood Arabic language learning.	Duo Koto District, Pasaman Regency, West Sumatra	20 early childhood education teachers.
11	2023	M Mansyur, Maltuful Anam	Descriptive qualitative approach with a phenomenological research type.	Implementation of child-friendly Arabic language learning for infancy-stage children.	Ummul Quro Pamekasan Early Childhood Education Institute	Principal, teachers, students, and parents.
12	2023	Moh Nadhif	Qualitative research using a phenomenological approach.	• Strategies used by teachers/ schools for early Arabic learning. • Factors influencing early Arabic learning.	Class B, Raudatul Atfal Al-Masithoh Tegalgondo Karangploso	Teacher of Class B.
13	2024	Anni Kholilah, Kholidah Nur, Mukhlis	Research and Development (R&D) using the ADDIE model: Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, Evaluation.	Developing the Hijaiyah Letter Tree educational game to help early childhood children recognize Hijaiyah letters.	RA As-Syarif Sibanggor Jae, Puncak Sorik Marapi District, Mandailing Natal Regency	• Early childhood children. • Media and material experts. • Teacher 1 and Teacher 2.

No	Year	Authors	Research Methods	Research Focus	Research Location	Research Participants
14	2024	Maulana Ashari, Rosendah Dwi Maulaya, Susliana, Wafiq Elsa Maulida, Dania Rahmasari, Olivia Afkarina, Tharika Neyla Izzati Sholihah	• Participatory Action Research involving 32 students and 3 teachers. • Conducted over 2 weeks in three activity stages.	Assisting teachers and students in introducing basic Arabic through songs compiled in the Ghina'ul Athfal book.	TK Dharma Wanita Ngrayudan 1, Ngrayudan 1 Hamlet, Jogorogo Village, on the slopes of Mount Lawu	• 32 students. • 3 teachers.
15	2024	Sri Zulfida, Zuriyati, Samsi Setiadi	• Qualitative ll,.64descriptive approach. • Direct classroom observation and interviews. • Miles and Huberman data analysis.	Exploring application of the philosophy of language approach in teaching Arabic to early childhood in Raudhatul Athfal.	Raudhatul Athfal in Bintan Regency, Riau Islands	30 teachers with Arabic teaching experience.
16	2024	Nurul Fitria Aprilia, Hanifa Hafiza, Malikatus Sholihah	• Qualitative field study. • In-depth interviews, direct observation, and documentation analysis.	Investigating the effectiveness of Arabic language learning methods based on fun-based learning at KB.	Bina Anak Muslim Tuban Kindergarten	Teachers and school principal.

No	Year	Authors	Research Methods	Research Focus	Research Location	Research Participants
17	2024	Sindi Pratiwi, Suci Nadilla Selian, Arfin Muhammad, Hilda Zahra Lubis	Qualitative-descriptive approach to understand singing method implementation.	Understanding in depth the implementation of the singing method in early childhood Arabic language learning.	Not addressed in the paper.	Teachers and students.
18	2025	Nuraman, Alia Ade Erwina, Septina	Quantitative approach with a descriptive research design.	Use of picture-based media supported by audio in learning Hijaiyah letters and Arabic vocabulary.	PAUD Kober Nurul Ikhwan, Tunjung Teja District	13 children aged 5–6 years.
19	2025	Muhammad Zaairul Haq, Silfiyah Rohmawati	Library research examining literature, theories, models, and curricula related to teaching Arabic vocabulary to early childhood students.	Analyzing previous studies on Arabic vocabulary teaching strategies in early childhood education.	Lubuk Keliat Village at Al-Fatih Early Childhood Education Center; Insan Mandiri Kindergarten in Lambung; PAUD AL-Madany Gondanglegi Malang	30 children participated in the number-introduction program at Al-Fatih Early Childhood Education Center.

No	Year	Authors	Research Methods	Research Focus	Research Location	Research Participants
20	2025	Marni, Rahmi	Qualitative case study with descriptive-analytical and exploratory framework.	• Arabic teaching strategies at Raudhatul Athfal Harapan Bunda. Alignment with modern pedagogical principles. • Evidence-based improvements grounded in child development and second-language acquisition theories.	Raudhatul Athfal Harapan Bunda, Indonesia	• Arabic teachers. • Early childhood learners aged 4–6. • Curriculum /lesson-plan/material documents. • Parents.
21	2025	Himatul Istiqomah	• Qualitative library research. • Literature review of books and journal articles. • Content analysis for pattern and theme identification.	Application of the PSS (Playing, Storytelling, and Singing) strategy in early childhood Arabic language learning.	Not addressed in the paper.	Not addressed in the paper.

No	Year	Authors	Research Methods	Research Focus	Research Location	Research Participants
22	2025	Nurlaila, Suci Nisaul Husni, Jhoni Warmansyah, Meliana Sari, Restu Yuningsih, Winda Trimelia Utami	Research and Development using a modified 4-D model: define, design, and development stages.	Developing an animated video for Arabic vocabulary recognition using Macromedia Flash 8.	Al-Fityan Qur'anic Early Childhood Education (PAUD), Lima Kaum, Tanah Datar Regency	• Two experts. • Two teachers. • Children aged 5–6 years.
23	2025	Mayang Sari Sitorus, Khalida Ziah Sukmana Srg, Salsah Nabilah Tarigan, Hilda Zahra Lubis	Qualitative research producing descriptive data from observed individuals and behaviors.	Investigating effective methods for teaching Arabic to young children.	RA Nur-Hajijah	Not addressed in the paper.
24	2025	Aidillah Suja, Syarifaturrahmatullah, Khairil Anwar, Fachrurrazi, Muchsinul Khuluq, Lina Eka Retnaningsih	Interpretive paradigm with a qualitative approach exploring teachers' beliefs.	Islamic kindergarten teachers' beliefs about early Arabic learning, focusing on benefits, teacher abilities, and teaching methods.	Indonesia, involving teachers from the Islamic Kindergarten Teachers Association	10 Islamic kindergarten teachers aged 39–50.
25	2025	Jauharoh Alfi Karomah, Narendradewi Kusumastuti, Amiratih Siti Aisyah	Research and Development using ADDIE: analyze, design, develop, implementation, evaluation.	Developing an Arabic Alphabet Book to improve children's recognition of Arabic numbers and Hijaiyah letters.	Aisyiyah Sidorejo Kindergarten, Kendal District	Material experts, media experts, and teacher users. - Small-group trial: 10 Class A1 children. - Field trial: 20 Class A2 children.

No	Year	Authors	Research Methods	Research Focus	Research Location	Research Participants
26	2026	Aep Anwar, Ajeng Kharisma Putri	• Classroom Action Research involving 10 children aged 5–6 in Class B. • Two cycles of planning, action, observation, and reflection.	Improving early childhood interest in learning Arabic through play-based methods.	RA Al Huda Pamulang, Indonesia	10 children aged 5–6 years in Class B.
27	2026	Ajeng Kharisma Putri	• Quantitative approach with pre-experimental One-Group Pretest-Posttest Design. • One group assessed before and after treatment without a control group.	Effectiveness of YouTube digital media through singing activities in improving Hijaiyah letter recognition.	Cendekia Tadulako Kindergarten, Palu, Indonesia	17 Group B2 students: 9 girls and 8 boys aged 5–6 years.
28	2026	D.I. Ansusa Putra, Fiqi Nurmanda Sari, Sukma Sari Dewi Chan, Mekki Klaina	Qualitative descriptive approach.	• Use of Islamic songs in Qur'an-Hadith education for early childhood. • Process of modifying songs into Islamic forms.	Five Islamic early childhood educational institutions in Jambi City, Indonesia	• 12 classroom teachers. • 2 parents.

No	Year	Authors	Research Methods	Research Focus	Research Location	Research Participants
29	2026	Mohamad Aris Murtadho, Ahmad Fikri Amrullah, Mochamad Nasichin Al Muiz	• Qualitative methodology using an integrative literature review. • Databases included Scopus, DOAJ, Google Scholar, and Sinta.	Integration of a love-based curriculum with psychopedagogy, humanistic values, social-emotional learning, and Islamic educational philosophy in early childhood Arabic instruction.	Not addressed in the paper.	Not addressed in the paper.

1. RQ1 – Research Trends

The selected articles were classified according to the indexing platforms of their respective journals, namely SINTA, Scopus, and DOAJ. Scopus-indexed journals were identified through the SCImago Journal & Country Rank website, SINTA-indexed journals through the official SINTA platform, and DOAJ-indexed journals through the DOAJ website. This classification was intended to establish the indexing status of the publications included in the review and provide a basis for examining the distribution of research across different journal indexing platforms. The analysis identified 29 articles addressing Arabic language learning in early childhood education that met the established indexing criteria.

An analysis of publication years indicates an increasing trend in research on Arabic language learning in early childhood education between 2020 and 2026 (see Figure 2). Specifically, one study was published in 2020, followed by four studies in 2021, three studies in 2022, four studies in 2023, and five studies in 2024. The number increased significantly to eight studies in 2025. By September 2026, four studies had been published, with the possibility of additional publications before the end of the year. Overall, the distribution indicates growing academic attention to Arabic language learning in early childhood education, particularly during the 2025–2026 period.

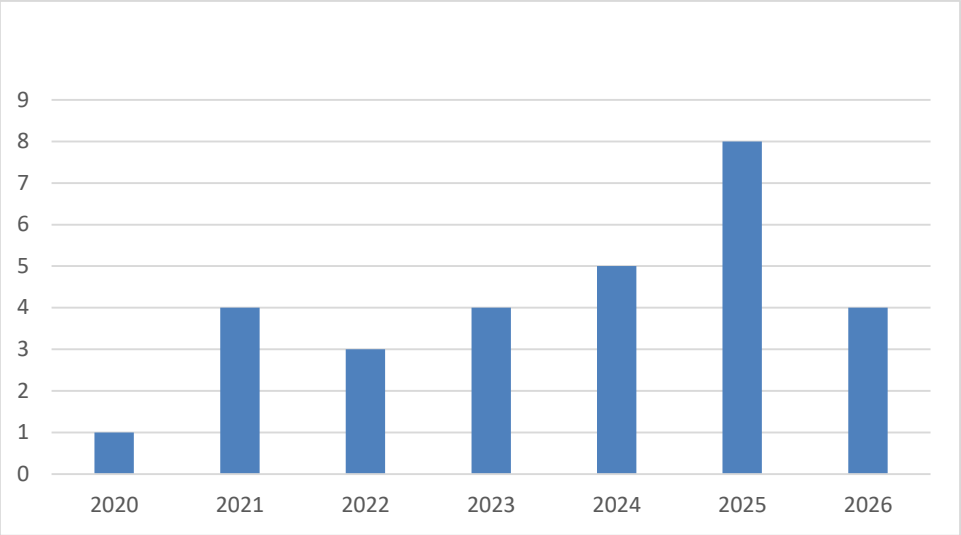


Figure 2: Graph of research each year

Based on the research matrix presented in Table 1, learning media and instructional strategies emerged as prominent areas of investigation. This trend reflects the importance of creating learning environments that are comfortable, interactive, and enjoyable for young children. From a social constructivist perspective, Arabic language learning at the early childhood level should provide opportunities for social interaction and active participation, enabling children to construct knowledge through meaningful learning experiences (Smidt, 2009). Such an environment can also provide children with positive initial experiences of learning Arabic.

Several factors may explain the emphasis on learning media in previous studies. First, the studies indicate concerns regarding the availability and variation of learning media in early childhood education settings, which encourage researchers to explore alternative and more engaging instructional resources. Second, difficulties in recognizing Hijaiyah letters and acquiring basic Arabic vocabulary have become important considerations in designing learning interventions. Third, certain Arabic letters have similar phonetic characteristics, which may present challenges for young children during the initial stages of language learning. Finally, children's limited interest in Arabic learning has encouraged researchers to investigate more varied instructional media and activities. These considerations suggest that the selection of appropriate learning media is closely related to children's developmental characteristics and the need to create engaging learning experiences.

The research trends also indicate that studies on Arabic language learning have consistently addressed learning media, instructional methods, and teaching strategies. However, studies published in 2025 and 2026 have begun to introduce additional research themes, particularly teacher beliefs and curriculum development. This development suggests a gradual expansion of research interests beyond the technical implementation of learning activities toward broader pedagogical and curricular considerations.

Regarding research methodologies, qualitative approaches were the most frequently employed, accounting for 14 of the 29 studies. Classroom Action Research and related action research approaches ranked second, with five studies. Quantitative research and Research and Development (R&D) approaches accounted for three studies each, while literature-based reviews accounted for four studies. This distribution indicates that previous research has primarily focused on describing learning practices, exploring instructional experiences, and developing learning media.

Although qualitative research provides valuable insights into teaching practices and children's learning experiences, the predominance of descriptive approaches indicates opportunities for methodological diversification. Quantitative and experimental research, particularly studies employing comparison groups and more rigorous measurement procedures, could provide additional evidence regarding the effectiveness of learning media and instructional strategies. Longitudinal and mixed-methods approaches may also contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of children's Arabic language development over time.

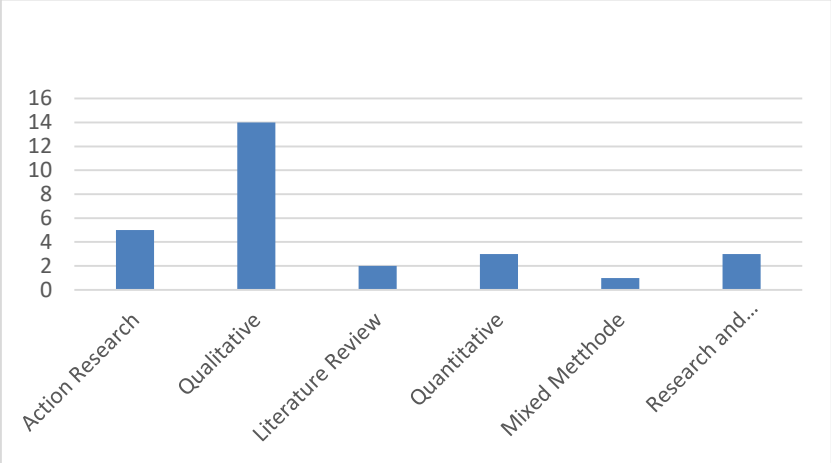


Figure 3. Graph of research methods

2. RQ2 – Major Themes

Based on the research matrix, several major themes can be identified in studies of Arabic language learning in early childhood education. Learning media emerged as the most prominent theme, accounting for nine studies. These studies examined various instructional resources, including Hijaiyah letter cards, flashcards, educational games, Arabic alphabet books, animated videos, YouTube, audio-supported media, and the Canva application. These media were generally used to help children recognize Hijaiyah letters, enrich Arabic vocabulary, increase learning interest, and create more engaging learning experiences in accordance with the characteristics of early childhood. The findings indicate that concrete, visual, audiovisual, and technology-based media have become important considerations in the development of Arabic language instruction for young learners.

The prominence of learning media also reflects the importance of providing learning experiences that are appropriate to children's developmental

characteristics. At the early childhood level, visual and interactive resources can support the introduction of unfamiliar vocabulary and symbols through concrete and engaging activities. However, the educational value of these media depends not only on their attractiveness but also on how they are integrated into learning activities and facilitated by teachers. Therefore, the development and selection of Arabic learning media should consider their relevance to learning objectives, children's developmental stages, and opportunities for active participation.

Another prominent theme concerns learning methods and instructional strategies, represented by seven studies in the research classification. These studies discussed singing, playing, storytelling, *fun-based learning*, and the Playing, Storytelling, and Singing (PSS) strategy in Arabic language instruction. Such approaches aim to create enjoyable learning environments while supporting children's acquisition of basic Arabic vocabulary and language skills. In addition, several studies highlighted teachers' strategies in providing guidance, establishing an Arabic-language learning environment, and adapting instructional activities to children's developmental needs. These findings indicate that successful Arabic language learning involves not only the selection of appropriate instructional materials but also the design and implementation of developmentally appropriate learning experiences.

Other themes included learning approaches (two studies), teacher competence and beliefs (one study), curriculum (one study), and online learning (one study). Studies concerning learning approaches examined child-friendly instruction, language philosophy, local wisdom, and the integration of psychopedagogical and humanistic values into Arabic language education. Research on teachers focused on their beliefs regarding the benefits of early Arabic language learning, their teaching competencies, and their instructional practices. Meanwhile, curriculum-related studies explored broader pedagogical and educational principles underlying Arabic language instruction. Some studies also identified implementation challenges, including limited learning time, teacher competence, and difficulties in selecting appropriate instructional methods.

Overall, these themes indicate that research on Arabic language learning in early childhood education has gradually expanded beyond the initial recognition of Hijaiyah letters and basic vocabulary acquisition. Research attention has increasingly addressed instructional media, teaching methods, pedagogical strategies, teacher competencies, and curriculum development. Nevertheless, the distribution of research themes suggests that the field remains strongly oriented toward instructional implementation, while broader aspects of children's language development and the sustainability of learning outcomes require further investigation.

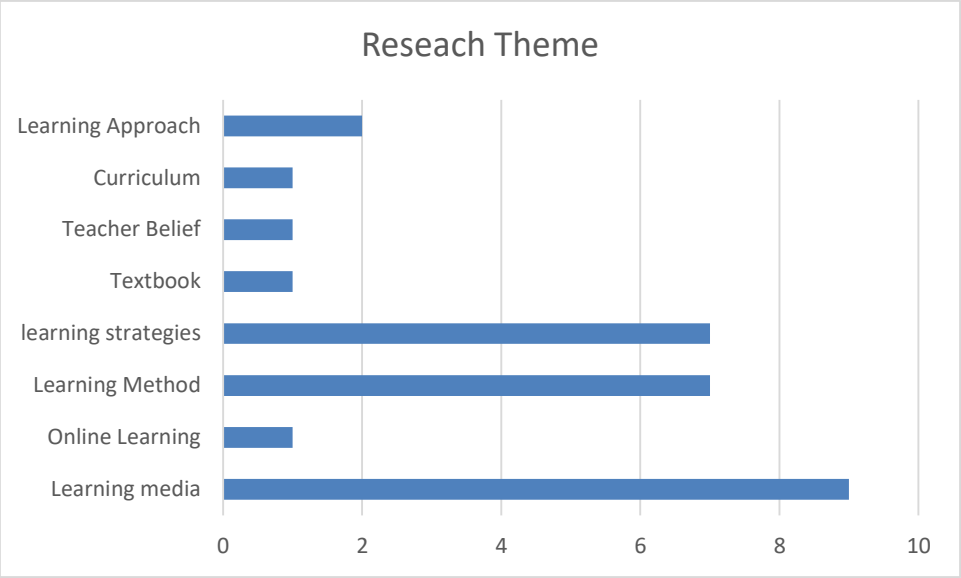


Figure 4: Research Theme

3. RQ3 – Research Gaps and Emerging Directions

Based on the research matrix, one relatively underexplored area concerns the long-term impact of Arabic language learning on children's language development, particularly speaking skills, interactive communication, and the use of Arabic in everyday situations. Most existing studies have focused on instructional media, Hijaiyah letter recognition, vocabulary acquisition, and the implementation of particular teaching methods. Consequently, there is still limited understanding of how early exposure to Arabic contributes to children's ability to communicate and use the language in meaningful social contexts. Future studies could therefore investigate the development of children's productive language skills and the extent to which early Arabic learning is sustained beyond structured classroom activities.

The learning contexts examined in previous studies also provide opportunities for further investigation. Research has predominantly focused on formal early childhood education institutions, such as PAUD, RA, and TK. Other contexts, including family environments, community-based learning, non-formal educational settings, and multilingual environments, remain relevant areas for exploration. In particular, studies involving Indonesian, regional languages, and Arabic could provide a broader understanding of how children's existing linguistic environments influence their Arabic language acquisition. Such research would help explain the role of family involvement, social interaction, and everyday language exposure in supporting early Arabic learning.

From a methodological perspective, previous studies have predominantly employed qualitative, descriptive, action research, and developmental approaches, particularly those focusing on the implementation of learning media and instructional methods. Although these approaches provide important information about educational practices, opportunities remain for more diverse research designs. Longitudinal studies, experimental research involving comparison groups, mixed-methods approaches, and quantitative studies with larger samples could

provide stronger evidence regarding the effectiveness and sustainability of different instructional approaches. These methodologies could be applied to evaluate the contribution of digital media, educational games, storytelling, singing, and other learning activities to children's Arabic language development. Furthermore, comparative studies across educational institutions, geographical regions, and conventional and digital learning environments could offer a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing the implementation and outcomes of Arabic language learning.

Emerging research directions may also focus on integrating digital technology with personalized and child-centered learning approaches. For example, future studies could examine the use of interactive applications, gamification, artificial intelligence, augmented reality, and audiovisual media designed in accordance with children's developmental characteristics. However, the implementation of these technologies should be accompanied by appropriate pedagogical guidance and consideration of children's learning needs. In addition, teacher competence, parental involvement, digital literacy, language development assessment, and the sustainability of instructional media represent important areas requiring further investigation.

These research directions are significant because the success of Arabic language learning should not be evaluated solely in terms of whether a particular medium or instructional method attracts children's attention. Rather, future research needs to examine how learning activities contribute to measurable and sustainable language development, including children's ability to recognize vocabulary, understand simple expressions, pronounce words, and communicate in meaningful contexts. Such investigations could provide a stronger evidence base for developing Arabic language learning practices that are developmentally appropriate, sustainable, and applicable across diverse early childhood education settings.

E. Conclusion

Based on the findings of this systematic literature review, Arabic language learning in early childhood education should be understood as a sociocultural process shaped by interactions among children, teachers, parents, and the learning environment. Accordingly, the selection of learning media and instructional methods should support the gradual development of children's language abilities in accordance with their developmental stages. This perspective is consistent with Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, particularly the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which emphasizes the importance of guidance and social interaction in facilitating children's learning and development.

The systematic literature review of studies on Arabic language learning in early childhood education published between 2020 and 2026 indicates a growing research interest in this field. The most prominent research themes focus on learning media, instructional methods, and teaching strategies, including the use of Hijaiyah letter cards, flashcards, educational games, animated videos, YouTube content, audio materials, and digital applications. In terms of research methodology, qualitative

approaches are the most frequently employed, while quantitative and Research and Development (R&D) studies remain relatively limited. These findings indicate that research on Arabic language learning in early childhood education is increasingly directed toward interactive, engaging, and developmentally appropriate learning experiences. Nevertheless, further research is needed to examine the long-term effects of these approaches on children's Arabic language development, particularly their speaking abilities, interactive communication, and practical use of Arabic in everyday contexts.

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