



Motivational Teaching Strategies in Arabic Vocabulary Instruction: Evidence from an Islamic Senior High School in Indonesia

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the strategies used by teachers to motivate students in learning Arabic vocabulary at MAN 1 Tapin. This research employed a qualitative approach with a field research design to explore teachers' experiences and strategies in motivating students during the vocabulary learning process. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with Arabic language teachers and analyzed using qualitative data analysis techniques consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings of the study reveal that teachers apply several motivational strategies in teaching Arabic vocabulary, including providing positive reinforcement, implementing interactive learning methods, utilizing instructional media, and creating a supportive classroom environment that encourages the use of Arabic language. These strategies contribute significantly to increasing students' motivation, participation, and confidence in learning Arabic vocabulary. The results indicate that effective motivational strategies implemented by teachers play a crucial role in enhancing students' engagement in the language learning process. This study highlights the importance of integrating motivational strategies into Arabic language teaching practices in order to create a more engaging and meaningful learning environment for students. The findings also provide practical implications for Arabic language teachers and educational institutions in developing innovative and motivating teaching strategies that support students' vocabulary learning.

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Introduction

Arabic language learning in Islamic educational institutions has a very strategic position because Arabic not only functions as a means of communication, but also as a medium to understand authoritative sources of Islamic teachings such as the Qur'an and hadith (Evi Nurus Suroiyah & Dewi Anisatuz Zakiyah, 2021). In the context of formal education in Indonesia, Arabic is taught from elementary to tertiary levels, especially in madrassas and Islamic boarding schools. However, the Arabic language learning process often faces various pedagogical challenges, one of which is related to the low motivation of students to learn (Koiruman et al., 2024). Learning motivation is a psychological factor that greatly determines the success of students in mastering language skills, including in mastering vocabulary (mufradat) (Kadir et al., 2023). Without strong motivation, students tend to have difficulty understanding, remembering, and using Arabic





vocabulary effectively in the context of communication and academic learning (Ismail et al., 2023).

In the study of second language acquisition, vocabulary mastery is seen as a fundamental component that determines a person's language ability (Masrai & Milton, 2019). Hassan et al., emphasized that vocabulary is the core of language competence because almost all language skills are highly dependent on word mastery (Abu Hassan & Mamat, 2018). Limited vocabulary is repeatedly identified as the primary barrier to successful foreign-language acquisition. Research shows that a lack of lexical knowledge restricts learners' test performance, communication ability, and overall proficiency (Sun et al., 2023). Multiple studies also emphasize that vocabulary is "crucial" in second-language learning, noting that learners' productive skills lag behind receptive knowledge when word knowledge is insufficient (Li & Zhao, 2015; Park et al., 2018).

A number of studies show that learning motivation has a strong relationship with students' success in learning a second language. From the perspective of educational motivation theory, motivation can be understood as an internal and external force that encourages a person to carry out learning activities consistently and continuously (Amrullah et al., 2022). In the context of language learning, motivation is not only related to interest in the language itself, but is also influenced by the pedagogical strategies used by teachers in the classroom. Teachers who are able to create a learning environment that is engaging, interactive, and relevant to students' needs will be more successful in increasing students' motivation to learn (Chen et al., 2021).

Some empirical research shows that teachers' motivational strategies play an important role in increasing student engagement in foreign language learning. For example, the research of Le-Thi et al., found that the use of motivational strategies by teachers can significantly increase students' intrinsic motivation in second language learning (Le-Thi et al., 2020). Other research has also shown that learning approaches that integrate communicative activities, language games, and the use of interesting learning media can increase students' motivation in learning foreign language vocabulary (Wijaya & Hikmah, 2023; Yang & Quadir, 2018; Yunita & Pebrian, 2020).

In the context of madrasah aliyah, especially at MAN 1 Tapin, learning Arabic has an important role in shaping students' linguistic and religious competence. However, based on various empirical reports in Arabic language learning studies in Indonesia, students often experience difficulties in mastering Arabic vocabulary due to low learning motivation and lack of variety in teaching strategies used by teachers (Erlina et al., 2025). This shows that there is still a gap between the motivational theories of language learning that have developed in the academic literature and the learning practices that occur in the classroom. Thus, research on teachers' strategies in motivating students to learn Arabic mufradat is very relevant to be done.

Based on this description, the main problem that is the focus of this research is how the strategies used by teachers in motivating students in learning Arabic mufradat at MAN 1 Tapin. Although various motivational theories and language learning strategies

have been widely developed in the academic literature, there are still limitations of research that specifically examines the implementation of teachers' motivational strategies in the context of learning Arabic vocabulary in Indonesian madrasas. This research seeks to fill this knowledge gap by examining in depth the motivational strategies used by teachers in learning Arabic mufradat. The main purpose of this study is to analyze and describe the strategies used by teachers in motivating students in learning Arabic mufradat at MAN 1 Tapin. The results of this study are expected to make a theoretical contribution to the development of Arabic language learning studies as well as practical contributions for teachers in designing more effective and motivational learning strategies.

Literature Review

The Concept of Motivation in Language Learning

Motivation is one of the psychological factors that greatly determines the success of the learning process, especially in learning a second language or foreign language. From the perspective of educational psychology, motivation is understood as an internal and external drive that moves individuals to carry out learning activities consistently and goal-oriented (Ryan & Deci, 2000). In the context of language learning, motivation is not only related to the desire to learn the language, but also involves students' attitudes, interests, and beliefs about their ability to master the language learned. Dörnyei explained that language learning motivation is a dynamic process that is influenced by various factors such as the learning environment, teachers' teaching strategies, previous learning experiences, and students' personal goals in learning the language (Dörnyei, 2001).

The Self-Determination theory developed by Ryan and Deci distinguishes motivation into two main types, namely intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2020). Intrinsic motivation arises from within the individual, such as curiosity, interest, or pleasure in learning something (Oed & Ryan, 1985). Meanwhile, extrinsic motivation arises due to external factors such as awards, assessments, or academic demands. In foreign language learning, these two types of motivation play an important role in determining the level of student involvement in the learning process. Research shows that students who have high intrinsic motivation tend to show greater levels of perseverance and engagement in language learning than students who are driven only by extrinsic motivation (Ushioda, 2011).

In the context of learning Arabic, learning motivation is a very important factor because Arabic is often considered a difficult language by some students. The complexity of language structure, differences in writing systems, and the limitations of the use of Arabic in daily life can lead to low motivation for students' learning. Therefore, the role of teachers in building and maintaining students' learning motivation is very crucial in the Arabic language learning process. Teachers not only function as material presenters, but also as facilitators who are able to create a learning environment that supports and motivates students to be active in the learning process.



Mastery of Mufradat in Arabic Language Learning

Vocabulary or mufradat is one of the basic components in language learning (Al-Khuli, 2000). Vocabulary mastery is the main foundation in the development of language skills because almost all communication activities depend on understanding and using words correctly (Thu'aimah, 1986). Without adequate vocabulary mastery, students will have difficulty understanding texts, expressing ideas, and interacting communicatively in the language learned. Therefore, mufradat learning is one of the most important aspects of teaching Arabic in educational institutions.

Schmitt states that vocabulary learning is not only concerned with memorizing new words, but also involves complex cognitive processes such as understanding meaning, use in the context of sentences, as well as the ability to remember and use the word in different communication situations (Schmitt, 2000). In the context of learning Arabic, mastery of mufradat is also related to understanding the morphological forms of words, word roots, and changes in word forms that occur in various grammatical structures of Arabic (Gani & Arsyad, 2019). This shows that learning Arabic mufradat requires a systematic and effective pedagogical strategy so that students are able to understand and use vocabulary optimally.

Teachers' Strategies in Motivating Language Learning

In the learning process, teachers have a strategic role in creating learning conditions that can increase student motivation. Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) Explains that the teacher's motivational strategy is a series of pedagogical actions designed to build, maintain, and increase students' learning motivation during the learning process. This strategy can be in the form of providing positive reinforcement, using interesting learning activities, creating a supportive classroom atmosphere, and providing opportunities for students to actively participate in the learning process.

Arabai Research (2016) It shows that the use of motivational strategies by teachers has a significant influence on increasing students' learning motivation in learning foreign languages. Teachers who actively use motivational strategies such as providing positive feedback, creating communicative interactions, and connecting learning materials with students' real lives can increase student engagement in the learning process. This shows that learning motivation does not only depend on the internal factors of the student, but is also influenced by the pedagogical approach used by the teacher.

In addition, Lamb (2017) emphasizing that teachers who are able to build positive interpersonal relationships with students tend to be more successful in increasing students' motivation to learn. A good relationship between teachers and students can create a sense of security and comfort in the learning environment, so that students are more courageous to try to use the language they are learning without fear of making mistakes. In the context of Arabic language learning, teachers' motivational strategies can also be in the form of the use of communicative approaches, group activities,

language games, and the integration of learning technologies to increase students' interest in Arabic.

Mufradat 's Teaching Strategies in Arabic Language Learning

Teaching *mufradat* in learning Arabic requires a systematic and varied approach so that students can understand and use vocabulary effectively. Nation (2013) argues that effective vocabulary learning should involve a variety of activities that allow students to encounter new words in a variety of usage contexts. These activities can be in the form of reading texts, listening to conversations, writing sentences, or doing communication exercises that involve active use of vocabulary.

Teng (2020) explained that the use of self-regulation-based learning strategies can help students develop vocabulary learning skills independently. This strategy involves students' ability to plan, monitor, and evaluate their own learning process. In learning Arabic, this strategy can be applied through activities such as making personal vocabulary lists, using vocabulary cards, and practicing vocabulary in sentences.

In addition, Gu's research (2017) It shows that vocabulary learning strategies that involve the use of context, association of meaning, and structured repetition can improve vocabulary retention in the long run. In learning Arabic, the use of a contextual approach is very important because many vocabulary words have different meanings depending on the context in which they are used. Therefore, teachers need to integrate various learning strategies that allow students to understand vocabulary not only conceptually, but also practically in everyday language use.

Method

This study uses a qualitative approach with a field research design that aims to understand in depth the strategies used by teachers in motivating students in learning Arabic *mufradat*. The qualitative approach was chosen because this study seeks to explore pedagogical phenomena that occur naturally in the learning process in the classroom, especially related to the practice of motivational strategies applied by Arabic teachers. The participants in this study are Arabic teachers who teach at MAN 1 Tapin. Participant selection was carried out using the purposive sampling technique, which is an informant selection technique based on certain considerations relevant to the purpose of the research. Arabic teachers are chosen as the main informants because they are parties who are directly involved in the learning process and have experience in implementing various learning strategies to motivate students in learning Arabic *mufradat*.

Data collection in this study was carried out through in-depth interviews as the main technique in obtaining research data. The interview was chosen because this method allows researchers to dig deeper into information about the experiences, perceptions, and strategies used by teachers in motivating students in learning Arabic *mufradat*. The data analysis in this study was carried out using qualitative data analysis techniques that are descriptive and interpretive. The data analysis process is carried out in stages starting from the data collection process to drawing conclusions. The stages of



data analysis in this study include data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn, as stated by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014).

Result and Discussion

Providing Positive Reinforcement to Increase Students' Learning Motivation

One of the strategies found in this study is the use of positive reinforcement by teachers in the Arabic mufradat learning process. Based on the results of the interviews, Arabic teachers at MAN 1 Tapin consistently give various forms of appreciation to students who show effort in learning Arabic vocabulary. This positive reinforcement is given in the form of verbal praise, recognition of students' efforts, and the provision of additional value for students who are active in the learning process.

The teacher said that giving appreciation to students is one of the effective ways to increase students' confidence in using Arabic. The informant explained indirectly that when students feel appreciated for their efforts, they become more courageous to try to pronounce a new vocabulary even though there are still mistakes in pronunciation or use. This condition shows that positive reinforcement strategies can create a more supportive learning environment and encourage students to be more active in learning.

In addition, teachers also emphasized the importance of building a learning atmosphere that is not scary for students. In the process of learning Arabic, some students often feel afraid of making mistakes when pronouncing words in Arabic. Therefore, teachers try to reduce this fear by giving a positive response to each student's efforts. The informant said that this approach aims to build students' confidence so that they do not hesitate to try to use the mufradat they have just learned.

Furthermore, the results of the interviews showed that the use of positive reinforcement also helped increase student engagement in learning. The teacher explained that when students see their friends getting appreciation from the teacher, they become more motivated to participate in learning activities. This suggests that positive reinforcement not only impacts a particular individual, but can also affect the dynamics of the class as a whole.

The findings of this study show that providing positive reinforcement is one of the important strategies used by teachers in motivating students to learn Arabic mufradat. This strategy not only increases students' motivation to learn, but also helps create a more positive and conducive learning atmosphere for the language learning process.

The findings of the study show that the provision of positive reinforcement by teachers is one of the effective strategies in increasing students' learning motivation in learning Arabic mufradat. Teachers give various forms of appreciation to students who try to use Arabic vocabulary in the learning process, either through verbal praise, recognition of students' efforts, and providing constructive feedback. This strategy has been proven to increase students' confidence in using Arabic and reduce their fear of making mistakes when trying to use new vocabulary.

These findings are in line with the Self-Determination Theory put forward by Ryan and Deci (2000), which states that intrinsic motivation can develop when individuals feel valued and supported in the learning process. In the context of language learning, the provision of positive reinforcement by teachers can increase students' sense of competence, namely the feeling that they are able to master the skills being learned. When students feel that their efforts are recognized by teachers, they tend to be more motivated to continue engaging in language learning activities.

This research is also consistent with Dörnyei's findings (2001) which emphasizes the importance of teachers' motivational strategies in building motivation to learn foreign languages. Dörnyei explained that one of the main strategies in increasing students' motivation to learn is to provide positive feedback that can strengthen students' confidence in their ability to learn languages. In learning Arabic, this strategy becomes very important because many students feel less confident when it comes to pronouncing words in Arabic that have a different phonological system than their mother tongue.

In addition, the results of this study also support Alrabai's findings (2016) which shows that teachers' motivational strategies have a significant influence on increasing students' learning motivation in second language learning. In the study, it was explained that teachers who consistently provide positive reinforcement to students can create a more supportive learning environment and encourage students to be more active in using the language being learned. Thus, providing positive reinforcement not only serves as a form of appreciation for students' efforts, but also as a pedagogical strategy that can increase student involvement in the language learning process.

The Use of Interactive Learning Methods in Mufradat Teaching

The findings of the next study showed that Arabic teachers at MAN 1 Tapin used various interactive learning methods to increase students' motivation in learning Arabic mufradat. This learning method is designed to make the learning process more interesting and not monotonous, so that students can actively engage in learning activities in the classroom.

Based on the results of the interview, the teacher explained that the use of interactive learning methods is very important in learning Arabic because lecture methods that are too dominant often make students feel bored. Informants conveyed indirectly that students tend to understand and remember new vocabulary more easily when they are directly involved in learning activities, such as group discussions, language games, and simple conversation exercises.

The teacher also explained that mufradat learning is often carried out through practical activities of using words in simple sentences. In this activity, students are asked to use the vocabulary they have learned in the form of short conversations or dialogues with their classmates. The informant stated that this strategy aims to help students understand the meaning of vocabulary in the context of real use, so that they not only memorize words but also be able to use them communicatively.



In addition, teachers also use language game activities as one of the strategies to increase students' motivation to learn. In this activity, students are asked to guess the meaning of words, match vocabulary with pictures, or compose sentences using words that have been learned. The informant explained that language game activities can make the classroom atmosphere more lively and fun, so that students become more enthusiastic in participating in learning.

These findings show that the use of interactive learning methods can increase student involvement in the Arabic mufradat learning process. Through this approach, students not only become passive recipients of information, but also play an active role in building their understanding of Arabic vocabulary. The findings of the study also show that the use of interactive learning methods is an important strategy used by teachers in motivating students to learn Arabic mufradat. Teachers not only use the lecture method in delivering the material, but also integrate various learning activities such as group discussions, language games, and simple conversation exercises that involve active use of vocabulary. This approach makes the learning process more dynamic and provides opportunities for students to be directly involved in learning activities.

The results of this study are in line with Lamb's view (2017) which confirms that students' active involvement in the learning process is one of the main factors that affect the motivation to learn a language. When students are given the opportunity to actively participate in learning activities, they tend to feel more in control of their learning process. This can increase students' sense of responsibility for learning and strengthen their motivation to learn a language.

In addition, the use of interactive learning methods is also related to the communicative language teaching approach, which emphasizes the importance of using language in the context of real communication. In this approach, language learning focuses not only on mastering grammatical structures, but also on students' ability to use language functionally in a variety of communication situations. Nation Research (2013) shows that vocabulary learning will be more effective when students are given the opportunity to use the words learned in a variety of communication activities. Therefore, the use of interactive learning methods can help students understand the meaning of vocabulary more deeply and improve their ability to use the vocabulary in the context of communication.

The findings of this study also support Schmitt's research (2008) which states that effective vocabulary learning should involve activities that allow students to actively process new words. When students engage in activities such as language games or conversation exercises, they not only memorize vocabulary mechanically, but also associate those words with meaningful learning experiences. This process can improve students' memory retention of the vocabulary they are learning as well as strengthen their understanding of the use of words in different contexts.

Utilization of Learning Media to Increase Student Interest

Another strategy found in this study is the use of learning media to increase students' motivation in learning Arabic mufradat. Based on the results of the interview, Arabic teachers at MAN 1 Tapin used various types of learning media such as pictures, vocabulary cards, and other visual media to help students understand and remember new vocabulary.

The teacher explained that the use of visual media is very helpful in vocabulary learning because students can associate new words with concrete visual representations. The informant said that students often find it easier to understand the meaning of vocabulary when the word is accompanied by relevant images or illustrations. Therefore, teachers often use pictures or vocabulary cards in the learning process to clarify the meaning of the words being taught.

In addition, the teacher also said that the use of learning media can make the learning process more interesting for students. The informant explained indirectly that students tend to be more focused and enthusiastic when learning using visual media than when the teacher only explains the material verbally. This shows that the use of learning media can increase students' attention to the material taught.

Furthermore, the teacher also revealed that learning media can help students in remembering vocabulary for a longer period of time. When students see an image or symbol related to a word, they can more easily recall the meaning of the word when needed. Thus, the use of learning media not only helps in the process of understanding vocabulary, but also plays a role in increasing students' memory retention of Arabic mufradat.

Another strategy found in this study is the use of learning media as a means to increase student learning motivation. Teachers use a variety of visual media such as pictures and vocabulary cards to help students understand the meaning of new words in Arabic. The use of visual media has been proven to help students relate vocabulary to concrete representations that are easier to understand.

These findings are in line with Alqahtani's research (2015) which shows that the use of visual media can increase the effectiveness of learning vocabulary in foreign languages. Visual media allows students to process information more quickly because they can associate words with relevant images or symbols. This process helps strengthen the associations between word forms and their meanings in students' memory.

In addition, the use of learning media is also related to the theory of multimodal learning which emphasizes that learning will be more effective when information is presented through various sensory channels, such as visual and auditory. When students see images related to a word and hear the pronunciation of the word, they can build a stronger mental representation of the vocabulary learned. This can improve students' ability to remember and use the vocabulary in different communication situations.

Teng's Research (2020) It also shows that the use of various vocabulary learning strategies, including the use of visual media, can improve students' ability to learn vocabulary independently. In the context of learning Arabic, the use of learning media



not only helps students understand the meaning of vocabulary, but can also increase their interest in the learning process. When learning is presented in an engaging and varied manner, students tend to show a higher level of attention to the material being taught.

Creating a Learning Environment That Supports the Use of Arabic

Another important finding in this study is the efforts of teachers in creating a learning environment that supports the use of Arabic in the classroom. Based on the results of the interviews, the teacher tried to encourage students to use Arabic vocabulary in various daily learning activities. The teacher explained that one way to increase students' motivation in learning mufradat is to give students the opportunity to use Arabic directly in simple communication in class. The informant said that the practical use of Arabic can help students feel more familiar with the vocabulary they are learning. Thus, mufradat learning does not only stop at the stage of memorizing words, but also continues at the stage of using language in the context of communication.

In addition, teachers also try to create a classroom atmosphere that supports the use of Arabic by providing examples of consistent language use during the learning process. The informant explained that teachers often use simple expressions in Arabic when interacting with students, such as giving instructions or greeting students at the beginning of lessons. This strategy aims to familiarize students with hearing and using Arabic in real-life situations.

Teachers also emphasized the importance of creating a comfortable learning environment for students. The informant explained indirectly that students will be more motivated to use Arabic when they feel that the classroom is a safe place to learn without fear of being ridiculed or criticized excessively when they make mistakes. Therefore, teachers try to build a classroom culture that values the learning process and encourages students to support each other in learning Arabic.

Overall, the findings of this study show that the creation of a learning environment that supports the use of Arabic is an important strategy in increasing students' motivation in learning mufradat. A positive and communicative learning environment can help students feel more confident in using Arabic vocabulary in a variety of learning situations. The findings of this study also show that the creation of a learning environment that supports the use of Arabic is an important factor in increasing students' motivation to learn. Teachers try to create a classroom atmosphere that encourages students to use Arabic in various learning activities, such as simple conversations and the use of everyday expressions in classroom interactions.

These findings are in line with the view of MacIntyre and Gregersen (2012) who emphasize that affective factors such as confidence and comfort in the learning environment have a great influence on students' success in learning a second language. When students feel that the classroom environment supports them to try to use language without fear of making mistakes, they will be more courageous to participate in communication activities.

In addition, Ushioda's (2013) research also emphasizes that the motivation for learning a language cannot be separated from the social context in which learning takes place. A positive and supportive learning environment can help students build their identity as language learners as well as increase their confidence in using the language they are learning. In the context of learning Arabic in madrasas, the creation of a communicative learning environment can help students feel that Arabic is not only an academic subject, but also a communication tool that can be used in daily life.

Overall, the results of this discussion show that teachers' motivational strategies play a very important role in increasing students' learning motivation in learning Arabic mufradat. A combination of positive reinforcement, interactive learning methods, the use of learning media, and the creation of a supportive learning environment can create a more meaningful learning experience for students. Thus, the findings of this study provide important implications for the development of Arabic language learning practices, especially in designing teaching strategies that are able to increase students' motivation to learn sustainably.

Conclusion

This study aims to analyze the strategies used by teachers in motivating students in learning Arabic mufradat at MAN 1 Tapin. Based on the results of the study, it was found that teachers use several main motivational strategies that play an important role in increasing students' learning motivation, namely providing positive reinforcement, using interactive learning methods, utilizing learning media, and creating a learning environment that supports the use of Arabic. The four strategies show that students' learning motivation in language learning is not only influenced by internal student factors, but also greatly influenced by the pedagogical approach applied by teachers in the learning process. The findings of this study also show that teachers' motivational strategies have a significant contribution in increasing student involvement in learning Arabic mufradat. When teachers are able to create a positive, interactive, and communicative learning atmosphere, students tend to be more motivated to learn Arabic vocabulary and more confident in using the vocabulary in learning activities.

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