

# Implementation of Active Learning Strategies in Improving Arabic Language Skills for Students of STAI As-Sunnah Tanjung Morawa, North Sumatra

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## ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe the implementation of active learning strategies to speak Arabic as well as various supporting and inhibiting factors, and also to describe the results obtained after implementing active learning strategies to speak Arabic at STAI As-Sunnah Tanjung Morawa Deli Serdang. In addition, this study also wants to see what are the supporting and inhibiting factors in the implementation of the learning strategy. In this study, researchers used two sources of data, namely: main data (primary) and supporting data (secondary). The main data (primary) researchers obtained from key informants such as; rector, vice chancellor for student affairs, head of the language center, lecturer in Arabic language courses and several students, whose data was processed by researchers using purposive techniques. Meanwhile, the supporting data (secondary) for the researcher was obtained from books, journals, magazines, and other periodicals relevant to the research theme being studied. The results showed that this private Islamic university implemented an active learning strategy in Arabic with four basic skills, namely: speaking, listening, writing, and reading. Factors supporting the success of this learning strategy are the motivation of lecturers towards students, the provision of using Arabic as the main language in the campus environment, as well as support for language laboratory facilities and infrastructure. Meanwhile, the inhibiting factor is that there are still many lecturers who do not understand the active learning strategy, as well as the low seriousness and commitment of the lecturers and students in implementing the learning strategy. The researcher also observed that this learning strategy succeeded in increasing students' Arabic language skills quite significantly. In addition, this strategy is also able to bring students to win various Arabic speech competitions at local and national levels, even some students can continue their studies to the Middle East.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Arabic is the language used in the holy book Al-Qur'an. For Muslims Arabic is the language they use in performing various religious rituals, for example, in carrying out the prayer procession and the Hajj procession must use Arabic. On the other hand, for Arab or Middle Eastern people Arabic is also a tool or key to learning various kinds of knowledge, *be it 'ulûm al-diniyyah* (religious sciences) and *'ulûm al-dunyawiyyah* (science and technology), because many books in ancient times were written in Arabic. Based on UN Resolution No. 3190 (D28-) dated December 18, 1973, Arabic was designated as one of the official languages at the United Nations, which means it has an equal position with other international languages such as English, Spanish, Chinese, Russian, and French (Sani & Yahaya, 2022).

In Indonesia, learning Arabic has been included in Islamic schools starting from the KB (Playgroup) level /playgroup. However, there are studies that reveal the weakness of students' mastery of Arabic, such as research conducted by Osman & Hamzah (2017), the need analysis encompassed the presence of facilities supporting blended learning, the internet and e-learning literacy among students and their readiness to adopt blended learning (Osman & Hamzah, 2017). While Asbulah, Lubis, Aladdin, & Sahrim research (2020), The findings showed that the engagement of graduates to study the Arabic in the classroom is at moderate level, and followed by lower level outside the classroom. Overall, it was discovered that the engagement of Arabic students at the Malaysian public university level is still moderate and as such the authorities need to take initiative to improve this situation (Asbulah, Lubis, Aladdin, & Sahrim, 2020).

As-Sunnah Islamic High School (STAI), Tanjung Morawa is one of the universities that understands and realizes the importance of Arabic for its students. For them it is necessary to make a new breakthrough in order to overcome this problem of weak mastery of the Arabic language. Since the last three years starting from 2019, STAI As-Sunnah, Tanjung Morawa requires mastery of Arabic for students who are about to graduate, in particular skills speak (kalam) in Arabic. Therefore, Arabic lecturers are also required to implement strategies active learning in his teaching. This strategy was chosen to instill potential maharah al-kalâm. In addition, there are several programs owned by STAI As-Sunnah Tanjung Morawa in learning Arabic, including 1) There is a technical guide book that contains active learning strategies, which are expected to be able to motivate students to have Arabic language skills, 2) There is a mandatory boarding program during study and students who are accepted are a maximum of 24 years old, 3) STAI As-Sunnah Tanjung Morawa supports students to take part in Arabic-themed competitions, whether organized by government or private institutions ("Sejarah Singkat STAI As-Sunnah," 2013).

From here, the researcher felt interested in exploring this matter more deeply, so this paper would like to describe how to apply active learning strategies to speak Arabic and the various supporting and inhibiting factors, will also describe the results obtained after implementing active learning strategies to speak Arabic in STAI As-Sunnah Tanjung Morawa Deli Serdang.

Strategy was created by the Greeks, who endowed the concept with a military connotation. The term derives from the Greek strategos, translated as a general in command of troops or the art of the general or plan to destroy enemies through effective use of resources. This term in itself contained the idea of objectives to be achieved and plans of action to be performed in various scenarios, depending on the enemy's behavior (Mainardes, Ferreira, & Raposo, 2014, p. 45). In relation to the world of education, strategy can also be interpreted as a procedure that is planned to be used later in teaching certain themes so that educational goals can be achieved, of course the strategy must be chosen according to the existing variables so that the selection of teaching methods can be optimal (Alhirtani, 2019). From here the author understands that the strategy is an optimal and structured effort for educators to get good teaching to their students, where there are also accurate methods and ways to realize all educators' dreams. The learning strategy itself by the Directorate of Education Personnel can be interpreted as an activity teaching that must be carried out by an educator and his students so that the end of the learning can be achieved and is very beautiful to enjoy.

Active learning according to Zaini (2009), it can be interpreted as a teaching and learning process in which educators invite students to learn actively, so that students will dominate teaching and learning activities in the classroom (Zaini, Munthe, & Aryani, 2009, p. 67). Origin of the term Active Learning itself comes from the Active Student Learning Way (CSBA) which has been known since the 1984 curriculum (Sudjana & Suwariyah, 2010, p. 28). There are three groups of active learning objectives, namely: 1) So that students become active students from the start, some examples of learning strategies are as follows: Trading Places (Places of Trade), Who is in The Class (Who is in Class), Group Resume (Group Resume), and so on, 2) Helping students gain knowledge, skills and attitudes actively, some examples of learning strategies are Inquiring Minds What to Know (Awakening Curiosity), Listening Team (Listening Team), Guided Note-taking (Making Guided Notes), etc., and 3) Forming strong memories for students of several examples of learning strategies Index Card Match (Match Index Card), Topical Review (Topic Overview), Giving Questions and Getting Answers (Giving Questions-Getting Answers), and so on. In active learning there are many strategies, but in principle these strategies can be grouped in three ways, namely direct learning strategies (direct instructions), problem-based learning strategies (problem based learning), and cooperative learning strategies (cooperative learning) (Nisak, 2021).

Experts agree that in language skills (*mahârah al-lughah*) there are four skills, namely: speaking skills (*mahârah al-kalâm*), listening skills (*mahârah al-istima'*), writing skills (*mahârah al-kitâbah*), and reading skills (*mahârah al-qirâ'ah*) (Latief, Sari, Yusuf, Armila, & Hidayat, 2021). Although there are many types of active learning strategies, in Arabic learning itself there is no one active learning strategy that is specifically for use in learning Arabic, so all active learning strategies can be used, as long as they pay attention to things like 1) what are the learning objectives, 2) the materials, 3) the students, 4) the conditions during which the education takes place, 5) the time, 6) the facilities and infrastructure that will be used, and 7) the costs. Will have the ability (*mahârah*) in the *fi'ldal-qirâ'ah* (reading/ read), *al-istima'* (listening/ hear), *fi'ldal-kalâm/al-muhâdatsah* (speaking/ speak), *andal-kitâbah* (writing/write). This learning strategy can also be referred to as a strategy *Nazariyyah al-Wihdah* (All in One System) (Syaiful, Ramadhanti, & Mahmoud, 2021).

In an effort to achieve the goals of active learning Arabic, an appropriate active learning strategy can be chosen. First, to improve speaking skills (*al-kalâm/speaking*) can use strategies such as (a) Direct Strategic, which aims to train students to retell what they see in Arabic, (b) Jigsaw Strategic This strategy aims to make students understand a reading as a whole again by dividing the reading into small parts which will later be combined into one, hopefully the reading can be understood quickly and deeply, (c) Small Group Strategic, This strategy aims to encourage students to be more active, so that students feel the same learning experience, (d) Image Viewing Strategic, Students will be trained to understand a reading which will later be visualized through the form of pictures (Khansa, 2016).

Second, to improve reading skills (*al-qirâ'ah/reading*) strategy can be used (a) with empty outline strategic, train students in explaining the contents of the reading in the form of tables, for example students can know the difference between *isim* and *fi'il*, (b) index card match strategic, teach students about words or sentences and their partners, (c) strategic analysis, train students to understand the main ideas and supporting ideas of a reading, and (d) snow bowling strategic, is used at an advanced level, consists of several stages according to the number of students and is usually used in small classes (Khansa, 2016).

Third, to improve writing skills (*al-kitâbah/writing*) can be divided first from the level, namely from beginner, intermediate and advanced. Learning to write (*al-kitâbah*) itself focuses on three things: writing skills with correct writing, skills in explaining ideas clearly and in detail, and correcting *khât* (Mustofa & Abdul, 2016, p. 104). Then it can also be practiced some active learning strategies such as (a) the strategy of seeing pictures, where students are asked to make a sentence or compose based on an image, (b) guided composition (الموجه الإنشاء), namely providing students with exercises to make sentences based on certain words, and (c) paragraph building The aim is to train students in developing their ideas by

way of students being given a topic and then students having to describe it in several sentences to become a paragraph.

Fourth, to improve listening skills (*al-istima'*/listening) can use active learning strategies in the form of (a) using text snippets strategy, students are trained in their listening skills and complete reading comprehension, in this strategy students listen to recorded readings and are given pieces of text related to the recorded reading, (b) recording strategy, emphasizing the ability to understand the contents of the reading and answer several questions related to the reading, and (c) retrieval (presentation) strategy, students are trained to re-express what they have heard in their own language (M. Khalilullah, 2011).

In Indonesia itself, in learning Arabic, in general, there are 2 types of theories, namely: *Nazariyyah al-Furū'* and *Nazariyyah al-Wihdah*. *Nazariyyah al-Furū'* is a theory that adheres to the separation of material in Arabic lessons (learning such *asqawa'id*, *muthāla'ah*, *muhādatsah*, as well *asinsha'* studied individually). While *Nazariyyah al-Wihdah* On the contrary, this theory is also called the unitary theory. All In One System, who views that the Arabic language is a unified whole, has mutually reinforcing and interrelated relationships. Therefore there should only be one subject that includes one meeting, books, evaluations and learning outcomes (Arsyad, 2010). Theory *Nazariyyah al-Wihdah* widely supported by linguists and communication experts, because in addition to seeing Arabic as a complete learning, they also see the shortcomings of other theories, namely: *Nazariyyah al-Furū'*, namely it is considered that this theory will tear the integrity of the Arabic language as well as eliminate the natural character of a language, because learning will be cut off and students find it difficult to use it in real life (Nur, 2015).

In several previous studies such as that conducted by Supardi (2018) by title "*The Integrated Arabic Learning Model at State Islamic Religious Universities*" which examines the importance of integrating language skills in foreign languages and Arabic. From the results of this study, it was found that the State Islamic Religious College (PTKIN) which separated the four Arabic language skills was not able to realize active language learning, and the results of the students' abilities were also half-assed because the focus was on reading and writing, learning became passive. Because speaking and listening skills get a small portion (Supardi, 2018). In another study, conducted by Novita Rahmi (2019) entitled "*Problematics of the Application of the Nazhariyyah Al Wahdah System in Arabic Language Learning at Madrasah Aliyah in Metro City in 2018*" found that there were problems in the application of theory *Nazariyyah al-Wihdah*, these problems include insufficient time allocation and the absence of a language laboratory that supports, while the solution to this problem is to bring in teachers who are professional in the field of Arabic and create a language environment that supports learning (Rahmi, 2019).

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to analyze and identify the implementation of active learning strategies, as well as supporting and hindering factors, as well as the results obtained after this active learning strategy is implemented.

## 2. METHODS

This type of research is descriptive qualitative, the author will explain the conditions as well as certain events according to the data in the field. This research will also use a social approach, because the data sought is data about humans who are always evolving and changing all the time. The purpose of this social approach is also to gain a deep and natural understanding and interpretation of the meaning of the phenomena in the field. In this study, the researcher does not start from a hypothesis, instead the researcher will go directly to the field and collect various complete data according to the problems studied (Lambert & Lambert, 2012, pp. 255–256).

The location of the implementation of this research is the Islamic High School (STAI) As-Sunnah Tanjung Morawa, on Jl. Medan-Tj. Morawa Km. 13, gg. Darmo, Bangun Sari Village, Tanjung Morawa District, Deli Serdang Regency, North Sumatra. Meanwhile the time for this research was carried out since the submission of the title was from January- October 2021. The time allocation for data collection in the field was 3 months, namely from July- September 2021.

For primary data and secondary data, it was determined that the primary data came from key informants taken from purposive techniques, namely taken from the managers or administrators of

STAI As-Sunnah Tanjung Morawa, hostel caretakers at STAI As-Sunnah Tanjung Morawa, and Arabic teachers at, while secondary data comes from journals, books, or magazines, all of which are still related to the object of research.

There are three kinds of instruments used to collect data in this study, namely interview guides, observation guides and match lists. The research data will be analyzed using interactive techniques consisting of 4 interacting components (Sutton & Austin, 2015). The 4 components are data collection (obtained from interviews, observation and documentation), data reduction (selection, centralization and simplification of data), data presentation (in the form of narrative texts grouped according to the topic of the problem), and verification and drawing conclusions.

To check the validity of the research data using data triangulation, the steps to be taken are through source triangulation (repeating back to sources of information that have been obtained), method triangulation (comparing data collection techniques between one another) and theorizing activities (when there is data that is not available), contradict each other, a compromise will be made (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007).

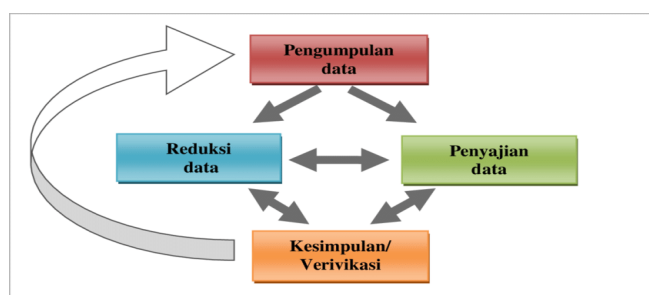


Figure 1. Miles and Huberman's Data Analysis Model

### 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In a previous study conducted by Supardi (2018), he said that it is necessary to develop a learning that combines the four skills in the language learning model in order to create an active and communicative language teaching (Supardi, 2018). The four skills in question are speaking skills (speaking; *mahârah al-kalâm*), reading skills (reading; *mahârah al-qirâ'ah*), listening skills (listening; *mahârah al-istimâ'*), and writing skills (writing; *mahârah al-scripture*). The integration or integrity of these four language skills is also called *nazariyât al-wihdah* in the context of learning Arabic. Based on research, the application of *nazariyât al-wihdah* at STAI As-Sunnah has been running for the last 3 years. It's been running for 3 years.

This Arabic language incentive program (*Qism al-I'dād al-Lughawiy*) runs for 1 year, and during this 1 year prospective students are not allowed to take undergraduate courses, except for students who are already proficient in Arabic according to the results of the interview. The final assessment of the Language Preparation Program consisted of *Mumtāz* (ممتاز), *Jayyid Jiddan* (جيد جداً), *Jayyid* (جيد), *Maqbūl* (مقبول), and *Rasyīd* (رشيد). For students who get the *Rasyīd* (رشيد) score, they are considered not to have passed and cannot continue their studies, but students will be given the opportunity to repeat again for 1 year. For students who are not proficient in Arabic, they will take 5 years of education because of this incentive program, and for those who are proficient in Arabic, they will only take 4 years of education.

| No. | YEAR/ FORCE         | NUMBER OF STUDENTS |    | TOTAL STUDENTS | NUMBER OF CLASS |
|-----|---------------------|--------------------|----|----------------|-----------------|
|     |                     | LK                 | PR |                |                 |
| 1   | 2019/2020<br>First  | 150                | 60 | 210            | 8               |
| 2   | 2020/2021<br>Second | 64                 | 40 | 104            | 5               |
| 3   | 2021/2022 Third     | 119                | 80 | 199            | 6               |

**Table 1.** Number of Students and Classes of *I'dād Lughah* Batch I, II and III

The active learning strategy of Arabic for students is divided into 2 sides, namely active learning through the Language Preparation Program (*Qism al-I'dād Lughawiy*) and the Arabic Language Learning Program in the classroom. From the results of the interview, it was found that in the Language Preparation Program (*Qism al-I'dād Lughawiy / IL*) the target was that students were already proficient in Arabic, especially in conversation, not forgetting to also be provided with reading, listening, and writing skills that students would explore in lectures. In the class according to the department In addition, there are other targets, such as weekly and monthly targets.<sup>1</sup> The weekly target to be achieved is memorizing the *mufradāt* written on the blackboard, while the monthly target is vocabulary and short daily conversations. Evaluation of weekly and monthly targets will be carried out by BEM.

In the IL program the manuals used are *Al-'Arabiyyah Baina Yadaik* volumes 1 – 3, in this manual there are also suggested learning methods, namely the *I'tiqādiyyah* method, such as *basyīrah*, *tarjamah*, *qawā'id*, *istilāhiyah*, and *sam'iyah*. In addition, there are also methods used in the IL program, namely the *Tikrār* method where the lecturer does repetitions of Arabic words or conversations in the next friendship and the *Halāqah* method where the lecturer demands students to imitate what the lecturer says. In their teaching, most of the lecturers use the method *Mubāsyarah* the direct method, where since the introduction, Arabic has been used without using the mother tongue at all, this is intended so that students are more focused, more active and motivated in the lesson, because this method is demonstrative, where students try to imitate and memorize. However, there are also lecturers who still mix Arabic with their mother tongue because it is judged that the students' ability to master Arabic is still too weak.

In addition to the problem of mastering speaking skills, the *I'dād Lughah* class also encountered problems with no motivation or enthusiasm for student learning. The STAI As-Sunnah explained that based on searches from the foundation or lecturer, students who do not have this enthusiasm for learning usually have personal problems, such as they enter STAI As-Sunnah not because of their own desires but at the wishes of their parents. To solve this personal problem, the head of the program *I'dād Lughah* who will be a motivator as well as a problem solver for these students.

Students who are declared proficient in Arabic according to the results of the interview or have passed the *I'dād Lughah* class will follow the undergraduate program (S1) according to their major. They will find Arabic courses according to the existing curriculum, which are taught in semester 1 with a weight of 2 credits. The manual for learning Arabic in lectures is *Al-'Arabiyyah Baina Yadaik* volume 4, in this book the material is higher because students are able to argue in Arabic. With students fluently speaking Arabic, if there is a competition these students will be directed to take part

in the competition, By participating in the competition, Arabic language skills will be honed and also able to compete with other PTKI students. Furthermore, in lectures,

There are several variations of active learning strategies carried out by lecturers in the classroom, from observations and interviews it was found that one of these strategies was the question and answer method, reading aloud strategy, learning strategy starts with a question, and discussion strategy. In an active learning strategy, the question and answer process will start when the lecturer introduces himself and then throws a topic at the students in Arabic, then the students are asked to explain the meaning of what the lecturer said, then the lecturer divides groups, 3-4 people in each group, then the lecturer asks students to write self-introductions and share their writings with other groups, after finishing the lecturer appoints students to explain what is in the writing without opening the writing, after that the lecturer invited other students to ask related questions, all this process was carried out in Arabic. Before ending the lesson, the lecturer repeats what has been conveyed in class (Al-Fauzan, 2003, p. 151).

In the active learning strategy Reading Aloud (reading aloud), the process begins when the lecturer reads the text fluently and aloud, then is given an explanation so that students are motivated to follow the lesson, then the lecturer returns to reading Arabic vocabulary, but this time students are asked to imitate what they hear. After that, students were given the opportunity to ask about vocabulary that had not been understood from the reading, after the questions were answered, some students were asked to come forward to talk according to the material, then the students and the lecturer together corrected the results of the conversation earlier (Al-Fauzan, 2003, p. 71). Then the lecturer conveys a conclusion about the contents of the reading and one of the students is asked to make a sentence as well as its meaning, before closing the lesson the lecturer provides additional vocabulary so that students memorize it.

In the active learning strategy, learning starts with a question, this strategy requires students to learn on their own before attending class. The process starts when the lecturer gives a topic to be discussed in the next class, so that students will study and see the syllabus, at the next meeting the lecturer asks what material has not been understood, then the lecturer explains about the topic, after that the lecturer gives a question and answer opportunity, then appoints one of the students concludes today's material, then the lecturer closes the class by giving a closing statement regarding today's material.

In an active learning strategy in the form of discussion, students will be required to think actively, before starting the discussion process the lecturer will motivate students so they don't have to be afraid of making mistakes and make the class feel comfortable. After that the lecturer will throw a topic for discussion, for example about distinguishing the pronunciation of the letters – used in a conversation, then the discussion process will run, after the discussion is finished, there must be an evaluation of students, this evaluation can be done by way of question and answer, communication practice, practice explaining pictures, and so on (Al-Fauzan, 2003, p. 179).

There are at least 4 factors that support the implementation of active learning strategies, so as to be able to improve the Arabic language skills of STAI As-Sunnah Tanjung Morawa students, Deli Serdang. The 4 supporting factors are the availability of supporting facilities (dormitories, buildings, library books and language laboratories), the number of lecturers who are experts in Arabic-juganative speakers (native speakers) in Arabic, students who have mastered the basic knowledge of Arabic, as well as a supportive school environment in learning Arabic.

The building facilities owned by STAI As-Sunnah Tanjung Morawa Deli Serdang are very suitable to be used as a place of learning, both for learning Arabic as well as for other learning, besides that its location in a residential area is also easy to reach. There are many rooms in this building that can be used for teaching and learning spaces, such as the library building, student dormitory, language laboratory and classrooms. Most of the lecturers owned by STAI As-Sunnah are also lecturers who are experts in Arabic, in the conditions of the Covid-19 pandemic, lectures are carried out with zoom meetings which also present fillers from the Middle East. Students who enter

STAI As-Sunnah lectures are those who have basic Arabic skills, both those who pass the interview selection or those who have attended the Language Preparation Program for 1 year, this clearly makes learning Arabic easier. The STAI As-Sunnah Tanjung Morawa environment in Deli Serdang also supports learning Arabic, this is stated in the Student Code of Ethics book, one of which talks about using Arabic as the main language when speaking to academics.

In addition to supporting factors, there were also found inhibiting factors for active learning of Arabic at STAI As-Sunnah Tanjung Morawa Deli Serdang, these factors were (1) not optimal use of the language laboratory, where lecturers had obstacles so they did not take advantage of existing laboratory facilities. The lecturers' obstacles were the lack of knowledge in using laboratory equipment, the absence of a schedule for the use of the laboratory, and the view that the laboratory was only for listening and speaking skills, not for reading and writing skills. To overcome this, the foundation sent a verbal and written warning so that lecturers optimize existing laboratories, (2) there are still lecturers who use conventional learning strategies that do not require student activity,

Even though it has only been implemented for 3 years, the Arabic language active learning strategy was able to give some positive results, such as (1) a total of 95% of students were able to enter the class according to the chosen major, (2) there were students who took part in the competition and were able to win the competition. Arabic, (3) those who have passed Language Preparation Program (*Qism al-I'dād Lughawiy/IL*) some continue their studies to Arabic-speaking countries, (4) STAI As-Sunnah guarantees 80% of graduates are able to speak Arabic actively.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The Arabic language active learning strategy at STAI As-Sunnah Tanjung Morawa Deli Serdang is based on the view of the integration of 4 Arabic skills, namely speaking skills (speaking; *mahârah al-kalâm*), listening skills (listening; *mahârah al-istima'*), writing skills (writing; *mahârah al-kitâbah*), and reading skills (reading; *mahârah al-qirâ'ah*). The integration of these 4 skills can be seen from (1) lecturers STAI As-Sunnah which uses various methods to foster student learning motivation, (2) Students who actively participate in the learning process, (3) A comfortable environment to motivate students to learn and excel. There is support from lecturers, especially lecturers who related to Arabic, which applies learning using Arabic, as well as other supporting factors, namely the presence of native speakers in lectures, then the adoption of the use of Arabic as the main language in communicating with the academic community in the student code of ethics as a supporting factor for the realization of an active learning strategy. However, there are also inhibiting factors such as there are still lecturers who do not understand active learning strategies.

The teaching and learning process that is able to encourage students to be active in the process and a pleasant atmosphere is able to produce understanding and mastery of the material and provide meaning in learning. The expected results can also be realized, from all participants who take part Language Preparation Program (*Qism al-I'dād Lughawiy / IL*) only 5% were declared unsuccessful. There were also outstanding students who were able to win Arabic speech competitions. Then there were also some who had passed the program *I'dād Lughah* who continued their education in the Middle East. And 80% of alumni who graduated from STAI As-Sunnah are able to speak Arabic actively. But the latest data is the result of the previous tracking, because the Language Preparation Program (*Qism al-I'dād Lughawiy/ IL*) does not yet have alumni.

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