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Integrating Arabic Language Pedagogy and Prayer Supplications: Enhancing Khushūʿ through Linguistic Comprehension

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Abstract: *Arabic has long been recognized as the primary language through which Islamic teachings are conveyed, making it essential for understanding religious texts and devotional practices. In many Islamic educational contexts, however, students often memorize prayer supplications without fully comprehending their linguistic meanings. This gap between recitation and comprehension may limit the development of spiritual concentration (khushūʿ) during prayer. This study explores how Arabic language pedagogy can be integrated with prayer supplications to enhance students' linguistic understanding and reflective engagement during worship. This research employed a qualitative design conducted at Pondok Pesantren Darullughah Wadda'wah, involving 30 first-grade Tsanawiyah students who regularly participate in Arabic language learning and congregational prayers. Data were collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis of instructional materials related to prayer recitations. The collected data were analyzed using the qualitative framework of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Triangulation was applied to ensure the credibility of the findings. The results reveal that integrating prayer supplications into Arabic language instruction allows students to engage with authentic linguistic materials that are directly connected to their daily religious practices. Teachers explained the lexical meanings, grammatical structures, and contextual significance of selected supplications, enabling students to link linguistic knowledge with spiritual reflection. Interview findings further indicate that students who understand the meanings of the supplications tend to demonstrate greater attentiveness and reflective awareness during prayer. Rather than reciting mechanically, they perceive prayer as meaningful communication with God. The study concludes that integrating Arabic language pedagogy with prayer supplications can simultaneously strengthen linguistic competence and spiritual awareness among students. This approach offers a pedagogical model that bridges Arabic language learning with Islamic devotional practice, particularly in pesantren contexts where language education and religious life are closely intertwined.*

Keyword : *Arabic pedagogy, prayer supplications, linguistic comprehension, spiritual concentration, pesantren education*

INTRODUCTION

Ṣalāh (ritual prayer) occupies a central position in Islamic spiritual life, serving not only as a mandatory act of worship but also as a means of spiritual reflection and moral formation (Alsuhaymi & Atallah, 2025; Halman, 2022). In the broader intellectual tradition of Islam, Arabic has long been regarded as a gateway to knowledge (Hanifansyah et al., 2025), as it is the language through which the Qur'an, prophetic traditions, and a vast corpus of classical Islamic scholarship have been transmitted (Mårtensson, 2020; Neuwirth, 2003; Wheeler, 2021). Mastery of Arabic therefore does not merely represent linguistic competence but also functions as an epistemological bridge that enables learners to access religious knowledge and spiritual meanings embedded in Islamic texts. Within the context of prayer, this linguistic dimension becomes particularly important because the supplications recited in ṣalāh are expressed in Arabic. Understanding these expressions may deepen the worshipper's awareness of the meanings being recited and potentially enhance the quality of spiritual concentration during prayer.

From the perspective of Arabic language education, the supplications and recitations used in prayer represent authentic linguistic texts containing rich vocabulary, syntactic structures, and rhetorical expressions. These texts include phrases such as *subḥānaka Allāhumma wa biḥamdik*, *ihdinā ṣ-ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm*, and *rabbi-ghfir lī*, which contain important grammatical patterns and semantic nuances. Despite their pedagogical potential, these prayer texts are rarely used systematically as instructional materials in Arabic language classrooms. Most Arabic language instruction in Islamic educational institutions still relies on traditional grammar-focused methods that emphasize memorization and rule-based learning rather than contextual understanding of meaningful texts.

Arabic language has long been recognized as a fundamental medium for accessing Islamic knowledge, particularly the Qur'an and prophetic traditions. Scholars emphasize that mastery of Arabic enables Muslims to understand the linguistic nuances, rhetorical structures, and semantic depth embedded in Islamic texts. Mulyani and Alimuddin (2024) argue that Arabic plays a crucial role in interpreting Qur'anic verses and hadith, as the language contains complex stylistic features and multiple layers of meaning that cannot be fully grasped without adequate linguistic competence. Consequently, Arabic language learning is not merely an academic subject but also a gateway for understanding the broader intellectual and spiritual dimensions of Islam.

Within the context of Islamic worship, prayer (*ṣalāh*) occupies a central position in shaping spiritual awareness and moral discipline. Previous studies have examined the spiritual

significance of prayer and its role in personal development and identity formation. Alsuhaymi and Atallah (2025) highlight that ritual prayer functions not only as an obligatory act of worship but also as a mechanism for self-purification and spiritual reflection. Similarly, Halman (2022) explains that the spiritual dimension of Islamic prayer involves deep internal awareness and humility before God, which is closely associated with the concept of *khushūʿ*. These studies suggest that meaningful engagement with the recitations of prayer may contribute to a deeper spiritual experience.

Several empirical studies have also explored how individuals interpret the meanings of prayer recitations in their spiritual lives. Barkah and Maylani (2025) conducted a phenomenological study on university students and found that prayer recitations can function as a form of transcendental communication between worshippers and God. Their findings indicate that when individuals become aware of the meanings behind the phrases recited in prayer, they are more likely to experience reflective spiritual engagement. However, the study also reveals that many young Muslims initially recite prayer texts mechanically without fully understanding their meanings, particularly in contexts where religious practices are influenced by modern distractions and time pressures.

In addition to studies on spiritual engagement, several educational studies have investigated strategies for improving students' understanding of prayer practices. For instance, Aliyah et al. (2024) demonstrate that structured educational programs focusing on prayer recitations and movements can enhance children's understanding of Islamic worship practices. Similarly, Az-Zahro (2025) reports that the use of audiovisual media in Islamic Religious Education significantly improves students' ability to correctly recite prayer texts and perform prayer movements. These studies highlight the importance of effective instructional methods in strengthening students' knowledge and practice of prayer.

Furthermore, other research has explored the psychological effects of *khushūʿ* in prayer. Amelia et al. (2024) examine the relationship between focused prayer practices and academic anxiety among university students. Although their findings indicate that prayer alone may not significantly reduce anxiety levels, the study underscores the role of conscious engagement and reflection during worship in shaping emotional and spiritual experiences.

Taken together, these studies demonstrate that Arabic language competence, understanding of prayer recitations, and spiritual engagement in prayer have each been discussed within their respective scholarly domains. However, most existing research treats these themes as separate areas of inquiry. Studies in Arabic language education generally focus

on linguistic skills and vocabulary acquisition, while research on prayer tends to emphasize spiritual, psychological, or ritual dimensions without considering the pedagogical role of linguistic comprehension in worship practices.

Based on this background, the present study aims to examine how Arabic prayer supplications can be integrated into Arabic language pedagogy to enhance students' linguistic comprehension and spiritual concentration during prayer. Specifically, this study seeks to answer the following research questions: How can prayer supplications be utilized as authentic learning materials in Arabic language instruction? To what extent does understanding the linguistic meanings of prayer supplications influence students' level of *khushūʿ* during prayer?

The scope of this research is limited to the integration of selected supplications commonly recited in prayer, such as opening supplications, short supplications between movements of prayer, and brief invocations frequently memorized by students. The study focuses on learners in Islamic educational institutions where Arabic language learning is part of the curriculum. While the study investigates the relationship between linguistic comprehension and spiritual concentration, it does not aim to measure *khushūʿ* as a purely theological or metaphysical state but rather as a reflective awareness reported and observed within educational contexts. These limitations are acknowledged to ensure clarity in the interpretation of the findings.

The significance of this study lies in its attempt to bridge the gap between Arabic language pedagogy and Islamic spiritual education. By integrating prayer supplications into language instruction, the study proposes a pedagogical approach that connects linguistic competence with spiritual awareness. Such an approach may contribute to the development of more meaningful Arabic language learning experiences in Islamic educational institutions, where language learning is closely intertwined with religious practice.

In addition, this research contributes to the broader discourse on language education by demonstrating how authentic religious texts can function as pedagogical resources that support both linguistic development and affective engagement. The findings of this study are expected to offer practical insights for Arabic language educators, curriculum designers, and Islamic educational institutions seeking to enhance students' language proficiency while simultaneously strengthening their spiritual consciousness during prayer.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research design to explore the integration of Arabic language pedagogy with the supplications recited in ṣalāh and its influence on students' spiritual

concentration (khushūʿ) through linguistic comprehension (Creswell & Creswell, 2020). A qualitative approach was selected because the study aims to understand participants' experiences, perceptions, and reflections regarding the relationship between linguistic understanding and spiritual awareness during prayer. This approach allows the researcher to capture nuanced meanings that cannot be adequately represented through quantitative measurement.

Conceptually, this study is grounded in two interrelated theoretical perspectives. The first is Arabic language pedagogy, particularly contextual language learning and authentic text-based instruction, which emphasize the use of meaningful linguistic materials to enhance comprehension and engagement. The second is Islamic spiritual education, which highlights the importance of understanding the meanings of prayer recitations in cultivating khushūʿ and reflective worship. By combining these perspectives, the research investigates how linguistic comprehension of prayer supplications may function as a bridge between language learning and spiritual experience.

The research was conducted at Pondok Pesantren Darullughah Wadda'wah, an Islamic boarding school where Arabic language learning and daily religious practices are closely integrated (Baharun & Habib, 2026). This location was deliberately selected because students regularly perform congregational prayers while simultaneously receiving structured Arabic language instruction. Such an environment provides a relevant educational context for examining the relationship between linguistic comprehension and spiritual engagement during prayer.

The participants of this study consisted of 30 first-grade Tsanawiyah students who were actively involved in Arabic language learning and daily congregational prayers within the pesantren environment. The participants were selected using purposive sampling, considering their exposure to both Arabic language instruction and regular recitation of prayer supplications. These students represent learners who are still developing their Arabic linguistic competence while simultaneously memorizing and practicing prayer recitations.The focus of analysis in this study centers on selected Arabic supplications commonly recited in prayer, including opening supplications, short invocations between prayer movements, and brief supplications frequently memorized by students. These texts were chosen because they represent authentic Arabic linguistic expressions that contain vocabulary, syntactic structures, and semantic meanings relevant to Arabic language learning while simultaneously forming an essential part of Islamic devotional practice.

The primary data of this research were obtained from students and teachers involved in Arabic language learning within the selected institution. Informants were selected purposively based on their direct engagement with Arabic language learning and regular participation in congregational prayer. In addition to participant perspectives, textual data from prayer supplications and relevant instructional materials were also examined as supporting sources. Secondary data were derived from academic literature on Arabic language pedagogy, Islamic spiritual education, and studies on prayer comprehension.

Data collection was carried out through several techniques to ensure depth and triangulation of information. First, classroom observations were conducted to examine how Arabic language instruction incorporates explanations of prayer supplications and how students respond to such explanations during learning activities. Second, semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected students and teachers to explore their perceptions of the relationship between understanding the meanings of prayer recitations and experiencing khushūʿ during prayer (Adeoye-Olatunde & Olenik, 2021). Third, document analysis was employed to analyze instructional materials, prayer texts, and relevant teaching resources used in the learning process.

The collected data were analyzed using a qualitative analytical framework inspired by the interactive model proposed by Miles et al. (2019). The analysis involved three main stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. In the data reduction stage, interview transcripts, observation notes, and textual data were organized and coded to identify recurring themes related to linguistic comprehension and spiritual awareness. In the data display stage, the categorized data were systematically arranged to facilitate interpretation of relationships between Arabic language learning and students' experiences during prayer. Finally, in the conclusion drawing stage, patterns and conceptual insights were developed to explain how the integration of Arabic linguistic instruction with prayer supplications contributes to enhancing students' reflective engagement and spiritual concentration.

Through this qualitative approach, the study seeks to provide a deeper understanding of how Arabic language pedagogy can be meaningfully connected with Islamic devotional practices. By examining both linguistic and spiritual dimensions within the same educational context, the research aims to offer insights into pedagogical strategies that simultaneously strengthen Arabic language comprehension and foster greater awareness of the meanings recited during prayer.

To enhance the credibility of the findings, data triangulation was applied by comparing information obtained from classroom observations, interviews, and document analysis

(Campbell et al., 2020). This triangulation allowed the researcher to verify recurring patterns and ensure the consistency of the collected data across multiple sources. In addition, ethical considerations were maintained throughout the research process. Participation in the study was voluntary, and all participants were informed about the purpose of the research. The identities of students and teachers were kept confidential to protect their privacy.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Utilizing Prayer Supplications as Authentic Materials in Arabic Language Learning

The first research question examined how prayer supplications can be integrated into Arabic language pedagogy as authentic learning materials. Classroom observations conducted during Arabic language lessons at Pondok Pesantren Darullughah Wadda'wah revealed that teachers introduced selected prayer supplications as part of vocabulary and sentence structure explanations. Rather than treating the supplications solely as memorized religious texts, teachers explained the lexical meanings, grammatical structures, and contextual significance of the phrases recited during prayer.

For example, the supplication "Rabbi-ghfir lī" (My Lord, forgive me) was used to introduce the structure of imperative and supplicative expressions in Arabic. Similarly, the phrase "Ihdinā ṣ-ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm" (Guide us to the straight path) was used to explain verb forms and the semantic nuances of supplication in Qur'anic Arabic. Students were encouraged to reflect on both the linguistic structure and the spiritual meaning embedded in these expressions.

Classroom observation notes indicated that this instructional approach allowed students to connect grammatical learning with meaningful religious practice. Students showed increased engagement during lessons that discussed prayer recitations, as these texts were already familiar to them through daily worship.

Interview data further confirmed the pedagogical value of this approach. One student explained:

"When the teacher explained the meaning of the supplications we recite in prayer, I realized that the words I memorized actually have deep meanings. It made learning Arabic feel more relevant to my daily worship."

Another student stated:

"Before this lesson, I only memorized the prayer recitations. After learning their meanings in Arabic class, I started to understand what I was saying during prayer."

These findings suggest that integrating prayer supplications into Arabic language instruction may function as a form of contextual language learning, where students engage with authentic linguistic materials that are already embedded in their religious practices.

Linguistic Comprehension and Students' Experience of Khushūʿ in Prayer

The second research question explored how understanding the linguistic meanings of prayer supplications influences students' experience of khushūʿ during prayer. Observation of congregational prayers and follow-up interviews indicated that students who understood the meanings of the recitations reported greater concentration and emotional engagement during prayer.

Several students described how understanding the meanings of the supplications helped them focus more deeply on the act of worship. One participant stated:

"When I understand the meaning of the words in prayer, I feel more focused. I am not just repeating the words, but I feel like I am actually talking to Allah."

Another participant reflected:

"Previously I recited the words quickly because I only memorized them. Now when I understand the meaning, I pause and think about what I am saying."

Teachers also observed similar changes in students' attitudes toward prayer. One Arabic teacher noted:

"After explaining the meanings of prayer supplications in Arabic class, some students became more attentive during prayer. They seemed more aware of what they were reciting."

These findings indicate that linguistic comprehension may contribute to reflective awareness during prayer, which aligns with classical Islamic teachings emphasizing the importance of understanding the meanings of prayer recitations. When students comprehend the semantic content of the supplications, the recitation becomes a meaningful communication rather than a purely mechanical repetition.

Linguistic Engagement through Authentic Religious Texts

The pedagogical effectiveness of using prayer supplications as authentic linguistic input aligns with broader findings in second language acquisition research. Studies have consistently demonstrated that learners who encounter new vocabulary and grammatical structures within contextually meaningful texts show stronger retention and deeper semantic understanding than those relying on decontextualized drills (Webb et al., 2023). In the case of Arabic language learning at pesantren, the supplications recited in prayer serve precisely this function: they are texts already embedded in the learners' daily devotional lives, providing a high degree of

contextual salience that reinforces both form and meaning. This is consistent with the findings of Daif-Allah and Al-Sultan (2023), who demonstrated that meaningful communicative activities in Arabic instruction rather than traditional grammar-translation approaches—significantly enhanced students' engagement with the language. By treating prayer supplications as authentic linguistic resources, Arabic educators in Islamic educational institutions can capitalize on students' pre-existing emotional and spiritual investment in these texts, transforming them from passive reciters into active meaning-makers.

Mindfulness, Attention, and Spiritual Comprehension

The relationship between linguistic comprehension and attentive worship observed in this study also resonates with emerging empirical research on mindfulness during Islamic prayer. Yousaf et al. (2022) developed and validated the Mindfulness during Worship Scale (MWS), identifying three interconnected dimensions of mindful attention during salāh: concentration, presence, and absorption. Their findings suggest that worshippers who cognitively engage with the content of prayer rather than reciting mechanically are more likely to experience all three dimensions of mindful worship. The present study's findings extend this line of inquiry into an educational context, proposing that deliberate linguistic instruction may serve as a pedagogical mechanism for cultivating such mindful engagement. When Arabic language teachers explicitly unpack the semantic and grammatical content of prayer supplications in the classroom, students are equipped not only with linguistic knowledge but also with the cognitive tools needed to sustain reflective attention during worship. This dual outcome—linguistic competence and spiritual awareness—illustrates the unique potential of integrating language pedagogy with Islamic devotional practice in pesantren settings, an approach that merits broader institutional adoption and further empirical investigation across diverse educational contexts (Baharun & Habib, 2026; Sopian et al., 2025).

The findings of this study highlight the pedagogical potential of integrating Arabic language learning with prayer supplications in Islamic educational contexts. The results demonstrate that prayer supplications can function as authentic linguistic materials that simultaneously support language acquisition and spiritual awareness.

From the perspective of Arabic language pedagogy, the use of authentic texts has long been recognized as an effective strategy for improving language comprehension. Authentic materials provide learners with meaningful linguistic input that reflects real communicative contexts. In this study, prayer supplications served as authentic Arabic expressions that students regularly encounter in their daily religious practices. This familiarity allowed students to engage

with the language more meaningfully compared to isolated vocabulary lists or abstract grammatical exercises.

These findings are consistent with previous research emphasizing the importance of contextual and authentic materials in language learning. Studies in Arabic language education have shown that contextualized learning environments enhance students' vocabulary retention and semantic understanding. When learners encounter language within meaningful contexts, they are more likely to develop deeper cognitive connections with the linguistic material.

From the perspective of Islamic spiritual education, the results also support classical Islamic scholarship emphasizing that understanding the meanings of prayer recitations plays an important role in cultivating khushūʿ. Many scholars argue that prayer should involve not only physical movements and verbal recitation but also conscious reflection on the meanings of the words being recited. The findings of this study indicate that linguistic comprehension may facilitate such reflection by enabling students to internalize the messages contained in the supplications.

Furthermore, the integration of Arabic language pedagogy and prayer supplications illustrates how linguistic learning and spiritual formation can reinforce each other within Islamic educational institutions. Instead of treating language learning and religious practice as separate domains, this approach connects linguistic understanding with devotional experience. Such integration may help students perceive Arabic not merely as an academic subject but as a living language that carries spiritual significance within their daily worship.

Another important implication of this study is the potential role of linguistic comprehension in fostering students' emotional and cognitive engagement during prayer. When students understand the meanings of the words they recite, they may experience prayer as a form of meaningful communication rather than a routine ritual. This transformation from mechanical recitation to reflective engagement may contribute to the development of khushūʿ.

Overall, the findings suggest that integrating prayer supplications into Arabic language pedagogy can provide a meaningful educational approach that simultaneously strengthens linguistic competence, religious understanding, and spiritual awareness. For Islamic educational institutions such as pesantren, this approach offers a pedagogical model that aligns language instruction with the broader goals of spiritual formation and character development.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the integration of Arabic language pedagogy with prayer supplications as a means of enhancing students' linguistic comprehension and spiritual concentration (*khushūʿ*) during prayer. The findings demonstrate that prayer supplications can function as authentic linguistic materials in Arabic language learning, allowing students to engage with vocabulary, grammatical structures, and semantic meanings that are directly connected to their daily religious practices. Classroom observations and interview data revealed that when students understood the meanings of the supplications recited in prayer, they were more capable of linking linguistic knowledge with spiritual reflection. As a result, the recitation of prayer was no longer perceived merely as memorized verbal expressions but as meaningful communication that strengthened students' awareness and concentration during worship. These findings highlight the pedagogical value of integrating Arabic language instruction with religious texts that are already embedded in students' devotional routines.

The study contributes to the growing discourse on Arabic language education and Islamic spiritual pedagogy by demonstrating that linguistic comprehension can play a significant role in fostering deeper spiritual engagement in prayer. However, several limitations should be acknowledged. The research was conducted within a single educational setting and involved a relatively small group of participants, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Future research may expand the scope of investigation by involving multiple Islamic educational institutions, different age groups, or comparative approaches across diverse learning environments. Practically, the findings suggest that Arabic language educators in Islamic schools and pesantren may benefit from incorporating prayer supplications and other religious texts into language instruction as authentic learning materials. Such integration has the potential to simultaneously strengthen students' linguistic competence, religious understanding, and spiritual awareness, while also opening new directions for interdisciplinary research at the intersection of language education and Islamic spiritual formation.

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