



## Application of Word Square Media in Strengthen Arabic Vocabulary Memorization at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Fifth Grade

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### ABSTRACT

*Arabic language learning at the madrasah ibtidaiyah level still faces various challenges, particularly in students' low mastery of vocabulary (mufradat). This condition is influenced using conventional teaching methods and the limited utilization of innovative and engaging learning media, resulting in low student motivation and learning outcomes. Therefore, it is necessary to implement effective learning strategies using interactive media. This study aims to analyze the application of Word Square media and its effectiveness in improving Arabic vocabulary memorization among fifth-grade students at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Maklumul Mukminin NW Pondok Gedang in the 2025/2026 academic year. This research employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive design to explore the learning process in depth. Data were collected through classroom observations, interviews with teachers and students, and documentation. Data analysis was conducted using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, including data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The validity of the data was ensured through triangulation techniques and credibility checks. The findings reveal that the implementation of Word Square media significantly improves student engagement, motivation, and participation in learning activities. The learning process becomes more interactive and enjoyable through word-search activities that involve visual and kinesthetic elements. Furthermore, students' vocabulary memorization ability shows a notable improvement, indicated by the increase in average scores from below 70 to approximately 90, as well as a significant reduction in the number of low-achieving students. In conclusion, Word Square media is an effective and innovative learning tool that enhances both cognitive and affective aspects of Arabic language learning, particularly in improving vocabulary memorization at the elementary level.*

### ABSTRAK

Pembelajaran bahasa Arab di madrasah ibtidaiyah masih menghadapi tantangan dalam penguasaan kosakata (mufradat), yang dipengaruhi oleh metode konvensional dan terbatasnya media pembelajaran inovatif, sehingga berdampak pada rendahnya motivasi dan hasil belajar siswa. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis penerapan media Word Square dan efektivitasnya dalam meningkatkan hafalan kosakata bahasa Arab pada siswa kelas V di Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Maklumul Mukminin NW Pondok Gedang tahun ajaran 2025/2026. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain deskriptif. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi kelas, wawancara dengan guru dan siswa, serta dokumentasi. Analisis data menggunakan model interaktif Miles dan Huberman, meliputi reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Validitas data dijaga melalui triangulasi dan pemeriksaan kredibilitas. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa media Word Square secara signifikan meningkatkan keterlibatan, motivasi, dan partisipasi siswa. Proses pembelajaran menjadi lebih interaktif dan menyenangkan melalui kegiatan pencarian kata yang melibatkan elemen visual dan kinestetik. Kemampuan menghafal kosakata siswa meningkat nyata, ditandai dengan kenaikan rata-rata nilai dari di bawah 70 menjadi sekitar 90, serta penurunan signifikan jumlah siswa berprestasi rendah. Kesimpulannya, media Word Square merupakan alat pembelajaran efektif dan inovatif yang mampu meningkatkan aspek kognitif maupun afektif dalam pembelajaran bahasa Arab, khususnya penghafalan kosakata di tingkat dasar.

## **PRELIMINARY**

Education is a strategic instrument in the development of quality and competitive human resources. Through education, individuals are not only equipped with knowledge (cognitive), but also values, attitudes (affective), and skills (psychomotor) that are integrated into character formation (Sugiyono, 2019). Therefore, the success of education is greatly determined by the quality of the learning process that takes place in the classroom. An effective learning process will produce students who are able to think critically, creatively, and adaptively to the development of the times. Conversely, a less optimal learning process will result in low student competency achievement (Suryani & Agung, 2018).

In this context, the quality of learning is not only determined by the curriculum used, but also by the teacher's ability to manage learning, including in choosing the appropriate methods, strategies, and media. The teacher no longer acts as the sole source of information, but as a facilitator capable of creating an active, innovative, and enjoyable learning atmosphere. This is in line with the modern learning paradigm that emphasizes student-centered learning, where students become the main subjects in the learning process (Bonwell & Eison, 1991). Thus, innovation in learning becomes a necessity that cannot be ignored.

One of the fields that plays an important role in education is language learning. Language is the primary communication tool used by humans to convey ideas, feelings, and information. Along with the development of globalization, language skills have become increasingly important, not only within the local scope but also at the national and international levels (Yusuf, 2020). Mastery of various languages allows individuals to interact widely and access various sources of knowledge. Arabic is one of the international languages that holds a strategic position, especially in the context of Islamic education. Besides functioning as a means of communication, Arabic is also the language of the Qur'an and Hadith, which are the primary sources of Islamic teachings. Furthermore, Arabic is used in various Islamic scholarly disciplines such as tafsir, hadith, fiqh, and kalam studies (Mustofa, 2019). Therefore, mastery of the Arabic language becomes very important, especially for students in Islamic educational institutions.

In its implementation in the field of education, Arabic language learning is directed towards mastering four language skills (maharah), namely listening skills (istima'), speaking (kalam), reading (qira'ah), and writing (kitabah). These four skills constitute a unified whole that is interconnected and cannot be separated. However, mastering these skills highly depends on the mastery of vocabulary (mufradat) as a fundamental element in language use. Vocabulary functions as the foundation for understanding meaning, constructing sentences, and expressing ideas both orally and in writing (Nation, 2001; Thornbury, 2002).

Nevertheless, the reality of Arabic language learning in Indonesia still faces various challenges. Many learners consider Arabic a difficult and less interesting subject. This is influenced by differences in language structure as well as learning approaches that are not yet fully innovative (Ismail & Alhadi, 2021). As a result, learners tend to be less motivated and experience difficulties in understanding the material. One of the main problems is students' low vocabulary mastery. Vocabulary mastery is a fundamental aspect of language learning. Without adequate vocabulary mastery, students will have difficulty in understanding and using the language effectively (Nation, 2001). This low ability is caused by conventional learning methods and the lack of use of interesting learning media.

In fact, the use of learning media plays an important role in improving the effectiveness of learning. Learning media can help convey material more concretely, attractively, and understandably, as well as increase students' learning motivation (Arsyad, 2017). Therefore, selecting the appropriate learning media becomes the key to enhancing the quality of Arabic language learning. Several studies show that the use of activity- and game-based learning media can increase students' motivation and learning outcomes (Plass et al., 2015; Hidayat & Widodo, 2020). Nevertheless, the implementation of innovative learning media in Arabic language learning at the primary Islamic school level is still limited.

One of the media that can be used is Word Square, which is a game-based learning media that involves the activity of searching for words in a grid of letters. This media can improve memory, concentration, as well as student engagement in learning. Theoretically, this media aligns with active and constructivist learning approaches that emphasize the active role of students in constructing knowledge (Vygotsky, 1978). Based on the results of initial observations in grade V at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Maklumul Mukminin NW Pondok Gedang, it was found that students' vocabulary memorization ability is still low. Therefore, learning innovation is needed using more interactive media. This study focuses on the

application of the Word Square media as an effort to improve students' Arabic vocabulary memorization. Accordingly, this study is entitled *Application of Word Square Media in Strengthen Arabic Vocabulary Memorization of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Fifth Grade*.

## **METHOD**

This research uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive type to gain a deep understanding of the Arabic language learning process through the application of the Word Square media in improving the vocabulary memorization of fifth-grade students at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Maklumul Mukminin NW Pondok Gedang. A qualitative approach was chosen because it emphasizes the meaning of phenomena that occur naturally in the classroom (Sugiyono, 2019). Data in this study were collected through observation of learning activities, interviews with teachers and students, as well as documentation as supporting data. These techniques were used to obtain comprehensive and in-depth data related to the learning process being studied (Moleong, 2018).

Data analysis was conducted using the interactive model proposed by Miles and Huberman, which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification (Miles et al., 2014). The validity of the data in this study was ensured through source triangulation and technique triangulation, as well as credibility tests by prolonging participation, observation diligence, and member checks, so that the collected data has a high level of reliability and can be accounted for (Sugiyono, 2019).

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

Based on an analysis of 38 articles that met the inclusion criteria, three main themes were found that consistently emerged in the literature on madrasah education management from a gender perspective. These three themes are: (1) inequality in gender representation in madrasah leadership and management; (2) gender construction in madrasah curriculum and organizational culture; and (3) policies and structural factors that influence the implementation of gender equality. The following presents an elaboration of each theme.

The thematic The results of this study indicate that the use of the Word Square media in Arabic language learning in grade V at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Maklumul Mukminin NW Pondok Gedang has a positive impact on improving students' vocabulary memorization. These findings were obtained through observation, interviews, and documentation carried out systematically. The use of appropriate learning media has been proven to improve the quality of the learning process, as stated that learning media functions to convey learning messages more effectively and attractively (Arsyad, 2017).

Based on observation results, the implementation of the Word Square media was carried out in three meetings with the stages of planning, implementation, and evaluation. The teacher first explained the vocabulary material, then provided the Word Square worksheet to the students to find words that match the material. In this process, students were actively involved in word search activities, discussions, and presentations of results. This aligns with the principles of active learning, which emphasize student involvement in constructing their own knowledge (Bonwell & Eison, 1991).

Research findings indicate that the use of Word Square media can increase student engagement in learning. Students become more active and enthusiastic in participating in learning activities. This condition shows that learning involving game-based elements can enhance students' learning motivation (Plass, Homer, & Kinzer, 2015). In addition, the learning atmosphere becomes more enjoyable and not monotonous, so students do not feel burdened in memorizing vocabulary.

From the aspect of social interaction, the Word Square media also encourages collaboration and healthy competition among students. Students discuss and cooperate in finding vocabulary, which ultimately enhances their understanding of the material. This is in accordance with the theory of social constructivism which states that learning occurs through social interaction and cooperation among individuals (Vygotsky, 1978). Furthermore, the use of Word Square media also integrates visual and kinesthetic aspects in learning. Students not only receive information verbally but are also engaged in activities that require observation and direct action. According to learning style theory, the combination of visual and kinesthetic can improve students' memory and understanding (Fleming & Mills, 1992). Thus, this media is very suitable for the characteristics of students at the elementary school level.

From the perspective of learning outcomes, this study shows a significant improvement in students' vocabulary memorization ability. Before the implementation of the Word Square media, most

students scored below 70. However, after the implementation of this media, the average student score increased to around 90. In addition, the number of students scoring below 80 decreased significantly from 11 students to 3 students. This improvement indicates that students' vocabulary mastery has developed quite well. This finding aligns with Nation (2001), who stated that vocabulary mastery is a fundamental aspect of language learning, as it forms the basis for the development of other language skills. Furthermore, Thornbury (2002) also emphasized that success in language learning is greatly influenced by the amount of vocabulary mastered by the learner.

In addition to an increase in the number of vocabulary words, students also experience an improvement in pronunciation skills and understanding of meaning. Students become more confident in pronouncing Arabic vocabulary and can understand the meaning of those words in the learning context. This shows that learning that involves active and enjoyable activities can enhance the overall quality of language mastery. Overall, the results of this study indicate that the Word Square media is effective in improving students' Arabic vocabulary retention. This media not only enhances cognitive aspects but also affective aspects, such as students' motivation and interest in learning. These findings also reinforce previous research results which stated that the use of innovative learning media can significantly improve students' learning outcomes (Hidayat & Widodo, 2020). Nevertheless, this study has limitations, particularly in terms of the relatively short research duration and the limited number of subjects. Therefore, further research with a broader scope is needed to test the consistency of these findings.

Thus, it can be concluded that the use of Word Square media is one of the effective alternatives in improving students' memorization of Arabic vocabulary at the elementary Islamic school level. The use of innovative media that suits the characteristics of students has been proven to be able to improve the overall quality of learning.

## CONCLUSION

This systematic Based on the results of the research and discussion, it can be concluded that the use of Word Square media in Arabic language learning in Grade V at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Maklumul Mukminin NW Pondok Gedang has been proven effective in improving students' vocabulary memorization. The learning process that utilizes Word Square media can create a more active, interesting, and enjoyable learning atmosphere, thereby encouraging optimal student involvement in learning activities.

In addition, the use of Word Square media also has a positive impact on improving students' abilities, which include an increase in the number of vocabulary words memorized, improved pronunciation skills, as well as understanding the meanings of vocabulary. This is reinforced by evaluation results showing a significant increase in students' scores after the implementation of this media, as well as a decrease in the number of students receiving low scores. Thus, Word Square media can be used as one of the innovative and effective learning media alternatives in Arabic language learning, especially at the madrasah ibtidaiyah level. The use of media that aligns with students' characteristics has been proven to improve the quality of learning, both cognitively and affectively. Therefore, teachers are expected to be able to develop and utilize various creative learning media to support the success of the learning process.

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