The Utilization of Language Laboratories in Istima' Learning at Darul 'Ulum Islamic University Lamongan

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A B S T R A K
Laboratorium bahasa dipandang sebagai media pembelajaran bahasa asing yang dapat memfasilitasi pengajar/pembelajar untuk dapat belajar lebih efektif. Laboratorium bahasa yang sekarang banyak digunakan merupakan terobosan baru dan modern. Artinya, peralatan laboratorium bahasa itu mencakup berbagai jenis media dengan fungsi masing-masing. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis penggunaan laboratorium Bahasa untuk pembelajaran istima', berbagai alat pada laboratorium bahasa, persepsi mahasiswa tentang penggunaan laboratorium bahasa dalam pembelajaran istima', dan kendala atau tantangan dalam penggunaan laboratorium Bahasa selama pembelajaran istima'. Lokasi penelitian dilaksanakan di Universitas Islam Darul 'Ulum Lamongan. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif. Teknik pengumpulan data menggunakan wawancara dan kuesioner. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa 1) Alat (tools) yang digunakan dalam laboratorium bahasa dalam pembelajaran istima' adalah earphone, layar lcd, proyektor, internet, wifi, youtube, dan e-learning 2) proses pemanfaatan laboratorium Bahasa, media, dan sumber belajar lebih banyak dilakukan untuk penyampaian materi dan evaluasi atau penugasan pembelajaran istima', 3) perspektif mahasiswa menunjukkan media dan sumber belajar istima' yang menggunakan dalam laboratorium bahasa memiliki efek dan antusias yang baik oleh mahasiswa terhadap pembelajaran istima' berlangsung.

A B S T R A C T
Language laboratories are considered an effective medium for foreign language learning, facilitating teachers and learners to study more effectively. The modern language laboratories used today represent a new and innovative approach, incorporating various types of media with specific functions. This study aims to analyze the use of language laboratories for Istima' learning, the different tools available in language laboratories, students' perceptions of using language laboratories in Istima' learning, and the challenges or obstacles encountered during the use of language laboratories in Istima' learning. The research was conducted at Darul 'Ulum Islamic University Lamongan. A qualitative descriptive method was used in this study. Data collection techniques included interviews and questionnaires. The findings of this study indicate that: 1) The tools used in the language laboratory for Istima' learning include earphones, LCD screens, projectors, the internet, Wi-Fi, YouTube, and e-learning platforms; 2) The utilization of language laboratories, media, and learning resources is primarily for delivering content and for evaluation or assignments in Istima' learning; 3) Students' perspectives indicate that the media and learning resources used in the language laboratory positively impact their enthusiasm and engagement in Istima' learning.

1. INTRODUCTION

In this modern era, the use of technology has become an inseparable part of daily life. The utilization of technology in all aspects of life has brought significant advancements and changes in how we work, learn, play, and interact (Mashis et al., 2023). With the continuous development of science and technology, new breakthroughs will emerge, continually influencing our lives in the future (Bustam et al., 2024). Technology is not limited to electronic devices such as computers and gadgets. Science and technology encompass all fields of life, including the economy, culture, industry, and education (Fauzi et al., 2023). Recognizing the importance of technology in education is crucial for enhancing a nation's civilization and ultimately encouraging the emergence of new innovations and technologies that can support the effectiveness of the learning process (Sholihah et al., 2022).

The role of technology in learning aims to enhance the course curriculum and improve student achievement standards. This program transforms traditional learning methods into those utilizing information technology (Uqba et al., 2024). Such innovation can make the learning process for both students and teachers more efficient and effective, while also fostering student creativity. Other benefits include reducing learning costs, facilitating teaching for educators, easing the writing process, addressing the lack of educational media, and enhancing student understanding. The goal of implementing technology in the learning process is to improve existing practices or effectiveness, but often, the aim is educational transformation. For instance, using presentation programs to explain lessons can enhance the effectiveness of exercises and the ability to practice them anytime, anywhere, unlike printed textbooks (Marianti, 2023).

The utilization of technology has become a viable option for learning Arabic. There are four key language skills that form the objectives or goals of learning Arabic: listening (*istima'*), speaking (*kalam*), reading (*qira'ah*), and writing (*kitabah*) (Handayani, 2022). Among these skills, istima' is the first that must be taught when learning Arabic (Wahida, 2021). Listening proficiency (*maharatul istima'*) plays a crucial role in language skills because *istima'* is the primary means of acquiring further language skills. Through listening, we can express what we have heard by speaking, reading, and writing. Additionally, listening helps us recognize vocabulary (*mufrodat*) and sentence structures (*tarkib*), which support the development of other language skills (Fathoni, 2018).

One technological tool that supports *istima'* learning is the language laboratory. This lab is designed as a learning medium that enables students to effectively communicate in language skills, particularly in listening. The language laboratory provides a practical learning environment that requires special equipment, which is not easily available in regular classrooms. It offers a new atmosphere for students in the *istima'* learning process. The teaching method is not limited to lectures from the instructor but also involves the use of electronic media and specialized equipment, allowing students to learn listening skills to the fullest. The effectiveness of the language laboratory must be supported by adequate equipment and the instructor's ability to deliver appropriate and engaging material.

The *Istima'* skill learning program utilizing the language laboratory is available at Darul 'Ulum Islamic University Lamongan. This language lab is equipped with advanced technology, such as computers, headsets, and language learning software that allows students to clearly listen to various Arabic audio materials. High-quality audio devices are used for intensive listening and speaking practice, while projectors and large screens are employed to display

relevant instructional videos. By using the language laboratory, students can practice listening to Arabic effectively, ultimately enhancing their overall understanding and skills.

Learning *istima'* with a language laboratory is a process where students learn to listen to and comprehend foreign languages, such as Arabic, using technology and modern media (Syafaah, 2019). The language laboratory is equipped with tools such as earphones, LCD screens, projectors, internet, WiFi, YouTube, and e-learning to support the learning process (Pustikayasa et al., 2023). During the learning sessions, students listen to recordings of native speakers provided in the laboratory. They can also watch videos, such as short films or presentations, which help clarify the context and usage of the language in real-life situations. Additionally, students can use digital resources like e-learning for additional materials and exercises. Learning *istima'* in the language laboratory not only enhances students' understanding of intonation, pronunciation, and vocabulary in foreign languages but also allows them to practice intensively and effectively. The use of technology facilitates direct interaction between students and learning materials, enabling more engaging and relevant teaching in contemporary settings (Sanwil et al., 2021).

Research relevant to this study was conducted with the title "Arabic Listening Learning by Utilizing Information and Communication Technology." The results of this study indicate that the use or utilization of ICT is highly needed, especially in the field of education. Many media can be used for online learning, including Zoom meetings, Google Meet, and learning management systems (LMS) (Prakasa, 2023). Another study titled "Utilization of Audacity Application in Listening Learning for Grade VII at MTsN 10 Sungayang" showed that this application is technology-based. Audacity provides a space for learning, and its features offer various effects that attract students (Amrina et al., 2022).

The difference between this research and previous studies lies in its focus on analyzing the utilization of language laboratories used in listening comprehension (*istima'*) learning at Darul 'Ulum Islamic University of Lamongan. This research aims to evaluate the impact of language laboratory use on students' listening skills, and to uncover the obstacles and challenges faced during the learning process. Thus, it is hoped that the results of this study will provide valuable insights for the development of more innovative and effective *istima'* learning methods, and enrich the literature on the integration of technology in Arabic language education.

The aim of this research is to investigate the utilization of the Language Laboratory in teaching *istima'* at Universitas Islam Darul 'Ulum Lamongan. This study aims to explore how the language laboratory is used as an effective learning tool to deepen students' understanding of *istima'* materials, focusing on the use of various modern media such as earphones, LCD screens, projectors, internet, WiFi, YouTube, and e-learning. Additionally, the research aims to analyze students' perceptions of the effectiveness of the media and learning resources used in the language laboratory, and to identify challenges and constraints faced, such as issues with unclear audio and limitations in internet speed. Thus, the primary objective of this research is to contribute to enhancing the quality of *istima'* learning through optimizing the use of technology and modern media in the academic environment of Universitas Islam Darul 'Ulum Lamongan.

2. METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative method. The research method that uses descriptive data in the form of written or oral language from observable individuals and actors. This qualitative approach is used to explain and analyze individual or group phenomena, events, social dynamics, attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions. The aim of the qualitative method approach is to understand or gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomena or issues under investigation (Sugiyono, 2022). Data collection techniques in this research involve interviews and questionnaires. Interviews were conducted with Arabic Language Education lecturers at Darul 'Ulum Islamic University of Lamongan. The questionnaire was created using Google Forms and distributed online to students to assess perceptions regarding the use of language laboratories in *istima'* learning. Data analysis utilizes an interactive model by Miles, Huberman and Saldana (2013). Activities in qualitative data analysis are conducted interactively and continuously until saturation, ensuring comprehensive analysis. This includes data condensation, data display, as well as conclusion drawing and verification.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Language Laboratory

Language laboratory is a tool used to train students in listening and speaking in a foreign language or a language being studied, such as Indonesian, by presenting pre-prepared lesson materials (Arono, 2013). It is considered as one of the learning facilities that can support successful learning (Jaya et al., 2023). The language laboratory also supports communicative teaching, which emphasizes long-term learning, interdisciplinary focus on students, and integration with everyday issues and realities.

The term "language laboratory" refers to a set of audio-video electronic equipment consisting of an instructor console as the main machine, equipped with a repeater language learning machine, tape recorder, DVD player, video monitor, headset, and students' booths installed in a soundproof room. Additionally, there is also a multimedia computer component that can be combined with all of these. The discussion should explore the significance of the results of the work, not repeat them. A combined Results and Discussion section is often appropriate. Avoid extensive citations and discussion of published literature.

The language laboratory, now widely used as a multimedia tool, represents a new and modern breakthrough. This means that the equipment in the language laboratory encompasses various types of media, each with its own varied functions. Creative teachers can utilize multimedia language laboratories with a variety of Arabic language learning programs packaged as audio tapes, videos, or interactive CDs. With this equipment, teachers can facilitate active communication among students through headsets and microphones available at each learning station (Nurlatipah et al., 2024).

With audio-video facilities and multimedia computers, logically, language laboratories should enhance the effectiveness of *istima'* learning processes because learners can reference native speakers. This differs from learning without a language laboratory, where learners are typically exposed to non-native speaker voices that often represent an intermediate language (interlanguage). Failures in improving learning effectiveness through language laboratories are usually due to human or management errors that prevent the laboratory from operating at its maximum potential (Sukartini et al., 2017).

The Utilization of Language Laboratories in Istima' Learning

The course of *maharah istima'* in the Arabic Language Education department at Darul 'Ulum Islamic University (UNISDA) Lamongan is a compulsory subject that students must take, comprising two levels: *maharah istima'* 1 and *maharah istima'* 2, each carrying 2 credits. *Maharah istima'* is considered crucial as it supports other language proficiency skills.

Maharah istima' 1 serves as a prerequisite for Arabic Language Education students before they can proceed to other linguistic subjects, and it is a requirement for advancing to *maharah istima'* 2. One of the key instructional tools used in *istima'* learning at UNISDA Lamongan is the Language Laboratory.

The Language Laboratory is a significant audio tool in foreign language teaching. Nearly all Western language teachings, such as English, French, and German, utilize language laboratories to enhance language skills (Izzan, 2011). The tools available in the Language Laboratory at UNISDA Lamongan include earphones and tape recorders for listening to native speaker audios, monitors used by instructors to control lesson materials, projectors and LCD screens for displaying materials and instructional videos such as short films and ghina' Aroby, microphones used by students and instructors for communication during lessons, available at each desk.

Before *istima'* lessons commence in the Language Laboratory, instructors need specific knowledge of both the software and hardware being used. Adequate knowledge of operating the Language Laboratory is essential for instructors to ensure smooth learning processes without technical hindrances (Ahmadi, 2019). In the Language Laboratory, students sit individually in acoustic booths equipped with sound boxes. They listen to the instructor's voice through headphones. Before conducting lessons, instructors provide technical instructions on the usage and steps of the equipment.

The steps of *istima'* learning in the Language Laboratory are flexible and adapt to the software being used. At UNISDA Lamongan, *istima'* learning in the Language Laboratory begins with several stages. Firstly, before lessons start, instructors take attendance and ensure each student is seated appropriately in the Language Laboratory. Then, instructors explain the operational procedures of the Language Laboratory to avoid confusion during *istima'* learning sessions. Next, instructors provide an overview of the materials to be discussed and taught to students. Once prepared, lessons commence with listening to audio spoken by native speakers and presenting short films or ghina' Aroby videos. Throughout the learning process, instructors monitor and engage students through questions and discussions. After lessons conclude, instructors provide evaluations and review the learned materials to ensure deep understanding among students.

Students Perception of The Use of Language Laboratories in Istima' Learning

Based on the survey results using Google Forms, students expressed that they are able to understand *istima'* materials by listening to audio spoken by native speakers. The use of audio helps students better grasp intonation, pronunciation, and the usage of words in real-life contexts. Additionally, students can understand materials presented through YouTube videos. The use of visual media clarifies contexts and situations, making the taught materials easier to understand and remember. However, some students struggle with understanding the meaning of readings due to unfamiliarity with foreign vocabulary. This variation in vocabulary comprehension among students affects their ability to understand *istima'* materials.

One of the challenges students face during *istima'* learning in the language laboratory is unclear audio quality. Additionally, unfamiliarity with foreign vocabulary poses a significant barrier. Both factors can disrupt the learning process and reduce students' effectiveness in understanding the presented materials. Moreover, slow internet speeds often cause delays or interruptions, hindering smooth learning experiences.

Despite these challenges, students feel there is an improvement in *istima'* learning when studying in the language laboratory. They find they can concentrate better compared to regular classroom settings. In the language laboratory, they can directly listen to audio from native speakers, enhancing their understanding of the materials. Furthermore, learning in the language laboratory allows students to learn new vocabulary and replay unclear audio, which greatly assists in improving their comprehension.

The Language Laboratory at Universitas Islam Darul 'Ulum Lamongan has several advantages and disadvantages as a medium for *istima'* learning, including on the positive side, first, learning in the language laboratory provides an engaging experience for learners by offering a different learning environment. Second, it allows for the presentation of native speaker voices along with visual aids, especially when supplemented with film screenings. Third, there are numerous instructional programs available, reducing the burden on teachers who can select according to their needs.

On the flip side, the language laboratory also has several drawbacks. First, it tends to be expensive, and not all educational institutions have this facility. Second, its use heavily depends on the availability of adequate electrical power. Third, it requires a dedicated and permanent space for its operation. Fourth, its operation is quite complex, requiring both teachers and students to have basic knowledge to effectively use it for learning purposes.

Nevertheless, there are significant benefits to learning in the language laboratory. First, it saves time as all students can practice language exercises simultaneously without waiting for their turn as in traditional classrooms. Second, students can engage in more intensive and effective language practice compared to classroom settings. Third, recordings of various native speaker types are available in the laboratory, whereas in classrooms, students usually only hear the teacher's voice. Fourth, almost all language learning objectives can be practiced in the laboratory, such as listening comprehension, speaking, reading, pronunciation, dialogue, and dictation. Fifth, laboratory exercises enable students to receive immediate feedback.

4. CONCLUSION

The language laboratory is seen as an effective foreign language learning media, facilitating educators and learners to study more effectively through modern equipment that includes various types of media. Research conducted at Universitas Islam Darul 'Ulum Lamongan using qualitative descriptive methods involving interviews and questionnaires revealed several important findings. Firstly, the tools used in the language laboratory for *istima'* learning include earphones, LCD screens, projectors, internet, WiFi, YouTube, and e-learning. Secondly, the utilization process of the language laboratory, media, and learning resources is mainly for delivering *istima'* learning materials and conducting evaluations or assignments. Thirdly, students' perceptions indicate that the *istima'* learning media and resources used in the language laboratory have a positive effect and generate high enthusiasm for *istima'* learning. Thus, the language laboratory can enhance students' understanding of *istima'* materials and improve the quality of learning through the use of technology and modern media. However,

challenges such as unclear audio and slow internet speeds need to be addressed to maximize the benefits of the language laboratory.

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