



# The Practice of Peer Tutoring in Morphosyntax Learning at the Madrasah Diniyah of Al-Azhar Islamic Boarding School

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## Abstract

Morphosyntactic competence is an essential foundation for understanding Arabic texts, particularly kitab kuning, in the pesantren educational context. The complexity of Arabic grammatical structures (nahwu and sharf) requires santri to develop independent mastery of linguistic rules amid the emergence of artificial intelligence-based learning technologies. This study aims to describe the implementation of morphosyntactic learning through peer tutoring, analyze its contribution to santri's morphosyntactic competence, and identify factors supporting the sustainability of this learning practice. This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design at Madrasah Diniyah Pondok Pesantren Al-Azhar, Sumenep Regency, from April to June 2026. Nine informants were selected through purposive sampling, consisting of the head of Madrasah Diniyah as the key informant, one morphosyntax tutor, two supervising teachers, and five fourth-grade santri. Data were collected through observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation, then analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña. The findings show that peer tutoring was implemented through nadham memorization and recitation, grammatical correction and explanation, discussions, classical Arabic text-reading demonstrations, and learning reinforcement through muroja'ah, with Nailul Amal as the main learning resource. This practice contributed to strengthening santri's morphosyntactic competence by encouraging active participation and collaborative learning interactions. Its sustainability was supported by the pesantren learning culture, continuous reinforcement, contextual learning materials, and tutors' adaptability to learners' diverse abilities. The study concludes that peer tutoring can be an effective strategy for strengthening Arabic morphosyntactic learning by integrating collaborative approaches with traditional pesantren educational practices.



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## A. Introduction

The ability to understand Arabic texts is one of the competencies that has been consistently maintained in the pesantren educational tradition. Various academic and religious activities, such as the study of classical Islamic texts (*kitab kuning*), scholarly discussions, and the development of Islamic literacy, require the ability to read and understand texts accurately. This need positions morphosyntax—which encompasses the aspects of *sharaf* and *nahwu*—as a crucial foundation in Arabic language learning. Mastery of morphosyntax helps students understand word formation, relationships between words, and the sentence structures that construct the meaning of a text (Situmeang dkk., 2025). This competency also serves as a primary tool for students to access, understand, and interpret various Islamic scholarly sources written in Arabic (Aliyah, 2018).

Despite its crucial role, the teaching of morphosyntax still faces various challenges. From a linguistic perspective, the complexity of linguistic rules and vocabulary mastery often pose obstacles to understanding the structure of the Arabic language. From a non-linguistic perspective, differences in learners' abilities also influence the process of mastering the material (Firdausiyah & Jannah, 2025). Advances in digital technology and artificial intelligence are also introducing new dynamics to Arabic language learning. Various translation apps, Arabic grammar checkers (Fitrah dkk., 2024), and artificial intelligence-based platforms can now help users quickly grasp the meaning of texts, identify sentence structures, and verify the accuracy of morphological and syntactic rules (Ilmiyah dkk., 2026). These conveniences expand access to Arabic language learning but do not diminish the importance of mastering morphosyntax. Learners still need the ability to analyze linguistic elements independently in order to evaluate the accuracy of the analyses and interpretations generated by technology. Thus, technology serves as a support for the learning process, not as a substitute for linguistic thinking.

Various educational institutions continue to develop learning strategies that can strengthen mastery of morphosyntax while increasing student engagement in the learning process. Learning approaches that incorporate peer interaction as part of the learning process are seen as capable of creating a more communicative atmosphere and supporting understanding of the material (Walewangko dkk., 2024). One widely implemented strategy is peer tutoring, a learning strategy that involves students helping one another understand the material through a process of learning support (Aghniyah & Jumari, 2024). Tutors play a role in guiding, explaining the material, and helping students overcome learning difficulties through closer interaction. This interaction creates opportunities for students to ask questions, discuss, and provide feedback to one another, making the learning process more active, collaborative, and student-centered.

Conceptually, peer tutoring is a learning strategy that involves students as learning resources for their peers through a structured mentoring process (Mahaputri dkk., 2026). Topping explains that peer tutoring facilitates the exchange of knowledge, learning experiences, and social support, which can enhance students' academic understanding (Sutri dkk., 2026). These interactions provide students with the opportunity to construct knowledge through activities such as explaining, asking questions, and providing feedback. This strategy is relevant for teaching morphosyntax because morphosyntax is a field that integrates aspects of morphology and syntax to understand word formation and

the relationships between linguistic units in constructing meaning (Imbang dkk., 2025). Mastery of morphosyntax serves as a crucial foundation for students in understanding Arabic language structure and accurately interpreting texts.

A number of studies indicate that peer tutoring makes a positive contribution to Arabic language learning and the strengthening of skills in reading classical Islamic texts. Mafaza dkk., (2026) research shows that the implementation of the Al-Miftah method proceeds through the stages of planning, implementation, practice, and evaluation, supported by the systematic use of textbooks, learning media, and the culture of discipline in Islamic boarding schools. Learning obstacles were overcome through reinforced material review and the application of peer tutoring. These results align with Y. Sari's research, which showed that peer teaching can improve morphosyntactic understanding, independent learning, and solidarity among students (Y. Sari dkk., 2025). Research by Roshua Astifa dkk., (2023) also indicates that peer tutoring in qirā'ah instruction fosters a more communicative learning environment and encourages students to ask questions more actively. Balulu, (2023) also indicates that peer tutoring in qirā'ah instruction fosters a more communicative learning environment and encourages students to ask questions more actively. These various findings demonstrate that peer tutoring contributes to strengthening mastery of the material while fostering more active learning interactions within the pesantren environment.

Some previous studies have primarily focused on the implementation of the method, learning outcomes, the ability to read religious texts, and the development of students' learning interactions. Studies that specifically examine the practice of peer tutoring in morphosyntactic learning—as a process that integrates the memorization of nadham, the explanation of grammatical rules, muraja'ah, and ta'kid into a single learning sequence—remain relatively limited. Madrasah Diniyah PP Al-Azhar presents a distinct context because it has consistently implemented peer tutoring since 2018, using the text "Nailul Amal"—developed independently by the pesantren community—as the primary instructional material. Senior students who have successfully completed the text guide junior students in memorizing, understanding, and reinforcing their mastery of morphosyntax through systematic mentoring. These characteristics indicate that peer tutoring functions not only as a learning strategy but also as an integral part of a collaborative learning culture that is continuously nurtured within the pesantren environment. Such learning practices are viewed as having the potential to strengthen mastery of morphosyntax while simultaneously fostering a sustainable collaborative learning culture, making them worthy of further in-depth study.

Based on this gap, this study aims to describe the mechanisms of morphosyntactic learning through peer tutoring at Madrasah Diniyah PP Al-Azhar, analyze its significance for students' mastery of morphosyntax, and examine the sustainability of this practice amid various implementation challenges. The research findings are expected to enrich the study of Arabic language learning—particularly regarding the application of peer tutoring in morphosyntactic instruction within Islamic boarding schools—while also serving as a reference for Islamic educational institutions in developing learning approaches that are more participatory, collaborative, and adaptive to students' needs.

## B. Method

This study employs a qualitative approach using a case study design to examine peer tutoring practices in morphosyntactic learning at the Madrasah Diniyah of the Al-Azhar Islamic Boarding School. The selection of this case study was based on the characteristics of the learning process, which utilizes the Nailul Amal textbook—compiled independently by the boarding school—and involves senior students who have graduated as tutors for junior students. The research took place at the Al-Azhar Islamic Boarding School's Madrasah Diniyah in Prakcak Hamlet, Pasongsongan Subdistrict, Sumenep Regency, from April to June 2026, with stages including preparation, data collection, data analysis, and the preparation of the research report (Purba dkk., 2025).

All parties involved in morphosyntactic learning through peer tutoring constituted the research population, while informants were selected using purposive sampling based on their involvement in the learning process. There were nine research informants, consisting of the head of the Madrasah Diniyah, who is also the chair of the team that compiled the Nailul Amal textbook, as the key informant; one morphosyntactic learning tutor; two “ ” or assigned teachers who assisted with the learning during evening sessions; and five fourth-grade students at the Madrasah Diniyah. Primary data were obtained from all informants, while secondary data were sourced from the Nailul Amal textbook, student assignment books, and various relevant instructional documents (Sulung & Muspawi, 2024).

Data collection combined observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation to ensure that the information obtained was mutually complementary. Observations focused on the entire morphosyntactic learning process through peer tutoring, ranging from the activities of tutors and students, learning stages, learning interactions, the recitation process, material explanations, comprehension discussions, to learning reinforcement activities during afternoon and evening sessions. Semi-structured interviews were conducted face-to-face using a flexible questionnaire, allowing the researcher to explore information based on each informant's responses. Key informants were interviewed twice to deepen and clarify the findings, while the tutor, the assigned teacher, and five students were each interviewed once. Documentation was utilized to corroborate the data through an examination of the Nailul Amal text, students' recitation logs, activity archives, and other learning documents.

Data analysis employed the interactive model developed by Matthew B. Miles, A. Michael Huberman, and Johnny Saldaña, which includes data condensation, data display, drawing conclusions, and verification (Miles dkk., 2014). The analysis process began with coding and grouping the data according to the research focus, then organizing the results into a systematic presentation to identify patterns, relationships, and the meaning of each finding. Conclusions were drawn iteratively alongside the verification process to ensure that the resulting interpretations remained consistent with the empirical data. The credibility of the findings is ensured through source triangulation—by comparing information from key informants, tutors, subject teachers, and students—as well as through methodological triangulation—by comparing the results of observations, interviews, and documentation.

### C. Findings and Discussion

#### Mechanisms of Morphosyntactic Learning through Peer Tutoring

The practice of peer tutoring in morphosyntactic learning at the Al-Azhar PP Madrasah Diniyah was first implemented in 2018 in response to the students' limited ability to read and understand classical Islamic texts. Before this program was launched, some students struggled to understand the linguistic structures that form the basis for interpreting Arabic texts. This situation prompted the administrators of Madrasah Diniyah to strengthen morphosyntactic learning as the primary foundation for mastering classical Arabic texts. This need has become increasingly relevant amid the development of various translation applications and artificial intelligence-based technologies capable of generating translations, adding vowel marks, and even analyzing i'rab automatically. Although these technologies offer convenience, the results they produce still require a verification process. Accuracy of meaning cannot be entirely reliant on digital systems because an understanding of linguistic structure remains the foundation for assessing the validity of analysis. Although digital media enhance accessibility to Arabic literature, their content does not fully align with authoritative texts and tends to disregard methodological principles in the interpretation of the (Rafsanjani dkk., 2026). Therefore, mastery of morphosyntax is considered essential so that students not only accept the results of technology but are also able to critically evaluate them and adapt them to appropriate linguistic rules.

Learning is reinforced through the use of the Nailul Amal textbook as the primary teaching material. This textbook was independently compiled by the Madrasah Diniyah team at PP Al-Azhar in response to the learning needs within the pesantren environment. Its content integrates material from the Al-Imrithi, Nadzmul Maqsud, Kafrawi, and Alfiyah Ibn Malik texts with a more practical design developed by the editorial team. This approach demonstrates an effort to contextualize the material so that it better suits the students' abilities without straying from the primary references in the scholarly tradition of the Arabic language. Thus, students receive material that not only draws from classical texts but is also organized more systematically to be easily understood according to their level of proficiency.

The philosophy behind the compilation of this book also reflects the educational orientation developed at PP Al-Azhar. Initially, the editorial team proposed the title Ta'jilul Amal, which means "accelerating the fulfillment of hopes." That name was ultimately not used because it was deemed inconsistent with the explanation in the Ta'lim Muta'alim that one of the prerequisites for learning is طول الزمن—which embodies the values of diligence and a long, gradual process—as well as (Pratiwi & Martoyo, 2024). The final choice settled on the name Nailul Amal, which means "achieving hopes or aspirations." This shift is not merely a change in terminology but also reflects the view that learning success is achieved through a consistent, gradual, and continuous process. These values are reflected in a learning model that emphasizes repetition, guidance, and practice as part of the process of mastering morphosyntax.

The peer tutoring program involves senior students serving as tutors for junior students. Tutors are selected from students who have completed the study of the Nailul Amal text and have passed the text graduation ceremony, thereby demonstrating sufficient mastery of the material. The selection of tutors is based not only on mastery of the material but also on shared learning experiences with

the students they mentor. The tutors have gone through the same learning process and thus understand the difficulties students often face when studying morphosyntax. This shared learning experience fosters a more open and communicative atmosphere (Basith, 2024). Students feel more at ease asking questions, expressing difficulties, and requesting further explanations when they encounter obstacles. This aligns with the findings of Wardani's research, which indicates that the role of a tutor is crucial in enhancing students' concentration and learning achievement indicators (Wardani dkk., 2024). This situation demonstrates that the senior-junior relationship in peer tutoring plays a vital role in fostering active and approachable learning interactions.

The role of the tutor is evident in every stage of learning at Madrasah Diniyah. Morphosyntactic instruction in fourth grade focuses on reinforcing memorization and understanding of grammatical rules through the text *Nailul Amal*, while fifth grade is directed toward applying these rules in reading religious texts, such as *Fathul Qarib*. These fourth- and fifth-grade classes— —consist of a mix of students from the Madrasah Tsanawiyah and Madrasah Aliyah levels. Learning activities are held four times a week, from Monday through Thursday, 1:00–2:40 p.m. Each session begins with the recitation of a nadham, followed by a memorization review, which typically covers at least three pages depending on the students' ability. Afterward, the tutor corrects the recitation while explaining the material contained in the memorized nadham. The next stage consists of a question-and-answer session and discussion to assess the students' understanding of the material. Additionally, each week the students participate in a group book-reading demonstration using an LCD projector as a practice tool for applying the rules within the context of broader texts. This series of activities demonstrates that memorization serves as a gateway to understanding, thereby fostering discipline, perseverance, and the ability to think logically (Rahmah, 2025), while explanations and discussions function as reinforcement in connecting grammatical rules to the practice of reading Arabic texts (A. K. Sari & Walardha, 2025).

The lessons held during the day are then reinforced through *muroja'ah* sessions, which take place after the Isha prayer until 9:30 PM WIB. These sessions serve as a means to reinforce memorization and deepen understanding of the morphosyntactic rules previously studied. Students have the opportunity to review the material, clarify parts they do not yet understand, and gradually deepen their mastery of the rules. The mentoring process is carried out by assigned teachers from the Miftahul Ulum Islamic Boarding School in Bettet, Pamekasan, and the Karang Durin Islamic Boarding School in Sampang. The presence of these assigned teachers demonstrates that learning reinforcement does not only take place in the classroom but is also supported by a continuous mentoring system. On the other hand, the tutors ensure the students' comfort and active participation through a variety of activities, such as reciting nadham to an engaging rhythm, learning in different locations, and activities known as "scientific exercises." In line with Rimah Dani's findings, such varied methods make the presentation of learning more engaging and far more dynamic, thereby stimulating students' enthusiasm for learning (RimahDani dkk., 2023). These variations help reduce boredom in morphosyntactic learning, which is often dominated by rote memorization and rule comprehension, thereby making the learning process more dynamic, repetitive, and continuous across both daytime and nighttime activities. The

selection of methods must also be tailored to students' ability levels, learning objectives, and the existing learning environment (Islam & Handriawan, 2025).

Mastery of morphosyntax is not built through separate explanations of grammatical rules, but rather through the integration of memorization, comprehension, and the practice of reading religious texts. A tiered sequence of activities allows students to gradually connect linguistic concepts with their application in Arabic texts. This approach aligns with constructivist learning theories, which position students as active agents in building understanding through repeated and meaningful learning experiences (Putri D. H. dkk., 2026).

### **The Significance of Peer Tutoring**

The implementation of peer tutoring at the Al-Azhar Islamic Boarding School's Madrasah Diniyah demonstrates that morphosyntactic learning does not merely occur as a process of knowledge transfer from tutor to student, but develops through social interactions that shape how students understand Arabic language structure. Morphosyntactic learning in the classical texts requires a process that cannot be achieved through one-way explanations alone; rather, it necessitates intensive dialogue, targeted repetition, and hands-on practice in reading and comprehending texts. The learning relationship between tutors and students extends beyond classroom activities to reinforcement sessions outside formal instruction, ensuring a continuous process of understanding.

The students' involvement in the learning process demonstrates a shift in their role from mere recipients of information to active participants in the construction of knowledge (Biki dkk., 2026). Findings by, and reinforce that educational renewal in contemporary Islamic boarding schools is not a dichotomy between tradition and modernity, but rather proceeds adaptively through the principle of preserving essential Islamic values and adopting contextual modern elements (Salsabila dkk., 2025). Activities such as reciting memorized verses, discussing course material, and engaging in question-and-answer sessions encourage students not only to memorize but also to reconstruct their understanding through verbal practice and simple analysis of the material being studied. This approach aligns with the perspective of social constructivism, which emphasizes that knowledge is formed through interaction and social processes, not merely through passive reception of information (Husen dkk., 2026). The active involvement of students is a key factor in strengthening the internalization of morphosyntactic concepts.

The students' learning experiences indicate that the interactive atmosphere in the classroom influences their ability to understand the material. This is evident from the statement by Student 1, who said:

*"The learning takes place in a fairly open atmosphere, so we feel more at ease asking questions, discussing, and even interacting casually with the ustadz without feeling awkward."*

In line with this, Student 2 remarked that:

*"This peer tutoring makes it easier and faster for us to understand the material, and it doesn't lead to boredom."*

A similar experience was shared by Student 3, who noted that having peer tutors makes the learning process feel more comfortable. As Student 3 explained:

*"If there's material I don't understand yet, I can ask the tutor directly without being afraid of getting it wrong. So it's easier and I grasp the material being"*

*explained more quickly.”*

Student 4 also pointed out that tutors from the group—senior students—have a way of explaining that’s easier to understand because they’ve gone through the same learning process. He stated that:

*“Tutors usually explain things in simpler language. Since they’ve also studied the same material, they know which parts students typically find difficult to understand.”*

In addition, the learning atmosphere created in peer tutoring groups helps encourage students’ engagement in the learning process. This was expressed by Student 5 as follows:

*“Learning is more relaxed and less stressful. If a friend doesn’t understand something, we usually discuss it together until they truly understand.”*

These findings suggest that psychological comfort in the learning environment contributes to increased student engagement in the process of learning morphosyntax (Husein dkk., 2025). The relationship between the tutor and the student is one of the factors that strengthens the quality of this interaction. Tutors who are senior students have learning experiences not too different from those of the students they mentor, so their delivery of material is more easily accepted and tends to be contextual to the difficulties faced by the students. This creates a more equitable learning environment, where students do not feel pressured to ask questions or request a repeat of the explanation when they do not yet understand the material. The interactions that develop are not merely instructional but also communicative, making the learning process more active and participatory.

The reinforcement of understanding through peer tutoring is also evident in a learning approach that emphasizes structured repetition. Memorizing material is not merely viewed as a recall activity but serves as a gateway to understanding meaning, grammar, and the application of rules—such as sentence structure or *i’rab*—when reading religious texts. This is followed by corrections from the tutor and application in more complex texts, so that the students’ understanding develops gradually from the memorization stage toward applied understanding. This sequence is commonly known as the *Al-Hifdlu Al-Fahmu Al-Muhakkah At-Tathbiq* method, which demonstrates that morphosyntactic learning does not stop at basic cognitive aspects but develops into analytical skills in reading Arabic texts (Nurhidayat dkk., 2025).

From the perspective of the Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky), peer tutors serve as a form of scaffolding that helps students bridge the gap between their actual and potential abilities (Cahyani & Maftuhah, 2025). The tutor’s role is not limited to explaining the material but also includes guidance, correction, and providing examples that enable students to gradually understand concepts until they can apply them independently. The process of learning morphosyntax develops through structured and continuous social support, not merely through spontaneous interactions in the classroom.

Peer tutoring serves not only as a teaching medium but also as a space for reviewing understanding to further solidify it. A tutor who is also one of the authors of the book *Nailul Amal* views this activity as a reciprocal learning experience. Mentoring students is not merely interpreted as a process of knowledge transfer but also as a means of review that helps maintain a consistent understanding of morphosyntactic material, thereby strengthening conceptual

mastery in a more stable way, since the material is not only understood theoretically but also reapplied in real-world learning contexts. Meanwhile, serving as a tutor is also seen as a form of contribution and service to the Islamic boarding school that has been their place of learning. The process of mentoring students provides a space for scholarly reflection while reinforcing the value of service within the pesantren tradition. This peer tutoring not only contributes to enhancing students' understanding but also fosters a mutually reinforcing learning cycle between tutors and students within a sustainable educational ecosystem.

### **The Sustainability of Peer Tutoring in Morphosyntactic Learning**

The learning structure at Madrasah Diniyah PP Al-Azhar follows a pattern that is not only focused on delivering content but also on the continuity of students' understanding. Learning activities are organized into two main sessions—a daytime session and an evening reinforcement session—which form a repetitive learning cycle. This cycle provides students with the opportunity to revisit the same material in different contexts, allowing understanding to develop gradually through structured repetition. This pattern of repetition aligns with the principle of spaced repetition, which emphasizes that time intervals between material reviews can strengthen long-term memory and deepen conceptual understanding (Rojulan dkk., 2026). material but also gradually strengthen their understanding and application of grammatical rules through repeated learning sessions. This temporal structure serves not only as a scheduling framework but also as a pedagogical mechanism that supports the internalization of the material. The culture of discipline in Islamic boarding schools reinforces the continuity of this process through a controlled and consistent learning system (Teguh dkk., 2025). Students' activities are regulated through logbooks, attendance records, and routine evaluations of their practice in reading religious texts, making their participation in peer tutoring an integral part of a stable academic routine.

The use of the Nailul Amal textbook reinforces the morphosyntactic learning process through the gradual and contextual organization of the material. This textbook combines classical poetic texts such as Al-Imrithi, Nadzmul Maqsud, Kafrawi, and Alfiyah Ibn Malik with internal developments at the pesantren tailored to the students' needs. This structured approach helps keep the learning process on track despite variations in students' abilities, as the material is systematically organized from basic to advanced levels (Rohita & Suwardi, 2020). Differences in students' abilities pose a challenge in the learning process because not all students have the same level of mastery of morphosyntactic rules. To bridge this gap, tutors form heterogeneous learning groups that combine students with a stronger grasp of the material and those who still require guidance. Interactions within the group encourage a process of mutual explanation of the material, so that students with a deeper understanding gain reinforcement through the act of explaining, while others gain insight through language that aligns more closely with their peers' ways of thinking.

Fluctuations in learning motivation also emerge as a challenge in the learning process. Some students show high enthusiasm, but under certain conditions, they experience burnout due to the intensity of memorization and the complexity of the material. To address this, tutors adjust the learning environment by moving activities to open spaces such as under shady trees, rice fields, or the surroundings of the boarding school so that students can experience a fresh new atmosphere and become ready to resume learning. The limited learning resources—which are

still dominated by oral and memorization-based methods—require tutors to develop varied delivery strategies to prevent the learning process from becoming monotonous. In fact, learning resources are a crucial component in supporting the learning process, as they help students absorb the material effectively and maximize their learning outcomes (Audie, 2019). Learning activities are then enriched through the recitation of nadham with rhythms chosen according to the students' preferences, using more energetic tones to re-establish focus on learning. The repetition of nadham in these activities maintains a connection between light-hearted activities and the reinforcement of material. In other situations, boredom is also addressed through activities such as walking around the pesantren grounds while reciting memorized nadham, ensuring that the process of reinforcing memorization continues in a more dynamic setting, unbound by the classroom.

Learning interactions do not only take place in formal classrooms but also continue outside of class hours when students struggle to understand the material. Communication between students and tutors can still take place in various settings—such as in the mosque area, outside dorm rooms, or in the cafeteria—allowing for more flexible clarification of material that isn't limited to the classroom setting. Moh Haikal azain fil haq noted that this communication pattern makes the learning process feel more fluid, as students can ask questions at any time when they need additional explanation. Meanwhile, the integration of a repetitive time structure, the pesantren's culture of discipline, adaptation of the material, flexibility in interaction, and responsive learning strategies fosters the sustainability of the peer tutoring process in morphosyntactic learning. All these elements are interconnected in supporting the strengthening of students' understanding through a learning process that unfolds gradually and continuously.

#### D. Conclusion

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