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Strengthening Students' Self-efficacy through the Implementation of Self-directed Learning in Arabic Speaking Proficiency

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe how Self-Directed Learning strengthens students' self-efficacy in Arabic speaking learning. A qualitative approach with a case study design was employed. Data were collected through observations, interviews, documentation, and questionnaires, and analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive model. The findings reveal that SDL strengthens students' self-efficacy through five key stages: goal setting, learning strategy planning, time management, self-reflection, and the selection of learning resources. Among these stages, goal setting and self-reflection had the strongest influence on students' self-confidence and self-regulation. At the same time, independent practice through learning strategy planning and resource selection contributed most to resilience and learning autonomy. Mastery experiences reinforced these improvements gained through repeated speaking practice and by social support from lecturers and peers during dialogues, presentations, and group discussions. As a result, students became more confident in expressing ideas, more persistent in overcoming speaking difficulties, and more independent in managing their learning. The study concludes that Self-Directed Learning is effective not only in improving Arabic speaking skills but also in strengthening the psychological dimensions of self-efficacy that support sustainable language learning.

1. INTRODUCTION

Learning Arabic, especially speaking skills in Arabic Language Education, is the most complex and most challenging aspect compared to other *maharah* (Thoyyibah et al., 2024). Speaking skills not only require mastery of linguistic elements (*mufradat*, *tarkib*, and phonology), but also require courage, confidence, and psychological readiness of students in expressing ideas orally (Balshe & Masterson, 2026). In practice, many Arabic Language Education students have a fairly good grammatical understanding, but experience obstacles when they have to speak spontaneously in Arabic (Schlam Salman & Haskel-Shaham, 2023).

These problems show that affective and psychological factors have a major contribution to the success of Arabic speaking learning (Pettrich et al., 2026). One of the most influential psychological factors is self-efficacy (Angamo et al., 2026; X. Ma, 2025). to Albert Bandura, self-efficacy is an individual's belief in their ability to organize and carry out the necessary actions to achieve certain performance (Panadero et al., 2026). In the context of language learning, self-efficacy determines the extent to which students dare to try, endure difficulties, and manage anxiety when speaking in public (Chen, 2025).

Students with high self-efficacy tend to participate more actively in discussions, do not give up easily when making mistakes, and have intrinsic motivation to continue to improve their speaking skills (Boughanmi et al., 2026). On the other hand, students with low self-efficacy often show an attitude of hesitation, fear of making mistakes, and prefer to remain silent in the learning process (Amini Farsani & Seyedshoja, 2025). This condition has direct implications for the low quality of *maharah kalam* practice in the classroom. In an effort to overcome this problem, a learning approach oriented towards learning independence is a strategic alternative (Ritonga et al., 2024). The concept of Self-Directed Learning proposed by Malcolm Knowles emphasizes that students can take the initiative in diagnosing learning needs, formulating goals, choosing strategies, and evaluating their own learning outcomes. SDL positions students as active subjects who are responsible for the development of their competencies (Rahman & Alam, 2026).

In Arabic language learning, Self-Directed Learning can be implemented through the practice of independent conversation, reflection on speaking performance, the use of digital media for speaking practice, and the preparation of personal achievement targets (AlHroob & Al-khresheh, 2026). Through this process, students not only train linguistic aspects, but also build a mastery experience which, according to Albert Bandura's theory, is the main source of self-efficacy (Derakhshan & Liu, 2026).

In addition, from the perspective of social cognitive theory, self-efficacy is formed through four main sources: mastery experience, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and physiological states (Bandura, 1986). The Self-Directed Learning model provides ample room for these four aspects to develop. Students gain experience of success through self-practice, learning from peer models, receiving constructive feedback, and learning to manage speech anxiety (Lai et al., 2026). Thus, there is a strong conceptual link between Self-Directed Learning and self-efficacy enhancement.

Self directed learning has been applied in learning Arabic, especially *maharah kalam* at uin syahada Padangsidempuan, in its application students are able to manage their own learning which results in students being proficient in speaking Arabic with a high level of confidence and without fear of being wrong, this can be seen when students speak in practical class both in the form of conversations and stories and describe something in Arabic so that students get best value. And it can also be seen in daily activities both on campus and off-campus; students continue to use Arabic fluently. In the practice of learning Arabic at UIN Syahada, the approach used is student-centered. Students are more actively producing language. As a result, the opportunity to build a successful speaking experience becomes high, so self-efficacy develops optimally (Cai et al., 2026).

Studies on self-efficacy in language learning have been carried out extensively, especially in the context of English learning. For example, research by Liu & Zhang *examined language learners' GenAI-assisted writing self-efficacy profiles and the relationship with their writing self-regulated learning strategies* (Liu & Zhang, 2025); research by Almayez *examined motivation and English self-efficacy in online learning applications among Saudi EFL learners: Exploring the mediating role of self-regulated learning strategies* (Almayez et al., 2025). The findings revealed that motivation positively influences self-regulated learning strategies and self-efficacy, while SRL strategies mediate the relationship between motivation and self-efficacy. Furthermore, the use of online language learning applications that foster motivation and learner autonomy has been shown to enhance learners' self-confidence and English language proficiency.

Research by Devisakti *Online Assessments Among Diverse Students in Malaysia Higher Education: Self-Efficacy and Technology Awareness* (Devisakti & Rohayati, 2025). The findings indicated that self-efficacy had a positive effect on both performance expectancy and effort expectancy in the use of online assessments. Furthermore, technology awareness strengthened the influence of effort expectancy and facilitating conditions on students' behavioral intention to use online assessments. Research by Sheril *The role of academic mentorship and self-efficacy in enhancing self-directed learning readiness among undergraduate nursing students* (Sherif et al., 2026). The findings indicate that students' readiness for self-directed learning is shaped not only by academic mentoring but also by the extent to which mentoring experiences strengthen their confidence in managing their own learning. Therefore, efforts to enhance students' readiness for self-directed learning should emphasize mentoring approaches that go beyond guiding by intentionally fostering learners' self-confidence, autonomy, and active engagement in the learning process.

Research by Adigun: *Fostering self-directed learning in blended learning environments: A constructivist perspective in Higher Education* (Adigun et al., 2025). The study highlights that a constructivist approach can effectively foster students' self-directed learning by encouraging them to construct their own understanding through blended learning actively. Furthermore, the proposed three-ring-drag-in model is considered a promising strategy for strengthening students' SDL capacities in higher education. To date, research examining how the implementation of self-directed learning can strengthen self-efficacy in speaking skills instruction, particularly in Arabic language learning, remains limited. This is noteworthy

because Arabic language learning is often characterized by high levels of language anxiety, making it essential to adopt learning strategies that not only improve students' language proficiency but also enhance their self-confidence.

This study was conducted in the Arabic Language Education Program at UIN Syekh Ali Hasan Ahmad Addary Padangsidempuan, which has distinctive characteristics compared with many other Arabic language education programs. *Maharah kalam* instruction at UIN Syahada adopts a student-centered learning approach through the implementation of self-directed learning, in which students actively set learning goals, select learning strategies, utilize a variety of digital learning resources, engage in self-reflection, and participate in continuous speaking practice both inside and outside the classroom. These distinctive characteristics make UIN Syahada a relevant context for examining how self-directed learning shapes students' self-efficacy in Arabic language learning.

Therefore, this study seeks to address this gap by examining how the implementation of self-directed learning contributes to strengthening students' self-efficacy in *maharah kalam* instruction. The findings are expected to contribute theoretically to the advancement of Arabic language learning research while also providing practical insights for designing instructional approaches that foster both students' speaking proficiency and their psychological development in a balanced manner.

The integration of Malcolm Knowles' Self-Directed Learning theory and Albert Bandura's Self-Efficacy theory provides a conceptual framework for explaining how speaking anxiety can be reduced in Arabic language learning. Self-directed learning enables students to learn according to their individual needs, set realistic learning goals, and engage in independent practice before performing in front of the class. Through this process, students gain mastery experiences through repeated practice, receive verbal persuasion from instructors and peers, learn through vicarious experiences by observing their classmates' performances, and develop the ability to regulate their emotional states while speaking. These four sources of self-efficacy gradually strengthen students' confidence in their Arabic speaking ability, thereby reducing their fear of making mistakes and their anxiety about speaking in public. Thus, self-directed learning functions not only as a learner-centered instructional strategy but also as a pedagogical mechanism that enhances self-efficacy and helps alleviate students' speaking anxiety.

Based on the background, research gaps, and novelties that have been described, this study aims to describe the mechanism of strengthening self-efficacy through the stages of *Self-Directed Learning*, so that a conceptual model of self-efficacy strengthening based on independent learning that is relevant and applicable in the context of *maharah kalam* learning in higher education can be formulated.

2. METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design to in-depth examine the strengthening of self-efficacy through the application of Self-Directed Learning in learning *maharah kalam* in Arabic Language Education students. This approach was chosen because it

allows researchers to understand phenomena contextually and holistically in natural learning situations. The case study focuses on a class that systematically applies the principles of Self-Directed Learning as developed by Malcolm Knowles, with the aim of exploring the process of internalizing learning independence and its impact on students' self-confidence in speaking Arabic.

Data Sources and Data Collection Techniques

The data sources in this study consist of primary data and secondary data. Primary data was obtained directly from the research subjects. These included Arabic Language Education students who participated in Self-Directed Learning-based *maharah kalam* learning, as well as lecturers who taught the course. Meanwhile, secondary data was obtained from supporting documents such as Semester Learning Plans (RPS), student reflection journals, and recordings of speaking practice (*kalam*).

To collect comprehensive data, this study employed four key techniques. First, participatory observation was conducted to directly observe classroom learning activities, student interactions, and independent learning practices. Second, in-depth interviews were carried out with both students and lecturers to explore their experiences, perceptions, and changes in self-efficacy throughout the learning process. Third, documentation was gathered through the analysis of learning journals, recordings of speaking practices, and pedagogical tools. Finally, a self-efficacy questionnaire served as supporting data to evaluate shifts in students' confidence levels before and after the learning implementation.

Primary Data Analysis Procedure

Primary data were collected directly from students and course instructors through three main techniques, with the following analytical procedures:

In-Depth Interview Procedure: The researcher analyzed and interpreted the narratives and emotional perceptions expressed by students and instructors. The qualitative interview data were used as explanatory evidence to uncover the psychological mechanisms underlying students' self-efficacy and self-regulation, particularly the factors influencing their confidence in Arabic speaking.

Participant Observation Procedure: Field notes documenting classroom interactions, individual presentations, paired dialogues (*hiwar*), and group discussions were analyzed to identify manifestations of self-efficacy, including self-belief, resilience, initiative, self-regulation, and learning autonomy.

Self-Efficacy Questionnaire (N = 17) Procedure (Quantitative Anchoring): Quantitative data obtained from the self-efficacy questionnaire were analyzed descriptively by calculating the frequency and percentage of responses in the Strongly Agree (SA) and Agree (A) categories across the five dimensions of self-efficacy. These results were used to corroborate the qualitative findings and confirm overall trends in students' self-efficacy.

Secondary Data Analysis Procedure

Secondary data were collected from supporting documents, including the Semester Learning Plan (RPS), students' learning reflection journals, and recordings of Arabic speaking (*kalam*) practice. The analytical procedures were as follows:

Analysis of Students' Learning Reflection Journals Procedure: The researcher examined the components of the students' reflection journals, including learning objectives, learning materials, learning strategies, learning resources, and self-evaluation. These documents were analyzed to determine how students implemented the stages of self-directed learning in practice and how these experiences contributed to the development of mastery experiences and persistence.

Referential Adequacy Procedure: Supporting documents, institutional records, and recordings of speaking practice were used as referential evidence to verify and strengthen the credibility of the findings derived from the interviews and participant observations.

Participants

The participants in this study consisted of 17 undergraduate students enrolled in the Arabic Language Education Program at UIN Syekh Ali Hasan Ahmad Addary Padangsidimpuan who were taking a *maharah kalam* course based on the Self-Directed Learning approach. All participants were non-native learners of Arabic and were purposively selected because they were enrolled in a class that consistently implemented the SDL approach throughout the course. This class was chosen as the case study setting because it provided an appropriate context for examining how the implementation of SDL contributes to strengthening students' self-efficacy in *maharah kalam* learning. Given these characteristics, the participants were considered capable of providing rich and in-depth information relevant to the research objectives.

Framework of Analysis

The analytical framework in this study integrates two main concepts, namely Self-Directed Learning and Self-Efficacy. The analysis focused on the relationship between the stages of SDL and indicators of strengthening student self-efficacy.

The analyzed stages of Self-Directed Learning (SDL) include learning goal setting, planning learning strategies, time management, self-reflection, and the selection of learning resources. These five components were then analyzed to determine their relationship with key self-efficacy indicators, namely self-belief, resilience, initiative, self-regulation, and learning autonomy. Ultimately, this framework is utilized to identify how self-paced learning practices contribute to the strengthening of students' psychological aspects, particularly in developing their Arabic speaking skills.

Data Analysis Procedure

Data analysis was carried out interactively and continuously with reference to the Miles and Huberman model, which encompasses three main stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. First, during the data reduction stage, data obtained from observations, interviews, and documentation were selected, focused, and simplified according to the research objective of strengthening self-efficacy through SDL. Next, in the data display stage, the reduced data were presented in the form of descriptive narratives, tables, and matrices to facilitate an understanding of the relationships between categories, such as the linkage between SDL practices and self-efficacy indicators. Finally, for conclusion drawing and verification, the researcher drew conclusions based on the emerging patterns, relationships,

and findings, verifying them continuously throughout the research process to ensure the validity of the results.

Data Triangulation and Validation

To ensure the validity of the data, this study utilized several techniques, maintaining overall data trustworthiness based on the criteria of credibility, dependability, and confirmability. These techniques included source triangulation, which involved comparing data gathered from students, lecturers, and learning documents. In addition, methodological triangulation was applied by combining observations, interviews, documentation, and questionnaires. Furthermore, member checking was conducted to confirm the interview results and data interpretations directly with the informants. Finally, referential adequacy was established by utilizing documents and records as supporting evidence.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Results

Self-Directed learning is a learning approach that places students as active subjects in the learning process, where they have the initiative in determining learning goals, strategies, and evaluations. This concept is in line with the thinking of Malcolm Knowles, who emphasized that learning independence is the key to developing individual competencies (Knowles, 2003). In the context of Arabic language learning, Self-Directed Learning encourages students to independently explore vocabulary, practice speaking skills, and utilize various learning resources, both from academic environments and digital media.

Table 1. The Process of Strengthening Self-Efficacy through Self-Directed Learning in Arabic

Component of Self-Directed Learning	Practices Carried Out by Students	Indications of Strengthening Self-Efficacy
Learning goal setting	Students set targets for memorizing <i>mufrodāt</i> and practicing speaking independently.	Confidence in being able to achieve the target of speaking
Planning learning strategies	Choosing exercise strategies such as voice recordings, peer discussions, and exercises in front of the mirror	Increased sense of being able to manage the learning process
Time management	Schedule regular speaking exercises	Consistency and commitment to learning
Self reflection	Evaluate pronunciation errors and sentence structure	Mistakes are seen as part of the learning process
Selection of learning resources	Using videos, digital dictionaries, and informal conversations	Increased confidence in enriching vocabulary

Table 1 shows that the application of Self-Directed Learning in Arabic language learning is able to strengthen students' self-efficacy through independent learning practices, such as setting goals, designing strategies, managing time, and conducting self-reflection. Students actively practice speaking, utilize various learning resources, and evaluate mistakes as part of the process, so that consistency, independence, and increased confidence in Arabic speaking skills are formed.

Self-efficacy is an individual's belief in his or her ability to complete a task or achieve a certain goal. Albert Bandura introduced this concept, emphasizing that a person's level of confidence greatly influences the way they think, act, and respond to challenges (Bandura, 1997). In the context of Arabic language learning, self-efficacy is an important factor that determines students' courage to use the language actively, especially in Arabic speaking skills. Students with high self-efficacy tend to be more daring to try, not easily afraid of making mistakes, and more consistent in practicing (Kormos, 2026).

Table 2. Manifestation of Student Self-Efficacy in the Practice of Arabic

Aspects of Self-Efficacy	Forms of Manifestation in Learning
Self-belief	Students show readiness to speak without waiting for detailed instructions from the lecturer.
Resilience	Students continue to speak despite mistakes
Initiatives	Students actively seek speaking practice opportunities
Self regulation	Students are able to identify weaknesses and design improvements
Learning autonomy	Students are not completely dependent on the text or direction of the lecturer.

Based on Table 2, descriptive data obtained from the self-efficacy questionnaire administered to all 17 participants were analyzed. The results indicated that the students demonstrated high levels of self-efficacy across all five dimensions examined.

Table 3. Distribution of Students' Responses to the Self-Efficacy Questionnaire

Aspects	Statement	Strongly agree	agree
Self-Belief	I am confident that I can practice Arabic dialogue (<i>hiwar</i>) in front of the class without seeing/depending on the text.	8 (47,1%)	7 (41,2%)
	I feel confident in expressing ideas spontaneously using Arabic during classroom learning.	6 (35,3%)	9 (52,9%)
Resilience	I continued to speak Arabic even though I realized that there was a grammatical error (<i>tarkib</i>) in what I spoke.	9 (52,9%)	6 (35,3%)

	I do not feel discouraged or excessively anxious when I have trouble finding the right vocabulary (mufradat) when speaking.	7 (41,2%)	8 (47,1%)
Initiative	I took the initiative to start a simple conversation in Arabic with a friend outside of formal lecture hours.	5 (29,4%)	9 (52,9%)
	I proactively seek out additional learning resources and resources to improve my Arabic speaking fluency.	8 (47,1%)	9 (47,1%)
Self Regulation	I have a habit of evaluating myself by recording my own voice and listening back to my Arabic pronunciation.	10 (58,8%)	6 (35,3%)
	I was able to identify my weaknesses in speaking Arabic and develop a strategy/improvement steps independently.	11 (64,7%)	5 (29,4%)
Learning Autonomy	I use digital media (such as app dictionaries, YouTube, or ChatGPT) independently to enrich Arabic vocabulary.	12 (70,6%)	5 (29,4%)
	I consistently set personal goals that I should achieve in the <i>maharah kalam</i> practice every week.	9 (52,9%)	7 (41,2%)

Table 3 shows the manifestation of student self-efficacy in maharah *kalam* learning. In the aspect of self-belief, students seem to have the readiness to speak without having to wait for detailed instructions from the lecturer. They dare to start a conversation or convey ideas in Arabic independently when given the opportunity to speak in class. In the aspect of resilience, students continue the speaking process even though they make mistakes in pronunciation, vocabulary selection, or sentence structure. The errors that appear do not stop the speaking activity, but are responded to with an attempt to continue communication.

Furthermore, in the initiative aspect, students show active efforts to find opportunities to practice speaking. This can be seen from their involvement in class discussions, conversations with friends, and speaking exercises outside of formal learning sessions. In the aspect of self-regulation, students are able to identify the weaknesses they experience in speaking Arabic, such as the limitations of mufradat or errors in sentence structure. Based on this awareness, students try to design improvement steps through additional exercises or strengthening material understanding.

Meanwhile, in the aspect of learning autonomy, students are not completely dependent on texts or lecturers' directions in the speaking process. They try to develop sentences independently by utilizing the language knowledge they have to convey ideas and opinions in Arabic.

3.2 Discussion

In the process of learning Arabic, students are required to make a Journal consisting of the learning components to be filled.

Jurnal Pembelajaran Mahasiswa

Nama : Adzwar
NIM : 2520500320
Mata Kuliah : STK Bahasa Arab
Pertemuan ke- : 3
Tanggal : Senin, 25/02/2025

No	Komponen	Uraian
1.	Tujuan Pembelajaran	Mampu menjelaskan bentuk dialog tentang musim tanpa member teks
2.	Materi yang Dipelajari	Musim-musim dalam setahun dalam bentuk dialog
3.	Strategi Belajar	Mencari suara sendiri dan latihan kefasihan.
4.	Sumber Belajar yang Digunakan	Buku, Google, Chat GPT, kamus, teman diskusi, dll. untuk member
5.	Evaluasi Hasil Belajar	Pada minggu ini dialog bahasa Arab tanpa melihat teks dan mengartikan sendiri dan bisa membuat kalimat dari kata-kata

Mengetahui

Dosen Pengampu [Signature]
Mahasiswa [Signature]

Figure 1. Journal of Self-Directed Learning

Figure 1 presents a Student Learning Journal used as a reflective learning document in Self-Directed Learning-based *maharah kalam* instruction. This document serves as evidence that students not only participated in the learning process but also actively planned, implemented, monitored, and evaluated their own learning. In the student learning journal document, it was found that students have implemented Self-Directed Learning-based learning in *maharah kalam* activities. Students independently set learning goals, which enable them to practice simple dialogues in Arabic related to daily activities and complete speaking tasks. The material studied focuses on the preparation and pronunciation of dialogues in a real-life context. In the learning process, students use the strategy of recording their own voices and practice speaking independently or in pairs. The learning resources used are also varied, including books, digital media such as Google and ChatGPT, dictionaries, and discussions with friends. The evaluation of learning outcomes showed that students were able to understand and practice Arabic dialogue without looking at the text and were able to compose sentences independently.

"In my opinion, ChatGPT has helped me become more independent in learning Arabic. Before using ChatGPT, I often waited for explanations from the lecturer or asked my classmates whenever I encountered difficulties. Now, whenever I do not understand Arabic grammar (*nahwu*), the meaning of *mufradat* (vocabulary), or how to construct sentences in Arabic, I first try to find the answers through ChatGPT. This allows me to learn independently before confirming my understanding with the lecturer."

The data also shows that there is a strengthening of student self-efficacy. This can be seen from the increase in students' self-confidence in practicing speaking independently without dependence on lecturers (Al-Hoorie et al., 2025). In addition, students show the ability to master assignments through the practice of dialogue without text, which indicates a mastery experience. Independence in determining learning strategies and resources, as well as consistency in conducting repetitive exercises through voice recordings, also show strong

learning resilience (Masnun et al., 2025).

The findings of this study show that the application of Self-Directed Learning makes a significant contribution to strengthening student self-efficacy in *maharah kalam* learning. Students no longer play the role of passive learners, but are active in managing their learning process, starting from setting goals to evaluating learning outcomes. This is in line with the concept of Self-Directed Learning put forward by Malcolm Knowles, who states that self-directed learning involves individual initiative in designing, implementing, and evaluating his or her own learning process.

The learning strategies used by students, such as recording their own voices, reflect a deep process of self-reflection (Lai & Sundqvist, 2026). This activity allows students to assess their speaking skills independently, resulting in a continuous self-assessment process. In addition, the use of a variety of learning resources demonstrates flexibility and autonomy in learning, which are key characteristics of independent learning (Butler, 2024).

From a self-efficacy perspective, these findings reinforce the theory put forward by Albert Bandura that individual self-confidence develops through success experiences, repetitive exercise, and environmental support (De Vrind et al., 2024). Students' ability to practice dialogue without text shows the existence of mastery experience, which is the main factor in increasing self-efficacy. On the other hand, interaction with friends through discussion also contributes in the form of social support (Thornbury, 2025), which further strengthens student confidence.

Thus, *maharah kalam* learning based on Self-Directed Learning not only improves technical speaking skills, but also shapes the psychological aspects of students, especially self-efficacy. This shows that the learning approach that provides space for independence to students is very effective in creating meaningful learning and is oriented towards developing real competencies in Arabic (Li et al., 2024).



Figure 2. Individual Student Presentations as a Form of Strengthening Self-Efficacy in *Maharah Kalam*

Figure 2 shows that *maharah kalam* learning based on direct practical activities is able to strengthen student self-efficacy through the application of Self-Directed Learning (Hamid,

2025). Students are given the opportunity to plan, prepare, and display their speaking skills independently. This is in line with the theory of Self-Directed Learning put forward by Malcolm Knowles, which states that self-learning is a process in which individuals take the initiative in determining learning needs, formulating goals, choosing strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes (Buschner & Tweed, 2026)

In this context, students who appear in front of the class have gone through these stages, starting from the preparation of the material to the implementation of speaking practice. This shows that learning is no longer teacher-centered, but has shifted to student-centered learning that encourages independence and responsibility for learning (Hong & Guo, 2025)

From the perspective of self-efficacy, this finding can be explained through the theory put forward by Albert Bandura. Bandura said that self-efficacy is influenced by four main sources, namely mastery experience, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and physiological state. In observed learning, these four aspects appear implicitly (He et al., 2025). The courage of students to appear and deliver material is a form of mastery experience, which is a success experience that directly increases self-confidence. Other students who listened gained vicarious experience through observation of their friend's appearance. Interaction and possible feedback in the classroom become a form of verbal persuasion, while a supportive classroom atmosphere helps to keep students' emotional state (physiological state) positive.

In addition, the practice of speaking in front of the classroom is also in line with the communicative approach in language learning, which emphasizes the use of language in real life in a social context (Seong, 2025). This activity not only trains the linguistic aspect, but also builds the courage, confidence, and mental readiness of students in communicating. As Nyamekye said in her research, the communicative approach in language learning emphasizes the real use of language in a social context that strengthens fluency in speaking through contextual activities, which in practice not only develops linguistic aspects, but also builds courage, confidence, and mental readiness of students in communicating (Nyamekye & Soré, 2025)

Thus, the integration between Self-Directed Learning and the practice of *maharah kalam* has proven to be effective in strengthening student self-efficacy. Learning that provides space for students to be active, independent, and reflective is able to produce meaningful learning experiences and improve speaking competence comprehensively, both from the skill and psychological aspects.



Figure 3. Paired Dialogue Interaction as an Effort to Strengthen Student Self-Efficacy

The practice of dialogue in *maharah kalam* learning based on Self-Directed Learning is effective in strengthening student self-efficacy. Dialogue activities carried out in pairs provide opportunities for students to be directly involved in the communicative use of language, so that learning becomes more meaningful and contextual. The findings of this study are in line with Ibrahim's research that a conducive learning environment and the use of creative methods inside and outside the classroom, as applied in Kampung Bahasa, provide space for students to be actively involved in real communication practices. In this context, paired dialogue activities allow students to use language directly and communicatively, so that learning becomes more meaningful and contextual, while increasing their confidence and readiness to communicate (Ibrahim et al., 2025)

In this activity, peers functioned as learning scaffolds, providing gradual support that enabled students to accomplish Arabic speaking tasks according to their level of competence (Abey Suriya et al., 2026). This learning environment allowed students to gain mastery experiences, which Bandura identifies as the most influential source of self-efficacy. Furthermore, when students observed classmates with similar abilities successfully communicating in Arabic, they became more confident in their own ability to achieve similar performance through vicarious experiences, consistent with the findings reported by Jud (Jud et al., 2025). In addition, constructive feedback from peers during speaking practice (verbal persuasion) and a supportive, low-anxiety learning environment (physiological and affective states) further strengthened students' self-confidence, as also reported in Angamo's study (Angamo et al., 2026). Therefore, paired dialogue practice not only improved students' Arabic speaking proficiency but also transformed their potential into actual communicative competence, as reflected in their increased confidence and willingness to communicate in Arabic.

From the perspective of Self-Directed Learning, students who are able to prepare and practice dialogue independently have fulfilled the characteristics of independent learning as stated by Malcolm Knowles, namely the ability of individuals to take the initiative to plan, implement, and evaluate their learning process. Dialogue activities show that students not only understand the material, but are also able to implement it in the form of real communication (Herda et al., 2026, 2026).

In terms of self-efficacy, this practice of dialogue is very relevant to Albert Bandura's theory, which states that individual self-confidence develops through direct experience (Csizér & Albert, 2024). Students' success in conducting conversations is a form of mastery experience, which is a success experience that is the main source of self-efficacy. In addition, other students who witnessed the dialogue also gained vicarious experiences, which are indirect experiences that can increase their motivation and confidence.

Interaction in dialogue also functions as a form of verbal persuasion, where responses from the interlocutor and the audience can provide social support that strengthens students' self-confidence (W. Ma et al., 2026). In the context of language learning, this activity is in line with a communicative approach that emphasizes the use of language as a means of communication, not just a learning object.

These findings can also be reinforced by the perspective of the theory of social constructivism put forward by Lev Vygotsky. Vygotsky emphasized that learning occurs through social interaction and language as the main tool in building knowledge (Maulana, 2025). In the context of *hiwar* practice, dialogue interaction between students reflects the process of social interaction that allows for the negotiation of meaning and the formation of collective

understanding. This activity is in the zone of proximal development, where students can improve their speaking skills through peer help. Thus, the practice of dialogue not only trains linguistic skills, but also strengthens confidence through social support and collaboration.

In addition, the motivational theories of Edward Deci and Richard Ryan through Self-Determination Theory are also relevant in explaining this finding. Self-Determination Theory emphasizes three basic psychological needs, namely autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Ng & Kong, 2025). In *hiwar* practice, students show autonomy through independent learning, competence through the ability to conduct dialogues, and relatedness through interaction with friends. The fulfillment of these three aspects contributes to increasing students' intrinsic motivation and confidence.

Thus, the practice of *hiwar* in *maharah kalam* learning not only improves students' speaking skills, but also plays an important role in building self-efficacy through direct experience, social interaction, and independent learning. The integration between Self-Directed Learning and a communicative approach is an effective strategy in creating active, independent, and meaningful Arabic language learning, according to Hussein in his research (Hussein et al., 2025).



Figure 4. Collaborative Interaction of Students in Strengthening Self-Efficacy in Arabic

Based on the results of observations of the learning activities in the picture, it can be seen that students are involved in small group discussion activities in *maharah kalam* learning. Students sit in groups and interact with each other directly, where one student appears to explain or convey an idea, while the other students listen, respond, and engage in conversation. This activity shows that there is collaborative and communicative learning.

Students in the group seemed to be actively exchanging opinions, asking questions, and responding to the material discussed. Some students were seen holding books or notes as references, which shows an effort to integrate learning resources in the discussion process. In addition, students' expressions and attention show high involvement in the learning process.

From the perspective of Self-Directed Learning, this activity reflects students' ability to manage learning independently in a group context (Lu, 2025). Students not only receive information, but also take the initiative in developing understanding through discussion,

information sharing, and clarification of concepts. This activity shows that students are able to actively construct knowledge.

Indications of strengthening self-efficacy can be seen from students' courage in expressing opinions, readiness to respond to questions, and active involvement in group interactions. Students show confidence in their ability to communicate using Arabic, even in an atmosphere of discussion that demands active participation.

These findings show that group discussions in *maharah kalam* learning based on Self-Directed Learning contribute significantly to strengthening student self-efficacy (Behforouz & Al Ghaithi, 2024). Interactions that occur in groups allow students to learn actively, support each other, and build mutual understanding through communication.

From the perspective of Self-Directed Learning, this activity is in line with the concept put forward by Malcolm Knowles that self-learning involves individual initiative in managing the learning process, including in choosing learning strategies and resources. Group discussions are one of the strategies chosen by students to deepen understanding as well as practice speaking skills.

These findings are also reinforced by Lev Vygotsky's theory of social constructivism, which emphasizes that learning occurs through social interaction. Group discussions reflect the process of social interaction that allows students to help each other in understanding the material (Ja'far & Hasanah, 2024). Through the concept of the zone of proximal development, students who have more ability can help other friends, so that there is a collective improvement in ability.

In addition, the Cooperative Learning theory of David Johnson and Roger Johnson is also relevant in explaining these findings. They emphasize that group learning can improve social skills, individual responsibility, and positive interactions between group members (Devlin et al., 2024). In this context, students not only learn languages, but also learn to communicate effectively in groups.

In terms of strengthening self-efficacy, interaction in group discussions provides space for students to gain experience of success on a small scale, such as being able to express opinions or answer questions (Menegale & Spricigo, 2024, 2024). This gradually strengthens students' self-confidence. In addition, support from peers also plays an important role in increasing self-confidence.

These findings are also in line with Edward Deci and Richard Ryan's Self-Determination theory, which emphasizes the importance of the need for autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Olafsen et al., 2025). In group discussions, students show autonomy through learning initiatives, competence through communication skills, and relatedness through social interaction with friends. In accordance with research conducted by Davis and William, which shows that a learning environment that supports autonomy, competence, relatedness, and beneficence simultaneously can increase students' autonomy motivation and well-being, because these four needs affect each other reciprocally (Estreder et al., 2024).

Thus, group discussions in *maharah kalam* learning not only improve students' speaking skills, but also play a role in strengthening self-efficacy through social interaction, active learning experiences, and independent learning. The integration between Self-Directed Learning and collaborative learning is an effective approach in creating meaningful, participatory, and self-confidence-oriented learning in Arabic.

4. CONCLUSION

The application of Self-Directed Learning in *maharah kalam* learning has proven to be effective in strengthening the self-efficacy of Arabic Language Education students. Through the stages of independent learning such as goal setting, strategy planning, time management, self-reflection, and the selection of learning resources, students are able to manage their learning process actively and responsibly. This process has implications for increasing self-confidence, resilience, initiative, self-regulation, and learning autonomy in the practice of speaking Arabic.

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting its findings. First, the observation period was relatively limited and therefore did not fully capture the continuous development of students' self-efficacy throughout the entire learning process. Second, the study was conducted exclusively with students from the Arabic Language Education Program at UIN Syekh Ali Hasan Ahmad Addary Padangsidempuan. Consequently, the findings reflect the characteristics of the learning context within this specific program and institution. They cannot be readily generalized to other Arabic language learning contexts with different student characteristics, curricula, or academic cultures. Future research is recommended to include a broader range of participants across multiple institutions and to employ a longer observation period in order to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how Self-Directed Learning contributes to the development of students' self-efficacy.

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