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Arabic Listening And Speaking Skills During Haze-Related Remote Learning: A Case Study In Palangka Raya

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Abstract

When classes move out of the room, Arabic listening and speaking are hit first because both depend on the teacher's voice, yet little is known about how they fared when haze, not a pandemic, forced remote learning. This qualitative single case study examined how both skills were taught and learned at Madrasah Aliyah Muslimat Nahdlatul Ulama Palangka Raya, where haze kept eleventh-grade students at home from late August to October 2026. We interviewed one Arabic teacher and eight students, purposively selected from two classes of 82 students, and added participant observation and documentation. The data were analysed with the interactive model of Miles and colleagues and checked by triangulation. Students named speaking and listening as the hardest skills; nobody named reading or writing. Four of the eight said nobody corrected their pronunciation, and the three who received correction had someone at home or nearby. Written materials were easiest to follow and voice notes least clear. Live video was preferred but undermined by signal, power cuts, and a free meeting plan. Seven students liked the vocabulary and grammar game, yet they reported gaining words and forms, not oral skill. Emergency remote Arabic teaching therefore needs an oral feedback channel, transcripts for audio, and short scheduled speaking sessions; these suggestions are tentative because language achievement was not measured.

Keywords: *Arabic listening and speaking, emergency remote teaching, haze, oral feedback, educational game*

Abstrak

Ketika kelas berpindah dari ruangan, keterampilan menyimak dan berbicara bahasa Arab menjadi yang pertama terdampak karena keduanya bergantung pada suara guru, tetapi belum banyak diketahui bagaimana keduanya bertahan ketika kabut asap, bukan pandemi, memaksa pembelajaran jarak jauh. Penelitian studi kasus tunggal kualitatif ini mengkaji bagaimana kedua keterampilan itu diajarkan dan dipelajari di Madrasah Aliyah Muslimat Nahdlatul Ulama Palangka Raya, tempat kabut asap membuat peserta didik kelas XI belajar dari rumah pada akhir Agustus sampai Oktober 2026. Kami mewawancarai satu guru bahasa Arab dan delapan peserta didik yang dipilih secara purposif dari dua kelas berjumlah 82 peserta didik, serta menambahkan observasi partisipan dan dokumentasi. Data dianalisis dengan model interaktif Miles dan kawan-kawan serta diperiksa melalui triangulasi. Peserta didik menyebut berbicara dan menyimak sebagai keterampilan tersulit; tidak ada yang menyebut membaca atau menulis. Empat dari delapan peserta didik mengatakan tidak ada yang mengoreksi pelafalan mereka, dan tiga yang menerima koreksi memiliki orang di rumah atau di sekitarnya. Materi tertulis paling mudah diikuti dan pesan suara paling kurang jelas. Video langsung paling diharapkan, tetapi terhambat sinyal, pemadaman listrik, dan paket gratis aplikasi pertemuan. Tujuh peserta didik menyukai permainan kosakata dan tata bahasa, tetapi yang mereka peroleh berupa kosakata dan bentuk kata, bukan keterampilan lisan. Pembelajaran bahasa Arab jarak jauh pada masa darurat karenanya memerlukan saluran umpan balik lisan, teks tertulis untuk audio, dan sesi bicara singkat terjadwal; saran ini tentatif karena capaian bahasa tidak diukur.

Kata kunci: menyimak dan berbicara bahasa Arab, pembelajaran jarak jauh darurat, kabut asap, umpan balik lisan, permainan edukatif

INTRODUCTION

Arabic is a foreign language in Indonesian madrasahs, and for most students the classroom is the only place they hear it. Of the four skills, *mahārah istimā'* (listening), *kalām* (speaking), *qirā'ah* (reading), and *kitābah* (writing), the two oral ones depend most on the teacher, who models pronunciation and corrects errors as they occur. The interactionist account of second language acquisition explains why: learning needs comprehensible input, chances to produce output, and feedback on that output (Loewen & Sato, 2018). A lesson that loses the teacher's live voice therefore loses all three at once, and the loss should fall first on listening and speaking.

Even in ordinary classrooms speaking is the most reported difficulty: limited vocabulary, articulation points (*makhraj*), sentence construction (*tarkīb*), and low confidence at a private madrasah aliyah (Salsabila & Zulheddi, 2026), and linguistic and non-linguistic difficulties among university students (Sugirma et al., 2024). Listening is no easier: learners practising with YouTube found native speech fast, dialogues unclear, and vocabulary new (Azka et al., 2024).

Remote teaching has made both skills harder to sustain. During COVID-19, online Arabic teaching suffered from weak networks and devices (Wahyudin & Thahir, 2022), thin interaction (Mursyid, 2022), and the difficulty of teaching listening and speaking without meeting face to face (Rahmawati & Syafi'i, 2021). WhatsApp offers a cheap remedy: small groups with voice notes and video calls reduced university students' fear of mistakes and brought immediate lecturer feedback (Sa'diyah & Alfian, 2021), teachers who join students' groups can add input, interaction, and feedback (Naghdipour & Manca, 2023), and voice notes have served English speaking practice (Rafi'i & Niswa, 2025; Sesa & Margana, 2025). Yet in a madrasah where lessons ran through WhatsApp, teachers avoided voice notes because the record button was easily cancelled, and students forgot vocabulary they could not practise directly (Robbani et al., 2021).

Haze brings problems of its own. Central Kalimantan has extensive peatland that burns easily in the dry season, and smoke can sit over Palangka Raya for weeks (Aprianti et al., 2025). In 2026 the disruption was national: by 2 September about 1.43 million students from 12,874 schools in six provinces were studying remotely (South China Morning Post, 2026), and in Palangka Raya limited face-to-face classes resumed only on 29 October (Table 1). This matches what Hodges et al. (2020) call emergency remote teaching, a temporary shift in delivery forced by a crisis, here with unhealthy air and no known end date.

Table 1. Haze-related disruption of schooling in 2026

Date	Event	Source
18 August	Palangka Raya education office adjusted learning hours to anticipate haze	Antara (2026)
2 September	About 1.43 million students from 12,874 schools in six provinces studying remotely (national figure)	South China Morning Post (2026)
29 October	Limited face-to-face classes restarted for kindergarten, primary, junior secondary, and non-formal education	MC Kota Palangka Raya (2026)

Previous work leaves three gaps. First, research on haze and schooling has addressed health, concentration, and general technology use (Hasanah et al., 2024; Silitonga & Zaharah, 2023), not particular language skills. Second, studies of remote Arabic teaching come from the pandemic and describe one platform at a time; as far as we could find, none asks what the oral skills lacked when a disaster interrupted lessons. Third, the two tools usually offered, asynchronous study and educational games, have untested effects on oral skills: asynchronous study delays feedback and demands self-regulation (Alhazbi & Hasan, 2021; Fabriz et al., 2021), while games raise engagement and vocabulary (Abdullah et al., 2026; Almelhes, 2024; Fatoni et al., 2024) but, in the one quasi-experiment we found, not speaking (Candra & Wati, 2026).

This article addresses those gaps through a single case: Arabic listening and speaking at Madrasah Aliyah Muslimat Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) Palangka Raya during haze-related remote learning from late August to October 2026. Its novelty lies in the context, a disaster-driven interruption not yet

documented for Arabic, and in its focus on what surrounded the oral skills (feedback, written support for audio, and live contact) rather than on the effectiveness of one platform. Three questions guide it. Which skills were hardest to keep going, and why (RQ1)? How did the formats in use (documents, voice notes, videos, live conferencing, and messaging) help or fail to help those skills (RQ2)? How did students use a vocabulary and grammar game, and what did they say they gained (RQ3)? The aim is practical: evidence for planning oral-skill teaching in haze-prone regions.

RESEARCH METHOD

We used a qualitative single case design (Yin, 2018), because we wanted to understand difficulties, formats, and responses as the people involved experienced them. The case was Arabic learning in Grade XI at Madrasah Aliyah Muslimat NU Palangka Raya, Central Kalimantan (established 17 May 2006, accredited A), during haze-related remote learning from late August to October 2026. The 82 students of XI A and XI B and their Arabic teacher formed the setting. The first author, then a student teacher in the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka internship, taught both classes alongside the teacher and joined the lessons as a participant observer.

From this group we purposively selected the supervising teacher (T), who decided how lessons would be delivered, and eight students (S1–S8). The basis of selection was direct participation in the remote lessons and in the game, so that informants could describe both from experience. Participation was voluntary, and students appear only by code.

The study followed five steps: preparation, data collection, data processing, analysis, and conclusion drawing (Figure 1).

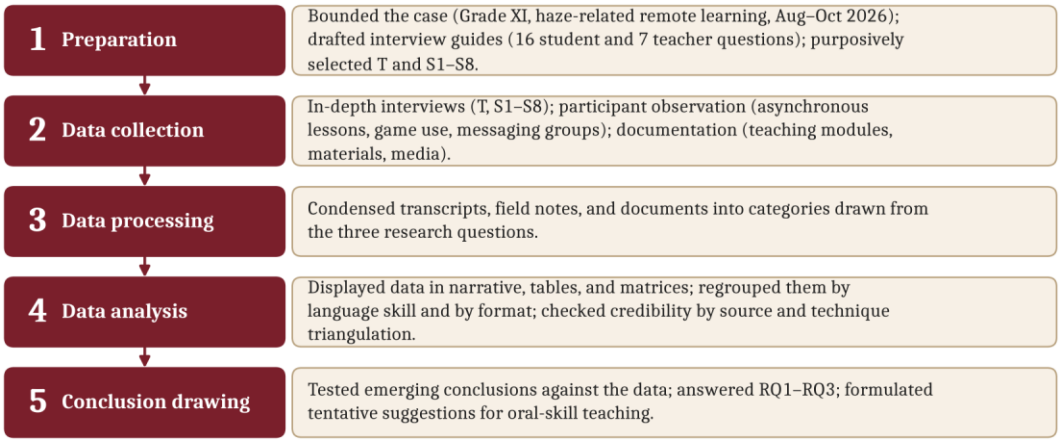

Figure 1. Research flow of the case study

In-depth interviews followed a guide (Figure 2). The student guide had 16 open questions on devices and connection, health, the hardest skill, pronunciation practice, forms of material, motivation, workload, the game, and preferences if haze returned. The teacher's guide had seven questions on the move online, guidelines, connection problems, changes in the four skills, reasons for choosing videos and the game, and plans for a recurrence. Participant observation covered the asynchronous lessons, use of the game, and exchanges in the messaging groups. Documentation gathered the teaching modules, materials, and media used in the period.



Figure 2. Interviews with student informants at the madrasah (students' faces masked to protect anonymity)

Analysis followed the interactive model of Miles et al. (2014): we condensed transcripts, notes, and documents into categories drawn from the research questions, displayed them in narrative, tables, and matrices, and tested emerging conclusions against the data. For this article we regrouped the condensed data by language skill and by format. Credibility was checked through source triangulation (teacher, students, documents) and technique

triangulation (interviews, observation, documents), which also let us set the first author's observations, as the students' teacher, against the informants' accounts. Counts such as "four of eight students" show how many informants reported a pattern and are not statistical generalisations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

When remote learning began the madrasah had no written guideline, and each teacher decided how to teach (T). For the first weeks the teacher sent only learning videos and questions; a month later he began using Zoom or Google Meet (T). Materials reached students through WhatsApp as PDF files, photographs, videos, and voice notes (S1, S5). The videos came from YouTube (T), and the first author also sent a vocabulary game that one student remembered as *Froggy Jumps* (S2).

Hardest skills and pronunciation practice

Table 2. Hardest skills and pronunciation practice (eight students, S1–S8, and the teacher, T)

Pattern	Informants	Reported reason or evidence
Speaking named hardest	S1, S3, S7	No direct practice with the teacher and doubt about pronunciation (S1); Arabic not used in daily life (S3); lack of understanding (S7)
Listening named hardest	S4, S5, S8	Communication easier in person (S4); audio without text made spelling confusing (S5); no direct explanation (S8)
No skill named hard	S2, S6	None given
All four skills disrupted	T	Students only watched videos and answered questions; effective Arabic teaching is face to face
Pronunciation never corrected	S1, S5, S6, S7	S1, S5, S6, and S8 practised alone by repeating aloud or memorising
Some correction received	S2, S3, S4	Mother (S2); people nearby who could use Arabic (S3); applications and parents (S4)

None of the students named reading or writing as the hardest skill; three named speaking, three listening, and two none (Table 2). The teacher, in contrast, saw all four skills as disrupted (T). The gap is plausible because reading and writing can be done alone from a PDF or photograph, so a weakness stays hidden until marked work returns, whereas in speaking and listening nobody tells students whether what they said or heard was right. This

fits the interactionist account (Loewen & Sato, 2018): remote delivery kept input in the form of files and videos but removed the feedback loop. Students' own reasons point the same way: no partner for practice (S1), no Arabic in daily life (S3), no direct explanation (S8), not connection. The same limits of exposure and uncertainty about pronunciation are reported for ordinary classrooms (Azka et al., 2024; Salsabila & Zulheddi, 2026; Sugirma et al., 2024), so what seems to have changed is whether anyone was there to respond.

Pronunciation practice shows this most clearly. Four students said nobody corrected their pronunciation (S1, S5, S6, S7); the three who received correction had someone at home or nearby (Table 2), and the student whose mother corrected pronunciation (S2) also said no skill was difficult. With eight informants the pattern is only suggestive, but it points one way: because Arabic is rarely heard outside class, the teacher is the main source of models and correction, and once that source is gone progress depends on who happens to live in the same house. Repeating a mistake aloud without correction may simply make it stick, and those who need feedback most are those without an Arabic-speaking adult at home. Other remote contexts differ. Small WhatsApp groups gave university students immediate lecturer feedback on voice notes (Sa'diyah & Alfian, 2021), whereas Finnish upper-secondary students reported that teachers mostly relied on written feedback in remote language teaching (Mäkipää, 2023). Here voice notes travelled in one direction, from teacher to students. Recorded oral tasks have been collected and assessed remotely with university learners (Ducasse, 2022); whether younger Arabic learners could do the same is untested.

Formats, access, and asynchronous study

Table 3. Instructional formats and students' responses

Format	Informants	Response
PDF files and photographs	S1, S5, S6, S7	Easiest to understand
Voice notes	S5, S7	Confusing; audio without text made spelling hard to follow (S5)
Videos chosen by topic	S8	Helpful because they contained an explanation

Format	Informants	Response
Live video (Zoom or Google Meet, from the second month)	S2, S3, S7, T	Preferred if haze recurs; signal lost during sessions (S3, S8); a power cut caused a missed lesson (S6); free plan ended meetings after about thirty minutes (T)
WhatsApp messaging	All eight	Helped with questions; replies sometimes unclear (S1, S8), slow (S7), or missing (S6); teacher's responsiveness praised (S2, S3)

Formats that carry written text were easiest: four students named PDF files or photographs (S1, S5, S6, S7), while two found voice notes the least clear (S5, S7), and S5 tied this to the lack of text (Table 3). This is awkward, because voice notes suit training the ear and tongue best, yet students handled them least comfortably, and the easiest formats train neither skill. Learners elsewhere use transcripts to confirm what they could not hear clearly, especially when the network is poor (Wang & Chen, 2023), so a transcript beside each audio file would answer S5's complaint directly. Robbani et al. (2021) report a technical reason why teachers avoid WhatsApp voice notes; our data add a comprehension reason that holds even when recording works.

Live sessions were what the students and the teacher wanted if haze returned (S2, S3, S7, T), for direct interaction and detailed explanation (S3, S8), which concern oral contact and not only convenience. Fabriz et al. (2021) similarly found that largely synchronous settings gave stronger support for competence and relatedness in higher education. Live sessions were hard to sustain, however. Five of the eight students and the teacher reported connection, electricity, or device problems (S1, S2, S3, S6, S8, T), and four students reported sore eyes, tiredness, cough, or smoke in the house (S1, S3, S5, S6), complaints consistent with haze research (Aprianti et al., 2025; Hasanah et al., 2024). Someone with sore eyes and an unreliable signal is unlikely to do speaking drills on a phone, so these conditions decide how often a student can practise at all.

Seven students said asynchronous study let them work at their own pace (S1, S2, S3, S5, S6, S7, S8). Yet five reported procrastination and piled-up tasks (S1, S3, S4, S5, S6) and six said their enthusiasm or concentration was lower

than in class (S1, S3, S4, S5, S7, S8), in line with earlier findings that asynchronous learning depends on self-regulation and delays feedback (Alhazbi & Hasan, 2021; Fabriz et al., 2021). A university Arabic course reported rising motivation online (Putra et al., 2022); students' age and loss of contact with classmates may explain the difference, but our data cannot settle that.

The vocabulary and grammar game

Table 4. Students' experience of the vocabulary and grammar game

Code	Reaction and attempts	Reported gain	Difficulty
S1	Interesting, less boring than ordinary tasks; played several times	Vocabulary	Unstable connection, long loading, hard questions
S2	Very interesting; played twice; ordinary tasks still needed	Vocabulary of chapters 1–2	None
S3	Fun, slightly nervous about wrong answers; played twice	Arabic numbers	None
S4	Very happy, more fun; at least once, repeated if unsatisfied	Verbs and daily practice questions	None
S5	More fun, with obstacles to pass; attempts not stated	Pronouns (*ḍamīr*)	None
S6	Disliked; timed, harder than ordinary tasks; restarted after accidental taps	Did not understand or remember	Confusing questions; accidental taps
S7	More pleasant; about twice, with a friend	Verbs (*fi'l*)	Long loading
S8	More fun because of challenges; once	Remembered the questions better	None

Seven of the eight students called the game interesting or enjoyable, and three found it more fun than ordinary tasks (S1, S5, S8). What they said they gained, however, was vocabulary, numbers, verbs, pronouns, and better recall of questions (Table 4): all words and forms, and no student said the game helped speaking or listening. This echoes the only experimental result we found for Arabic, in which a game platform improved vocabulary but not speaking (Candra & Wati, 2026), and agrees with reports of greater engagement in game-based Arabic classes (Almelhes, 2024; Fatoni et al., 2024). Our evidence is self-report and no test was given, but it suggests that

the engagement a game produces does not by itself reach oral skill, so a vocabulary game can sit beside oral practice but should not replace it.

S6 disagreed. This student disliked the timed format, which caused rushing and loss of focus, and accidental taps restarted the game; ordinary tasks were preferred because they could be repeated until understood. Abdullah et al. (2026) note that game platforms are often used as stand-alone motivational tools with little instructional design, and S6's experience shows the risk: a game that rewards speed disadvantages learners who need time, and a glitch can wipe out their effort when no teacher is on hand. Untimed modes, unlimited replays, and lenient scoring would make such games fairer.

Implications and contribution

These findings are proposals to test, not a validated model. They suggest a low-bandwidth core of documents, photographs, and short videos with a written transcript for every audio file; short live sessions for speaking and questions, scheduled around air quality and power cuts and not dependent on a free meeting plan; a deliberate channel for oral feedback, such as short voice-note exchanges between student and teacher, or paired practice; a moderate workload with clear deadlines (S1, S4, S5); and a written preparedness plan at the madrasah. The contribution is threefold. For theory, the case illustrates how the loss of live interaction breaks the input–output–feedback chain: feedback was missing, and audio input was hard to use without text. For practice, it gives teachers low-cost remedies. For the institution, it shows that the lack of a guideline (T) left each teacher to improvise.

CONCLUSION

Haze-related remote learning left Arabic listening and speaking without the feedback loop that classroom teaching supplies. Students named speaking and listening, never reading or writing, as the hardest skills, and pronunciation was corrected only where someone at home could do it (RQ1). Text-bearing formats were easiest to follow and voice notes, sent only as material, the least

clear; live video was wanted but undermined by signal, power, and the meeting plan (RQ2). Students enjoyed the vocabulary and grammar game but reported gaining words and forms, not oral skill (RQ3). The study's contribution is to locate the problem in the missing feedback and written support around the oral skills, in a disaster context not previously documented for Arabic.

For practice, the findings point to tentative, low-cost remedies: transcripts for audio, short scheduled speaking sessions, a channel for oral feedback, and a written preparedness plan at the madrasah. The study is a single case with eight student informants, rests on self-reports, did not measure language achievement, and was conducted by a researcher who also taught the students. Later studies could trial the oral feedback channel, measure speaking and listening before and after, compare game designs, and examine how support at home creates inequality.

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