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Using Picture-Based Media to Improve Arabic Vocabulary Retention among Third-Grade Madrasah Students

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Abstract

This study examines the use of picture-based instructional media to improve Arabic vocabulary (mufradāt) memorization among third-grade students at MI Islamiyah Tlogohaji, Sumberrejo, Bojonegoro. A quantitative, one-group pretest–posttest design was implemented with 16 students during the 2021/2022 academic year. Data were collected through tests, interviews, and documentation and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The mean score increased from 30.00 on the pretest to 83.13 on the posttest. The reported paired-samples test yielded $p < .001$, suggesting a statistically significant difference between the two assessments. Classroom observations also indicated greater student enthusiasm and attention when pictures were incorporated. The findings suggest that picture-based instruction can support vocabulary memorization in this group; however, the absence of a comparison group limits causal interpretation.

Keywords: Arabic vocabulary; picture-based media; vocabulary retention; elementary madrasah; pretest–posttest

A. Introduction

In Islamic educational thought, education is understood as guidance that develops both knowledge and character. Zakiah Daradjat emphasizes learners' ability to understand and practice religious teachings, whereas Ahmad D. Marimba highlights physical and spiritual guidance grounded in Islamic values. Within schooling, learning also involves interactions among students, teachers, and educational resources that help learners acquire knowledge, skills, attitudes, and habits.

The success of instruction depends in part on the media used to communicate concepts. Learning media may stimulate learners' attention, thinking, and motivation and enable them to study according to their interests and abilities (Nurdyansyah, 2019). Teachers therefore function not only as transmitters of knowledge but also as facilitators who select resources suited to learners' characteristics.

Pictures and photographs are accessible visual media that can help make complex information understandable. They are particularly relevant for introducing vocabulary because a visual referent can be associated with a word. Arabic has a long history in Indonesian religious and educational life, including use in pesantren and madrasahs and the incorporation of Arabic-derived vocabulary into Indonesian. Nevertheless, beginning students may perceive Arabic as difficult and need engaging learning experiences. Research on visual elements in Arabic textbooks (Fadilah & Yusuf, 2024) offers a complementary perspective on the value of visual presentation in learning materials.

Arabic vocabulary learning is expected to achieve satisfactory mastery. Low achievement may reflect instructional methods, learner motivation, or constraints in school resources. Preliminary observations at MI Islamiyah Tlogohaji indicated that instruction relied mainly on students copying vocabulary from the blackboard and reading the words aloud. Limited variation in media and teacher-centered practices appeared to contribute to reduced engagement. This classroom context motivated the use of picture-based media as an alternative.

Previous studies examined audiovisual materials for Arabic vocabulary acquisition (Rachmawati, 2014) and strip-story media for vocabulary

memorization (Zidny, 2019), as reported in the source manuscript. Faizin (2020) also discussed vocabulary learning through the ABC 5 Dasar game. Although these studies use different media, they suggest the relevance of varying instructional methods. This study specifically investigates changes in third-grade students' vocabulary scores before and after learning with pictures.

B. Method

The participants were 16 third-grade students at MI Islamiyah Tlogohaji during the 2021/2022 academic year. The study applied a quantitative pre-experimental design with one group measured before and after picture-based Arabic vocabulary instruction.

Data sources comprised vocabulary tests, interviews, and documentation. The original analysis combined descriptive measures with a Kolmogorov–Smirnov normality test and a paired-samples hypothesis test. Because there was no untreated control group, any observed change should be interpreted as a within-group difference rather than definitive proof of a causal effect.

C. Results and Discussion

Pretest scores were low: among the 16 students, the mean was 30.00, the minimum was 20, the maximum was 60, and the standard deviation was 14.606. Fourteen students (87.5%) were classified in the lowest achievement category and two in the low category.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for Pretest Scores

Statistic	Value
Sample size	16
Mean	30.00
Maximum	60
Minimum	20
Range	40
Standard deviation	14.606

Table 2. Distribution of Achievement before Picture-Based Instruction

No.	Category	Score	Frequency	Percentage

		interval		(%)
1	Very low	0-54	14	87.5%
2	Low	55-64	2	12%
3	Moderate	65-79	0	0.0%
4	High	80-89	0	0.0%
5	Very high	90-100	0	0.0%
Total	Total	Total	16	100%

After picture-based instruction, the mean score was 83.13, with a minimum of 50, a maximum of 100, and a standard deviation of 14.477. Six students (37.5%) were in the high category and seven (43.8%) in the very high category. The remaining three students were distributed across the very low, low, and moderate categories.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics for Posttest Scores

Statistic	Value
Sample size	16
Mean	83.13
Maximum	100
Minimum	50
Range	50
Standard deviation	14.477

Table 4. Distribution of Achievement after Picture-Based Instruction

No.	Category	Score interval	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Very low	0-54	1	6.3
2	Low	55-64	1	6.3
3	Moderate	65-79	1	6.3
4	High	80-89	6	37.5%
5	Very high	90-100	7	43.8%
Total	Total	Total	16	100%

The reported Kolmogorov–Smirnov test showed a significance value of .140, exceeding the .05 threshold. Thus, the original study treated the normality assumption as satisfied. The paired-samples analysis reported a mean pretest–posttest difference of −53.750, t(15) = −17.086, and a two-tailed significance value displayed as .000; this is reported more appropriately as p < .001 rather than p = .000.

Table 5. Kolmogorov–Smirnov Normality Test

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test	One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test	One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test
		Unstandardized Residual
N	N	16
Normal Parametersab	Mean	.0000000
Normal Parametersab	Std. Deviation	11.37294298
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.187
Most Extreme Differences	Positive	.187
Most Extreme Differences	Negative	-.110
Test Statistic	Test Statistic	.187
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.140c
a. Test distribution is Normal.	a. Test distribution is Normal.	a. Test distribution is Normal.

Table 6. Paired-Samples Test

Paired Samples Test	Paired Samples Test	Paired Samples Test	Paired Samples Test	Paired Samples Test	Paired Samples Test	Paired Samples Test	Paired Samples Test	Paired Samples Test	Paired Samples Test
		Paired Differences	Paired Differences	Paired Differences	Paired Differences	Paired Differences			
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference			

		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pair 1	Pretest – Postest	-53.750	12.583	3.146	-60.455	-47.045	-17.086	15	.000

The improvement from 30.00 to 83.13 indicates substantial growth in observed performance following the intervention. Picture-based media combine lexical items with visible representations, which may make meanings easier to recognize and recall. The students also appeared more enthusiastic and focused during activities. Because vocabulary is closely connected to sounds, structures, and meanings, vocabulary instruction should not be separated from broader language learning. Nevertheless, the design does not isolate the intervention from practice effects, maturation, or other changes during instruction.

D. Conclusion

Picture-based media were associated with higher Arabic vocabulary memorization scores among the 16 third-grade students of MI Islamiyah Tlogohaji. Mean scores increased from 30.00 to 83.13, and students showed positive engagement with the learning activities. Teachers are encouraged to develop varied, interesting instructional resources, while students should continue practicing vocabulary regularly. Future research using a control group and longer-term retention measures would strengthen the evidence for the effectiveness of this approach.

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