



THE URGENCY OF ARABIC LANGUAGE SKILLS FOR MEMORIZING IMAM NAWAWI'S HADITH ARBA'IN IN ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTS.

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ABSTRACT

Arabic language skills play a crucial role in learning hadith because they are written and narrated in Arabic. However, studies specifically addressing the importance of Arabic language skills for memorizing the Hadith of Arba'in Nawawiyah in Islamic boarding schools are still relatively limited. This study aims to analyze the importance of Arabic language skills for memorizing the Hadith of Arba'in Nawawiyah among students at the Integritas Qurani 368 Islamic Boarding School. The study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with three final-year students who had completed the Hadith of Arba'in Nawawiyah and were selected using a purposive sampling technique. Data analysis was conducted through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing and verification. The results showed that Arabic language skills helped students understand the vocabulary, sentence structure, and content of the hadith, thus facilitating the memorization process and reducing errors in remembering the wording of the hadith. Furthermore, Arabic language skills also supported a deeper understanding of the memorized material, making the memorization more meaningful. This study concludes that Arabic language proficiency is a crucial factor in supporting the effectiveness of memorizing the Hadith of Arba'in Nawawiyah. Therefore, Arabic language learning and hadith memorization programs need to be developed in an integrated manner to improve the quality of hadith learning in Islamic boarding schools.

Keywords: *Arabic; Hadith Arba'in Nawawiyah; hadith memorization; Islamic boarding school.*

INTRODUCTION

Hadith is a source of Islamic teachings that holds an important position after the Qur'an as a guideline in understanding the creed, worship, morals, and various aspects of the lives of Muslims. Therefore, the tradition of memorizing hadith has long been part of the Islamic education system, especially in Islamic boarding schools (Yayah Fauziyah, 2023) . One of the hadith books that is widely studied and memorized is *the Hadith Arba'in Nawawiyah* by Imam Nawawi (Yayah Fauziyah, 2023) . This book contains forty-two selected hadiths that cover the main points of Islamic teachings and are therefore often used as basic material in hadith learning. In various Islamic boarding schools, memorizing the Hadith Arba'in Nawawiyah is not only seen as a form of preserving the tradition of Islamic

scholarship, but also as a means of building a deeper religious understanding for students through mastery of Arabic hadith texts (Halim et al., 2025; Yayah Fauziyah, 2023) .

Memorizing hadith requires more than just the ability to memorize the words, but also an understanding of the vocabulary (*mufradat*), sentence structure, and the meanings contained within. Arabic language skills are one of the competencies that can potentially influence a student's success in memorizing hadith, as Arabic is the original language used in hadith transmission. (Safitri & Farirahma, 2024; Zulhannan & Musyarrofah, 2024) . Arabic language mastery allows students to understand the relationship between words and the meaning of a hadith more completely, so that the memorization process is not only mechanical, but also based on understanding (Daud et al., 2025; Rusli et al., 2024; Suryana et al., 2024) . In Islamic boarding schools that make Arabic one of the core subjects, the relationship between Arabic language skills and successful hadith memorization is an interesting phenomenon to be studied further, especially in the context of learning the Hadith Arba'in Nawawiyah.

Although memorizing the Hadith of Arba'in Nawawiyah has become a common learning program in various Islamic boarding schools (pesantren), its implementation still faces various challenges. Not all students are able to memorize hadith with the same level of ease, even though they receive similar materials and memorization targets (Kurniailah & Bakar, 2023; Raswan et al., 2025) . Some students experience difficulty remembering the order of words, distinguishing similar wordings of hadith, or understanding the content of the memorized hadith. On the other hand, there are students who are able to memorize more quickly and retain their memorization for a longer period of time (Pamungkas et al., 2023; Parveen, 2025) . These differences indicate that the success of hadith memorization is not only influenced by the intensity of repetition, but can also be related to other factors that support the learning process, including the ability to understand Arabic, the primary medium of the hadith text. Therefore, a more in-depth study is needed to understand how Arabic language skills play a role in supporting the memorization process of the Hadith Arba'in Nawawiyah in Islamic boarding schools (Amat & Ab Hadi, 2024; Anam et al., 2024).

Extensive research on memorization in Islamic education has focused on various learning strategies and approaches that support student success. Suryana et al. (2024) found that the Tahfidz and Tarjamah Al-Qur'an program, which implemented intensive repetition, habitual recitation, and ongoing teacher guidance, strengthened students' memorization and understanding of the Qur'an. These findings align with research by Dimyathi et al. (2025) which demonstrated that implementing a *working memory strategy* can improve memorization skills while strengthening long-term memorization retention. Furthermore, Abd Ghani et al. (2026) conducted a systematic study of tahfiz educational institutions in Malaysia, revealing that structured repetition, the integration of pedagogical approaches, and the use of technology are important factors in supporting the effectiveness of memorization learning. These three studies confirmed that successful memorization is influenced by



systematically designed learning strategies supported by appropriate pedagogical approaches.

On the other hand, several studies have also examined the role of the learning environment, coaching methods, and other supporting factors in successful memorization. Zulhannan and Musyarrofah (2024) found that Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) implement various learning approaches, such as visual, auditory, and *kinesthetic* methods, combined with activities to understand and practice the contents of the Qur'an. Meanwhile, Sneida et al. (2024) showed that repetition *and* imagery strategies are effective strategies in strengthening the process of storing and using information in language learning. Research by Halim et al. (2025) also revealed that the success of a hafiz is not only determined by individual ability, but is also influenced by the application of systematic memorization methods, consistent murajaah routines, support from educational institutions, and strong spiritual motivation. In general, these studies indicate that successful memorization is influenced by a combination of cognitive factors, learning strategies, the educational environment, and the students' internal motivation.

Although various previous studies have discussed strategies, methods, cognitive factors, and learning environments that support successful memorization, research specifically examining the urgency of Arabic language proficiency in relation to the memorization of the *Forty Hadith of al-Nawawi* (*Hadith Arba'in Nawawiyah*) within Islamic boarding school settings remains relatively limited. Most existing studies have focused on memorization methods, memory development, and *tahfiz* learning systems, while the relationship between Arabic language mastery and success in hadith memorization has not received sufficient attention. In response to this gap, the present study aims to analyze the significance of Arabic language proficiency for the memorization of the *Forty Hadith of al-Nawawi* among students at Pondok Pesantren Integritas Qurani 368. The novelty of this research lies in its focus on positioning Arabic language proficiency as an essential factor in the hadith memorization process, based on the experiences and perspectives of students who have successfully completed the memorization of the *Forty Hadith of al-Nawawi*. This study employs Ausubel's Meaningful Learning Theory (1968) as its primary theoretical framework to explain how Arabic language comprehension facilitates more meaningful learning processes, while also drawing on Craik and Lockhart's Levels of Processing Theory (1972) to understand the influence of depth of information processing on memory retention. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to the development of hadith education in Islamic boarding schools, particularly by strengthening the integration of Arabic language instruction and hadith memorization programs.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design to examine in depth the urgency of Arabic language skills for memorizing the Hadith Arba'in Nawawiyah among students at the Integritas Qurani 368 Islamic Boarding School (Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2014) . The study was conducted for three days involving three students as research informants. The selection of informants was carried out using a *purposive sampling technique* based on certain criteria, namely final year students who have completed the memorization of the Hadith Arba'in Nawawiyah and are recommended by the ustaz as informants who are considered capable of providing information in accordance with the focus of the study. The main instrument in this study is the researcher himself supported by semi-structured interview guidelines, a voice recorder, and field notes to assist the data collection process. The research data focuses on the students' experiences, views, and understanding of the relationship between Arabic language skills and the process of memorizing the Hadith.

The research procedure began with the preparation of interview instruments and coordination with the Islamic boarding school, followed by the selection of informants according to predetermined criteria. The next stage involved conducting in-depth interviews and collecting documentation relevant to the research needs. The data obtained were then organized and analyzed using a qualitative data analysis model that includes data reduction , data display , and conclusion drawing and verification (Miles et al., 2020) . Through these stages, the data obtained can be systematically organized to produce a comprehensive picture of the urgency of Arabic language skills for memorizing the Hadith of Arba'in Nawawiyah in the Islamic boarding school environment.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 of student interviews

No	Focus of Study	Findings
1	Motivation to Memorize the Hadith of Arba'in Nawawiyah	Informant 1 memorized the Hadith of Arba'in as a form of following the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Informant 2 was motivated by his interest in the science of hadith as a first step in understanding Islamic teachings. Informant 3 chose the Hadith of Arba'in because it is concise yet covers the fundamentals of Islamic teachings.
2	Methods and Stages of Memorization	Informant 1 used the <i>takrir</i> (repetition) method and memorization cards. Informant 2 uses the repetition method combined with a general understanding of meaning (<i>ijmali</i>). Informant 3 used the <i>sima'i method</i> , <i>takrir</i> , and studied mufradat which was considered difficult.
3	The Influence of Arabic Language Ability	Informant 1 stated that Arabic language skills helped him understand the sentence structure of hadith. Informant 2 considered mastering the vocabulary essential for avoiding errors in memorization. Informant 3 admitted to experiencing

		difficulties when encountering complex vocabulary and more complex sentence structures.
4	Challenges and Solutions in Memorizing	Informant 1 overcame difficulties by setting realistic memorization targets. Informant 2 relied on prayer and discipline to maintain memorization. Informant 3 overcame obstacles by studying the meaning of difficult vocabulary and repeating it repeatedly until it was easy to remember.
5	The Urgency of Arabic Language Mastery	Informant 1 stated that understanding Arabic helps speed up the memorization process. Informants 2 and 3 emphasized that Arabic is the main foundation for studying hadith.

Motivation of Students in Memorizing the Hadith of Arba'in Nawawiyah

Based on the interview results, it was found that each informant had a different motivation in memorizing the Hadith Arba'in Nawawiyah. Informant 1 stated that his motivation stemmed from the desire to follow the sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad SAW through mastering the hadiths that serve as guidelines for the life of a Muslim. Meanwhile, Informant 2 was driven by his interest in the science of hadith as one of the first steps to understanding Islamic teachings more deeply. In contrast to the two previous informants, Informant 3 chose to memorize the Hadith Arba'in Nawawiyah because the book contains concise hadiths, but covers various fundamental Islamic teachings. This finding indicates that the motivation to memorize hadith is not only driven by academic obligations at the Islamic boarding school, but is also influenced by religious and intellectual factors, and perceptions of the benefits of the material being studied.

These findings align with research by Halim et al. (2025) , which demonstrated that spiritual motivation is a crucial factor in successfully memorizing religious texts. The desire to draw closer to Islamic teachings and to understand their religious content more deeply can motivate individuals to maintain consistency in the memorization process (Almoshagah et al., 2022; Ayyad, 2022) . Furthermore, research by Zulhannan and Musyarrofah (2024) also emphasized that Islamic boarding school-based education emphasizes not only memorization but also character building and an understanding of the Islamic values contained in the material studied. Therefore, the informants' motivation reflects a link between spiritual and intellectual goals in memorizing the Hadith of Arba'in Nawawiyah (Suja et al., 2025) .

Based on these findings, students' motivation in memorizing the Hadith of Arba'in Nawawiyah can be understood as the initial capital that determines their sincerity in undergoing the memorization process. Motivation originating from religious awareness tends to make students view hadith memorization as part of worship and an effort to emulate the Prophet Muhammad, while intellectual motivation encourages students to use memorization

as a means of understanding Islamic teachings more systematically (Abd Ghani et al., 2025; Mousi, 2021) . This diversity of motivations shows that the process of memorizing hadith is not only oriented towards achieving memorization targets, but also related to students' needs to gain a broader religious understanding. Therefore, motivation can be seen as a factor that provides direction and meaning to the memorization activities carried out by students in the Islamic boarding school environment (Mousi, 2021) .

Methods and Stages of Memorizing the Hadith of Arba'in Nawawiyah

Based on the interview results, it was found that the informants used various methods in the process of memorizing the Hadith Arba'in Nawawiyah. Informant 1 relied on the *takrir method* (repetition) combined with the use of memory cards to help memorize the structure of the hadith more systematically. Informant 2 used the repetition method accompanied by an understanding of the meaning of the hadith in general (*ijmali*), so that the memorization process did not only focus on the words, but also on their meaning. Meanwhile, Informant 3 applied a combination of *the sima'i method* by listening to the teacher's recitation, *takrir* , and studying the mufradat considered difficult before memorizing them. These findings indicate that although repetition was the main method used by all informants, there were variations in strategies carried out to adjust to the needs and learning characteristics of each student.

These findings align with research by Suryana et al. (2024) , which demonstrated that intensive repetition is a key factor in strengthening memorization and retaining information. Research by Sneida et al. (2024) also found that *repetition* is one of the most effective techniques for supporting memory storage and strengthening. Furthermore, research by Halim et al. (2025) revealed that successful memorization is not solely determined by repetition but is also supported by the systematic and consistent application of methods tailored to the learner's needs. These similar findings indicate that repetition remains the primary foundation of memorization, while other supporting strategies serve to enhance the effectiveness of the memorization process and facilitate learners' retention. (Mawangir, 2022; Tarmuji et al., 2022)

Based on research findings, the methods used by informants indicate that the process of memorizing hadith does not occur mechanically, but rather involves various complementary strategies. The use of memory cards, the *sima'i method* , and understanding the meaning of hadith are forms of adaptation carried out by students to strengthen memory and facilitate the memorization process. This indicates that successful memorization depends not only on the frequency of repetition, but also on the ability of students to choose and combine methods that suit their learning needs (Fitriyah et al., 2026) . Thus, the variety of methods used by informants indicates that the process of memorizing hadith is an activity that requires active involvement of students in developing effective and sustainable learning strategies (Kartini et al., 2026) .



The Influence of Arabic Language Ability on Memorization of the Hadith of Arba'in Nawawiyah

Based on the interview results, all informants acknowledged that Arabic language skills influenced the memorization process of the Hadith of Arba'in Nawawiyah. Informant 1 stated that mastery of Arabic helped him understand the sentence structure of the hadith, making it easier to remember the order of the memorized words. Informant 2 emphasized the importance of understanding the mufradat to avoid errors when memorizing and distinguishing between similar hadith wordings. Meanwhile, Informant 3 revealed that one of the difficulties often encountered in the memorization process was the presence of complex mufradat and sentence structures that were more complicated than the Arabic texts he usually studied. These findings indicate that Arabic language skills not only function as a tool for understanding the meaning of the hadith, but also influence the ease with which students can remember and retain their memorization.

These findings can be understood through the *Meaningful Learning theory* proposed by (Ausubel, 1968) . According to this theory, the learning process will be more effective when new information can be connected to prior knowledge. In the context of this study, the students' existing Arabic language skills serve as prior knowledge that helps them understand the content of the hadith being memorized (Ausubel, 1968) . When students understand the meaning of the mufradat, the relationships between words, and the sentence structure in the hadith, the memorization process is no longer just a repetition of sounds or phrases, but also involves understanding the content of the text being studied. Thus, memorization built through understanding tends to be more meaningful and easier to maintain than memorization that relies solely on repetition (Çakin, 2022; Syaifulloh et al., 2023) .

The findings of this study can also be explained through *the Levels of Processing theory* developed by (Craik & Lockhart, 1972) . This theory explains that information that is processed more deeply will have a greater chance of being stored in long-term memory than information that is processed superficially (Craik & Lockhart, 1972) . In this study, understanding the vocabulary and structure of Arabic indicates a deeper information processing process because students not only memorize the wording of the hadith, but also understand the meaning contained in it (Amat & Ab Hadi, 2024; Mustopa et al., 2026) . Conversely, the difficulty experienced by Informant 3 when finding complex vocabulary indicates that limited language understanding can hinder the process of in-depth information processing. Therefore, Arabic language skills can be seen as a factor that helps students achieve a higher level of information processing so that memorization becomes stronger and easier to recall.

The results of this study are consistent with the research of Suryana et al. (2024) which showed that understanding the memorized material plays an important role in strengthening the quality of students' memorization. This finding is also in line with the research of Sneida et al. (2024) which emphasized that the learning process involving a deeper understanding of meaning and information processing tends to result in better memory. In addition, the research of Zulhannan and Musyarrofah (2024) shows that the activity of understanding the material is an inseparable part of the memorization process in the Islamic boarding school environment. Thus, the results of this study strengthen the view that Arabic language skills not only function as linguistic competence, but also as a factor that supports the understanding and effectiveness of the memorization of the Hadith Arba'in Nawawiyah.

Challenges and Solutions in Memorizing the Hadith of Arba'in Nawawiyah

Based on the interview results, each informant faced different challenges during the process of memorizing the Hadith of Arba'in Nawawiyah. Informant 1 revealed that one of the obstacles faced was maintaining consistency in achieving the memorization target, so he overcame this by developing a realistic memorization plan that suited his abilities. Informant 2 stated that laziness and a decline in motivation to memorize were frequent challenges, so he tried to overcome this through prayer and forcing himself to continue memorizing even when he was less motivated. Meanwhile, Informant 3 faced difficulties in understanding difficult vocabulary and complex language structures. To overcome this, he studied the meaning of the vocabulary first and repeated it repeatedly until it was easier to understand and memorize. These findings indicate that the challenges in memorizing hadith do not only come from the aspect of memorization ability, but are also related to factors of motivation, discipline, and language comprehension.

These findings indicate that the process of memorizing hadith is an activity that simultaneously involves various cognitive and non-cognitive aspects. Challenges such as maintaining consistency, managing motivation, and understanding difficult vocabulary indicate that successful memorization is determined not only by the ability to remember the wording of the hadith, but also by the students' ability to manage their learning process (Haris, 2022; Sirojuddin & Ghoni, 2025). Interestingly, the solutions implemented by informants tend to be active and adaptive, such as setting realistic targets, strengthening spiritual motivation, and deepening understanding of vocabulary that has not been mastered. This shows that students do not simply rely on repetition of memorization, but also develop specific strategies to overcome obstacles that arise during the learning process (Halim et al., 2025; Parveen, 2025). Thus, the ability to adapt learning strategies is one of the factors that supports the sustainability of the hadith memorization process.



The results of this study align with those of Halim et al. (2025) , who found that memorization success is influenced by discipline, consistent practice, and an individual's ability to maintain a structured learning routine. These findings also align with those of Dimyathi et al. (2025) , who demonstrated that memorization is influenced by cognitive factors related to the ability to manage information and maintain long-term memory. Furthermore, research by Suryana et al. (2024) emphasized that consistent repetition is key to strengthening memorization. These similar findings suggest that various challenges in memorization can be overcome through appropriate learning strategies, consistent practice, and efforts to understand the memorized material, thereby enabling the memorization process to be more effective and sustainable.

The Urgency of Arabic Language Mastery in Memorizing the Hadith of Arba'in Nawawiyah

Based on the interview results, all informants assessed that Arabic language skills play a crucial role in the process of memorizing the Hadith of Arba'in Nawawiyah. Informant 1 stated that understanding Arabic helped him memorize the hadith more quickly because he was able to understand the sentence structure and relationships between words in the hadith being studied. Meanwhile, Informants 2 and 3 emphasized that Arabic is the main foundation in studying hadith because all hadith texts are delivered in Arabic. According to both informants, mastery of the vocabulary and language structure helps students understand the content of the hadith better, making the memorization process easier. These findings indicate that Arabic language skills are not only seen as a supporting competency, but as an element that has a direct relationship to the success of hadith memorization.

These findings can be explained through the *Meaningful Learning theory* proposed by (Ausubel, 1968) . This theory emphasizes that learning will be more effective if new information can be connected to prior knowledge (Ausubel, 1968) . In the context of this study, Arabic language skills serve as prior knowledge that helps students understand the content of the hadith being memorized. When students understand the meaning of the mufradat, sentence structure, and messages contained in the hadith, the memorization process is not only oriented towards repeating the words but also involves understanding the text's content (Pamungkas et al., 2023; Suryana et al., 2024) . This condition makes the learning process more meaningful because the information learned is related to prior knowledge. Therefore, the better a student's mastery of Arabic, the greater the chance of forming memorization that is not only strong verbally but also understood conceptually (Djuaeni & Usman, 2021; Kurniailah & Bakar, 2023) .

Furthermore, *the Levels of Processing theory* developed by Craik & Lockhart (1972) also explains the importance of Arabic language skills in the process of memorizing hadith. This theory explains that information that is processed deeply is more easily stored in long-term memory than information that is only processed at a superficial level (Craik & Lockhart, 1972) . In this study, understanding the vocabulary and structure of Arabic allows students to process information more deeply because they not only remember the sound of the hadith but also understand its meaning. Conversely, limited Arabic language proficiency can potentially cause the memorization process to rely solely on mechanical repetition, making information more easily forgotten. Thus, Arabic language skills play a role in improving the quality of information processing, which ultimately contributes to the strength and resilience of hadith memorization (Akmaliyah et al., 2021; Surahman et al., 2025) .

Based on the overall research findings, it can be understood that the urgency of Arabic language skills in memorizing the Hadith of Arba'in Nawawiyah lies in its ability to bridge the process of understanding and memorization simultaneously. Arabic language skills help students understand the content of the hadith, recognize the relationship between words, and reduce errors in the memorization process (Adinata et al., 2025; Haj et al., 2026) . These findings contribute to the study of Islamic education by showing that the success of hadith memorization is not only influenced by the intensity of repetition or the memorization method used, but also by the linguistic abilities of the students. Therefore, Arabic language learning and hadith memorization programs should not be positioned as two separate activities, but rather as two components that support each other in forming a more effective and meaningful hadith learning process in the Islamic boarding school environment.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, Arabic language skills have an important role in supporting the memorization of the Hadith Arba'in Nawawiyah in the Islamic boarding school environment. The research findings show that students have various motivations in memorizing hadith, ranging from religious encouragement to follow the sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, the desire to understand Islamic teachings through the science of hadith, to interest in the concise and comprehensive content of the Hadith Arba'in. In the memorization process, the informants utilize various methods such as *takrir* , *sima'i* , memorization cards, and understanding the meaning of hadith in general. The research results also show that mastery of mufradat and understanding of Arabic language structure helps students understand the content of hadith, reduces errors in memorization, and facilitates the process of remembering and maintaining memorization. Thus, the research objective to analyze the urgency of Arabic language skills for memorizing the Hadith Arba'in Nawawiyah has been achieved, where Arabic language skills are proven to be a factor that supports the effectiveness of the hadith memorization process.

The findings of this study imply that Arabic language learning and hadith memorization programs need to be developed in an integrated manner, as they mutually support each other in creating a more effective and meaningful learning process. Theoretically, the results of this study reinforce the view that understanding the material studied can improve the quality of the learning process and the strength of memorization. However, this study has limitations because it only involved three informants from one Islamic boarding school, so the findings obtained cannot describe the conditions of all Islamic boarding schools in general. Therefore, further research is recommended to involve a more diverse number of informants, a wider research location, or a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches to obtain a more comprehensive picture of the relationship between Arabic language ability and successful hadith memorization. Furthermore, the results of this study can be used as considerations for Islamic boarding school managers to strengthen Arabic language learning as an integral part of supporting the success of hadith memorization programs.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author would like to express his gratitude to the Integritas Qurani 368 Islamic Boarding School for granting permission and the opportunity to conduct this research. He also extends his deepest appreciation to the ustaz (Islamic teachers) and all the students who volunteered to serve as informants and provide valuable information throughout the research process. He also extends his gratitude to all those who provided support, input, and assistance, both directly and indirectly, so that this research could be successfully completed. He hopes that the results of this research will benefit the development of Arabic language learning, Islamic boarding school education, and hadith studies.

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