

Reconstructing Arabic Speaking Development: The Hidden Role of Communicative Pedagogy and Self Efficacy in Undergraduate Learners

Salsa Hauna Ajidin ^{a.1,*}, Yanda Rismawati ^{b.2}, Asep Ajidin ^{c.3}, Arya Yudiawan ^{c.4}, Muhammad Alief ^{c.5}

^{a,b,d,e} UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, Indonesia

^c STIH Putri Maharaja Payakumbuh, Indonesia

^{*1} salsahauna03@gmail.com ; ² yandarismawati@gmail.com; ³ asepaajidinhamidy@gmail.com;

⁴ 24204022002@student.uin-suka.ac.id; ⁵ 2204022011@student.uin-suka.ac.id

*Correspondent Author

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ABSTRACT

Arabic language learning in higher education is still largely dominated by structural approaches, which often limit students' opportunities to develop speaking proficiency. This study aims to reconstruct the development of Arabic speaking skills (Mahārat al-Kalām) by examining the interaction between communicative pedagogy and learners' self-efficacy in undergraduate contexts. Using an archival qualitative research design, the study analyzes lesson plans (RPS), assessment rubrics, classroom video recordings, and interaction transcripts from an al-Kalām course. Data were examined through Conversation Analysis, Thematic Analysis, and Communicative Approach Analysis to capture interactional patterns, psychological dimensions, and pedagogical alignment. The findings show that communicative activities such as intonation imitation, object description, thematic dialogue, project-based tasks, and interaction with native speakers stimulate spontaneous oral production and foster meaning negotiation. Students demonstrated increased initiative, self-repair, and sustained turn-taking, indicating the development of communicative competence. Thematic analysis further reveals that repeated communicative experiences strengthen students' self-efficacy through mastery experiences, social support, and a supportive classroom environment. The study concludes that Arabic speaking development does not emerge spontaneously but is systematically constructed through the integration of communicative instructional design and learners' psychological readiness. These findings highlight the importance of aligning pedagogical planning and affective support to enhance speaking proficiency in higher education

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Introduction

Arabic language education in higher education institutions is largely dominated by traditional approaches that emphasize structural aspects of language, particularly grammar (nahwu–sharaf) and translation. (Selim, 2018) The strong focus on reading, writing, and translation skills has resulted in limited attention to speaking and listening abilities. Consequently, students'

speaking development progresses slowly and is characterized by low confidence, fear of making mistakes, reluctance to speak, and limited exposure to authentic interaction.(Arabic et al., 2020) Challenges related to mastering sentence structures, vocabulary, and verb patterns are exacerbated by the lack of opportunities for real-life language practice.(Brosh, 2019) Minimal communicative activities in the classroom, a learning culture that prioritizes accuracy over fluency, and limited learning resources further restrict students' opportunities to practice speaking naturally.(Brosh, 2019) Overall, a structure-focused and teacher-centered approach tends to make students passive, hesitant, and uncomfortable in oral communication. This situation calls for a shift toward more communicative, interactive, and student-centered instructional methods that foster a supportive learning environment and encourage students to use Arabic in meaningful contexts.(Tang, 2021)

Speaking proficiency (Mahārat al-Kalām) is a crucial component of language learning because it directly supports social interaction, academic engagement, and professional needs.(Benlaghrissi & Ouahidi, 2024) However, despite years of formal study, many learners continue to struggle with oral fluency. This indicates a persistent gap between students' theoretical knowledge and their ability to use the language in everyday situations, highlighting the need for more communicative and learner-centered instructional approaches..(*International Students ' Experiences on Speaking and Writing Skills in Language Learning Processes in Higher Education*, 2025)

These challenges are reflected in students' weak performance in fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary use, and confidence often influenced by anxiety, fear of negative evaluation, and limited speaking practice.(Yan et al., 2024) Traditional grammar-based and teacher-led instruction restricts meaningful interaction, slowing down the development of speaking skills.(Hui & Wong, 2021) Additionally, psychological barriers such as shyness, discomfort, and communication anxiety further inhibit students' willingness to participate.(Benlaghrissi & Ouahidi, 2024) To address these issues, various strategies have been suggested, including communicative approaches, project-based learning, collaborative tasks, and technology-supported practice, although their implementation varies across instructional contexts.(Qiao & Zhao, 2023) Supportive, safe, and interactive learning environments also play a significant role in building confidence, encouraging risk-taking, and enhancing oral performance.(Liu, 2025)

Communicative approaches such as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) emphasize the use of language in meaningful contexts through active learner participation and authentic interaction.(Namaziandost & Shatalebi, 2019) Research has shown that CLT significantly enhances speaking skills, classroom participation, and communicative effectiveness.(Safarnejad, 2020)

Communicative activities such as discussions, group collaboration, and role-play foster fluency and increase learners' confidence by providing real-life opportunities to use the language.(Peng et al., 2025) CLT also develops communicative competence beyond grammar mastery by preparing learners to use language appropriately across contexts.(Kozawa, 2017) However, its effective implementation requires sustained pedagogical support.(Graves et al., n.d.) Therefore, maximizing the potential of CLT necessitates instructional transformation, teacher professional development, and institutional support to ensure sustainable and meaningful application.(Access et al., 2018)

Speaking proficiency in a foreign language is not determined solely by linguistic knowledge but is also shaped by psychological factors such as confidence, self-efficacy, and anxiety.(Lin et al., 2022) *Self-efficacy*, one's belief in their ability to successfully perform a task plays a vital role in shaping oral performance.(C. Li & Jun, 2023) Learners with high self-efficacy tend to take more risks, persist despite errors, and participate more actively in oral interaction.(Xu & Xu, 2025) Conversely, low confidence hinders students' willingness to communicate. Positive experiences and social support are therefore essential in building learners' comfort in using the language. (C. Li & Jun, 2023)

There remains a notable research gap regarding the integration of pedagogical approaches and psychological factors in Arabic speaking development at the tertiary level. Most existing studies examine either teaching methods or psychological constructs such as self-efficacy and anxiety, without exploring how both interact in shaping students' speaking performance.(Mei et al., 2023) The relationship between communicative interaction and confidence has been widely discussed in other language contexts but remains underexplored in Arabic language education.(Ma, 2022) Thus, more comprehensive studies are needed to explain how communicative pedagogy and psychological dimensions jointly contribute to the development of Arabic speaking proficiency in higher education..(Lee, 2019)

Recent scholarship highlights the importance of reconstructing interactive instructional approaches to enhance speaking skills effectively.(Mulyadi, 2021) Successful oral performance is influenced not only by teaching methods but also by learners' abilities to regulate their own learning, maintain motivation, and believe in their capabilities.(Nair, 2021) Interactive learning approaches including digital technologies and project-based learning are shown to be more effective than traditional methods because they allow learners to practice, engage, and build confidence through direct use of the language.(Sherine et al., n.d.) At the same time, self-regulation skills such as goal-setting, monitoring progress, and seeking feedback significantly contribute to fluency and participation. The synergy between supportive instructional design and learners' self-regulation drives more optimal speaking development.(Su et al., 2018)

These insights have important implications for language education, particularly in designing curricula that promote learner autonomy and meaningful interaction. Educators are encouraged to develop learning activities that not only train linguistic skills but also strengthen students' confidence and reflective habits. Theoretically, these perspectives reinforce the idea that speaking proficiency develops through the interplay between effective pedagogical design and learners' active engagement in managing their own learning.(Tiwery, n.d.) Understanding this synergy ensures that speaking instruction becomes more effective, relevant, and aligned with contemporary learning needs.

This article aims to deepen the understanding of how communicative instructional approaches and students' self-efficacy interact in shaping Arabic speaking proficiency at the university level. Specifically, this study examines: (1) how interactive and student-centered teaching strategies are implemented in speaking classes and how they influence students' engagement and oral development; (2) how students' self-efficacy affects their motivation, participation, and performance in speaking tasks; and (3) how communicative environments and positive feedback contribute to building confidence, thereby promoting more active participation and better learning outcomes. Through this analysis, the study seeks to contribute to the development of more effective instructional models and enrich the theoretical and pedagogical discourse on Arabic speaking instruction in higher education.

Method

Research Design and Approach

This study employed an archival qualitative research design (Fan & Yan, 2020), utilizing instructional documents, interaction transcripts, and classroom video recordings as primary data sources without conducting direct classroom observations. (Dumlao, 2020) This design is appropriate for tracing the development of speaking skills as they naturally unfolded during documented instructional events. The research adopts a process-oriented perspective, focusing on interactional dynamics, conversational flow, and the social mechanisms that contribute to the emergence of oral proficiency.

Research Focus and Units of Analysis

The study focuses on the development of *Mahārat al-Kalām* through students' verbal participation in a range of communicative activities. The units of analysis include:(1) turn-taking patterns, (2) verbal responses to instructional prompts and tasks, (3) meaning-negotiation strategies, and (4) self-efficacy indicators such as speaking initiative, self-repair, and management

of pauses. (Auriel Zaeni et al., 2025) Learning is viewed not as an outcome-oriented process, but as a communicative practice that emerges through interaction.

Data Sources

The data corpus consists of archived instructional materials, including classroom video recordings, transcripts of teacher–student interactions, lesson plans and syllabus documents, assessment rubrics, and students’ oral outputs such as project work and speaking assignments. The completeness of metadata and inter-document linkage was used to ensure accurate contextual interpretation of the learning environment.

Data Collection Procedures

Data were collected through systematic retrieval of archival materials provided by the instructor. (1-S2, n.d.) The video recordings were transcribed *verbatim*, capturing interactional details such as pauses, laughter, self-repair, and speaker shifts. The transcripts were then segmented into analytical units based on turn sequences, task themes, and salient communicative episodes. (Z. Li, 2020) Initial coding followed two stages: Descriptive coding (Hennessy et al., 2016) used to label observable verbal actions (e.g., questioning, explaining, requesting clarification), Thematic coding, used to identify emerging patterns related to speaking development and self-efficacy. (Yan et al., 2024)

Data Analysis Techniques

a. Conversation Analysis (CA)

CA was employed to identify interactional patterns such as turn-taking, self-repair, clarification requests, confirmation checks, and other mechanisms that sustain conversational continuity. This approach enabled a detailed examination of how meaning was negotiated and how students constructed oral production sequentially. (Aleksius, 2021)

b. Thematic Analysis (Self-Efficacy)

Thematic Analysis was used to identify themes related to self-efficacy, including confidence, hesitation, self-initiated correction, and speaking initiative. These themes were developed from initial coding and analyzed to understand the psychological dimensions that support speaking development. (Version, 2025)

c. Communicative Approach Analysis

This analysis examined the alignment between classroom activities and the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) particularly fluency development, authentic task use, and students’ engagement in meaningful communication. This

perspective helped evaluate how pedagogical design contributed to language production.(Haile et al., 2024)

Data Trustworthiness

Data trustworthiness was ensured through source triangulation (videos, transcripts, instructional documents, student work) and methodological triangulation (CA, thematic analysis, and communicative analysis).(Korstjens & Moser, 2018) Peer debriefing was conducted by discussing the emerging findings with academic colleagues to minimize interpretive bias(Access, 2025). An audit trail documenting the analytical process from transcription to final interpretation was maintained to enhance transparency.(Maher et al., 2018) Finally, *thick description* was provided to portray the instructional context in detail, enabling readers to evaluate the transferability of the findings to similar settings(Watson & Jackson, 2025)

Result and Discussion

Archival data analysis shows that the development of students' speaking skills emerged through intensive communicative interaction, meaning-negotiation strategies, and the increasing initiative displayed by students in oral production. The findings were generated through three complementary analytical techniques Conversation Analysis, Thematic Analysis, and Communicative Approach Analysis which together revealed the dynamics of Arabic language learning in the classroom.

1. The Role of Communicative Pedagogy in Stimulating Oral Production

The implementation of communicative pedagogy is clearly reflected in the design of oral activities and instructional strategies outlined in the course syllabus (RPS) and captured in the classroom videos..

Figure 1. Data from the RPS

Based on the al-Kalām RPS, students were prompted to produce spoken language through several communicative activities: (1) imitating native-speaker utterances with accurate Arabic intonation (CPMK-2), (2) describing objects and surrounding environments spontaneously using *takhayyul-takallam* and *iqra'-takallam* techniques (CPMK-3), (3) expressing thoughts and feelings through oral media such as podcasts, TikTok, or creative video projects (CPMK-4), and (4) engaging in real-time dialogue with native speakers via Zoom or platforms like Ometv (CPMK-5). These activities created a learning environment that required students to produce meaningful language in authentic contexts.

Figure 2. Video Interactions



The video data reveal that descriptive instructions often served as the initial trigger for spontaneous speech. In one session, the lecturer instructed students to describe surrounding objects in detail with accurate Arabic intonation. This prompted utterances such as: “هذا القلم أزرق، وطوله متوسط، وأستعمله كلَّ يومٍ في الدرس,” demonstrating students’ attempts to adjust tone and rhythm to the model provided by the instructor. In project-based sessions, students were grouped thematically to discuss, argue, and construct dialogues on topics such as family, hobbies, transportation, and daily routines as specified in the RPS. These interactions frequently displayed meaning-negotiation dynamics; when students lost track or paused, the lecturer reactivated the flow through prompts such as: “ماذا ستفعلون لو تغيّر المكان؟” allowing the conversation to continue and stimulating further oral production.

The videos also show that the lecturer engaged in informal Arabic conversation with students, modeling natural intonation and sentence structure aligned with CPMK-2 and CPMK-3. Additionally, students’ interactions with native speakers through Zoom and Ometv (CPMK-5) increased their spontaneity, confidence, and utterance length. Overall, the archival data confirm that prompting, open-ended tasks, dialogic facilitation, and exposure to native speakers functioned as key drivers for increased oral production in al-Kalām.

1. Alignment with the Assessment Rubric

The consistency between the video findings and the assessment rubric further strengthens the interpretation that communicative pedagogy effectively stimulates spoken production.

Figure 3. Speaking Assessment Rubric

RUBRIK PENILAIAN UNJUK KERJA AL KALAM 2025

Nama mahasiswa :
NIM/kelas :
Tema :

No	Aspek Yang dinilai	skor									
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	Kelancaran dalam menyampaikan ide, pikiran, perasaan dan pendapat dengan bahasa Arab										
2	Kejelasan suara sehingga dapat apa yang disampaikan dapat didengar dan dipahami orang lain.										
3	Kesesuaian intonasi dan gaya pengucapan dengan orang Arab.										
4	Ketepatan dalam memilih kata, frase/ungkapan bahasa Arab										
5	Kerincian dalam menyampaikan ide, pikiran, perasaan dan pendapat dengan bahasa Arab										
6	Tatapan mata saat menyampaikan ide, pikiran, perasaan dan pendapat dengan bahasa Arab yang menunjukkan percaya diri.										
7	Kebiasaan teman saya berbicara dengan Bahasa Arab										
8	Durasi waktu menyampaikan ide, pikiran dan gagasannya lebih dari 5 menit										
9	Antusias dalam menyampaikan ide, pikiran dan gagasan dalam Bahasa Arab										
10	Ketepatan, keserasian dan keindahan media yang digunakan dalam mengungkapkan ide dan gagasan secara lisan.										
Total skor											

Yogyakarta,.....
Penilai

Tugas-tugas di buku.....
Uts :

The speaking rubric emphasizes fluency, intonation accuracy, descriptive detail, initiative in taking the floor, and the ability to imitate native pronunciation. All of these aspects clearly appeared in the video data: students produced extended and spontaneous utterances, showed accurate intonation when modeling teacher or native-speaker samples, and independently took turns during group tasks.

In project-based tasks, rubric categories such as fluency, intonation, expression style, and lexical variety corresponded closely with student performance. Their ability to sustain dialogues even when facing pauses or topical breakdowns illustrates the relevance of the rubric to actual classroom behavior. Thus, empirical findings from the video data align closely with the rubric criteria, confirming that communicative pedagogy plays a central role in eliciting oral production.

2. Learners' Interaction Patterns and Meaning Negotiation

Conversation Analysis of the archival data shows that classroom interaction in al-Kalām unfolded naturally and consistently with the communicative principles outlined in the RPS. Students did not merely respond to instructions; they autonomously initiated turns, sustained conversations, and completed thematic oral tasks. The interaction patterns observed include stable turn-taking, initiative in opening conversations, and the use of meaning-negotiation strategies during moments of misunderstanding.

The transcripts display a range of communication strategies signaling speaking development. In the *waṣf mā ḥawlahu* activity, Student A opened with thematic question: “*Mādzā taf’alu ba’dā shalāt al-fajr?*” Student B responded with self-repair: “*Azhhab... azhhab ilā al-jāmi’ah thumma adrus.*” This self-correction reflects students’ emerging ability to monitor and adjust their own utterances.

In a hobby-themed discussion, a clarification request appeared when Student D asked: “*Mā ma’nā ar-riyādah al-khafifah?*” followed by cooperative explanation from Student C. In a market-themed project, Student E performed a confirmation check: “*Hal naqulu si’r am tsaman?*” before the lecturer provided brief confirmation without taking over the conversation. Interactions with native speakers showed further advances: students began initiating questions themselves, maintaining more authentic and fluent communication.

These patterns show that students developed their speaking skills through meaning-negotiation mechanisms aligned with Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and CPMK-2 to CPMK-4 indicators. Strategies such as self-repair, clarification requests, comprehension checks, and speaking initiative demonstrate that students were not simply reproducing language forms, but actively constructing spoken competence through sustained interaction.

3. Emergence of Students’ Self-Efficacy through Communicative Activities

Thematic Analysis indicates that repeated communicative activities fostered a clear increase in students’ speaking self-efficacy. This was visible in greater initiative, sustained contribution to conversations, and reduced dependence on teacher intervention. Initially, students tended to wait for explicit instructions; in later sessions, they began initiating questions, offering opinions, and completing previously unfinished sentences.

Video evidence shows that self-efficacy emerged through mastery experience. In one everyday-activity conversation, a previously hesitant student produced a longer, uninterrupted utterance: “*Azhhab ilā al-bayt thumma u’iddu ad-dars wa uḥāwil an ataḥaddatha bil-‘Arabiyyah akthar.*” This expansion indicates stronger confidence in managing discourse. Another student demonstrated self-correction before continuing an explanation evidence that they no longer feared making mistakes but saw correction as part of natural speech.

Assessment documents also showed improvement in categories related to confidence: initiating conversation, maintaining intonation stability, and sustaining dialogue. These increases parallel the behavioral patterns observed in discussions and

project tasks. Tasks that required autonomy group dialogue creation, oral video production, and interaction with native speakers provided direct success experiences that strengthened students' self-efficacy.

Overall, self-efficacy grew not merely from linguistic knowledge, but from communicative experiences that offered mastery, social support, and emotional regulation. A learning environment that encourages repeated oral practice enables students to feel more capable, confident, and ready to participate in Arabic conversations consistent with the theoretical assumptions of self-efficacy.

4. The Relationship Between the RPS, Task Design, and Speaking Development

Analysis of the RPS shows that the development of students' speaking ability was not incidental, but the result of a structured and sequential task design. The al-Kalām syllabus places oral competence at its core, as reflected in the CPMK structure and activities that consistently guide students toward productive language use. The learning sequence from intonation imitation, to descriptive tasks, to thematic dialogues, to communication with native speakers demonstrates a clear progression of task complexity aligned with communicative learning principles.

The alignment between task demands and student performance appears clearly in the data. Early tasks focusing on intonation and simple sentences built basic confidence, while descriptive and thematic dialogue tasks expanded utterance length and structural complexity. Project-based tasks requiring collaboration and argumentation pushed students to employ communication strategies such as rephrasing, elaboration, and clarification strategies not observed in early sessions.

A logical correspondence was also found between the RPS indicators and observable communicative behaviors. Rubric categories fluency, speaking initiative, intonation accuracy, and ability to sustain dialogue manifested strongly in project work and native-speaker interactions. This indicates that the assessment instruments in the RPS effectively captured actual speaking development.

In sum, the findings show that students' speaking development resulted from the integration of RPS planning, progressively structured communicative tasks, and repeated practice opportunities. This systematic pedagogical design ensured that students experienced gradual, authentic, and meaningful oral production, supporting consistent improvement throughout the al-Kalām course. Thus, the integration of pedagogical planning and real communicative experience created a predictable and coherent developmental pathway for students' speaking proficiency.

Conclusion

This study shows that the development of students' speaking skills in the al-Kalām course does not occur spontaneously, but is constructed through the systematic integration of communicative pedagogical design, authentic interaction experiences, and the enhancement of learners' self-efficacy. The analysis of learning archives reveals that the implementation of a communicative approach through activities such as intonation imitation, object description, thematic dialogue, and interaction with native speakers consistently triggers speech production and encourages students to use Arabic in meaningful contexts.

The interaction patterns that emerge in the classroom indicate students' active involvement in initiating conversations, performing self-repair, and employing meaning negotiation strategies such as clarification, confirmation, and elaboration. This process signifies the development of communicative competence in line with the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and the Course Learning Outcome Indicators (CPMK) outlined in the lesson plan (RPS). In addition, repetitive communicative activities create mastery experiences that strengthen students' self-efficacy. This is reflected in increased speaking confidence, more stable intonation, and greater initiative in sustaining conversations, as supported by the assessment rubrics and behavioral observations.

The findings also confirm that the al-Kalām lesson plan (RPS) functions as a well-structured pedagogical framework that regulates the progression of tasks from simple to complex, thereby providing a consistent developmental trajectory for students. The alignment between learning objectives, task instructions, and evaluation instruments directly contributes to the improvement of students' oral performance. Overall, this study demonstrates that the synergy between the communicative approach and learners' psychological factors creates a conducive learning environment for the development of Arabic speaking skills in higher education.

Recommendations

1. For Arabic Language Teachers

- a. It is essential to maintain and expand authentic communicative activities such as thematic dialogue, role-play, and interaction with native speakers, as they have proven effective in stimulating students' speech production.
- b. Scaffolding practices provided by lecturers, such as guiding questions and intonation modeling, should continue to be applied gradually to support the development of students' fluency and spontaneity.

- c. It is recommended to increase the use of formative feedback that focuses on intonation, fluency, and communication strategies, rather than solely on grammatical accuracy.

2. For Curriculum Developers / Study Programs

- a. Lesson plans (RPS) should continue to emphasize tiered communicative tasks, integrate digital media, and provide space for projects based on real interaction.
- b. The assessment of speaking skills should ideally adopt rubrics that evaluate not only linguistic aspects but also affective aspects such as initiative and speaking confidence.

3. For Students

- a. Independent practice through video production, online conversations, and group collaboration can strengthen self-efficacy and help maintain speaking proficiency.
- b. Students are encouraged to be more active in applying communication strategies such as meaning clarification, self-repair, and utterance extension to improve fluency.

4. For Future Researchers

- a. Future studies may be extended to more diverse classroom contexts or include additional triangulation through interviews to enrich the understanding of self-efficacy development.
- b. Longitudinal studies with longer time spans may provide a deeper picture of the development of students' oral competence from semester to semester

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