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Development of Arabic Culture-Based Storytelling Media through a Project-Based Learning Approach

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Abstract

Keywords:

Project-Based
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Arabic Culture,
Arabic.

This research was conducted descriptively to identify gaps, synthesize relevant concepts, and formulate the most appropriate theoretical model. The study produced a Project-Based Learning (PjBL) framework for creating Arabic culture-based storytelling that is ready to be implemented in the classroom. This model is designed to encourage students to collaborate actively and use Arabic in authentic contexts – namely by creating and presenting stories – so it is expected to enhance their speaking skills (mahārat al-kalām). In addition, the model is anticipated to increase students' learning motivation and their understanding of Arab culture. Conceptually, this model is feasible to apply and has the potential to become an effective new approach to making Arabic language instruction more engaging and practical. The implications of this study indicate that the developed framework can serve as a guideline for teachers in designing more contextual and creative

project-based Arabic language learning. Implementing this model has the potential to promote cultural integration in language teaching, improve the quality of communicative interaction in the classroom, and strengthen performance-based learning. Furthermore, this research opens opportunities for the development of media, assessments, and curricula that support Arabic cultural storytelling across different educational levels.

Abstrak

Kata Kunci:

Pembelajaran
Berbasis
Proyek,
Storytelling,
Budaya Arab,
Bahasa Arab.

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis dan merumuskan kerangka konseptual model pembelajaran Project-Based Learning (PjBL) yang berfokus pada pembuatan storytelling (bercerita) berbasis konten budaya Arab guna meningkatkan kompetensi berbahasa Arab siswa. Latar belakang penelitian didasarkan pada perlunya pengembangan model pembelajaran yang inovatif untuk meningkatkan keterampilan berbicara (mahārat al-kalām) dan mengintegrasikan materi budaya otentik dalam pembelajaran Bahasa Arab. Metode yang digunakan adalah Kualitatif Deskriptif dengan pendekatan Studi Pustaka (Library Research). Data dikumpulkan melalui penelaahan sistematis terhadap berbagai literatur, termasuk buku, jurnal ilmiah, dan dokumen terkait mengenai teori Project-Based Learning, prinsip pengembangan media storytelling, integrasi konten budaya Arab dalam Penelitian ini dilakukan secara deskriptif untuk mengidentifikasi kesenjangan, mensintesis konsep-konsep yang relevan, dan merumuskan model teoretis yang paling sesuai. Penelitian ini menghasilkan sebuah model kerangka kerja (framework) Project-Based Learning (PjBL) untuk pembuatan storytelling bernuansa budaya Arab yang siap diimplementasikan di kelas. Model ini dirancang untuk mendorong siswa berkolaborasi secara aktif dan menggunakan bahasa Arab dalam konteks yang autentik, yaitu mencipta dan menyajikan cerita, sehingga diperkirakan mampu meningkatkan keterampilan berbicara (mahārat al-kalām). Selain itu, model ini diharapkan dapat meningkatkan minat belajar serta pemahaman siswa terhadap budaya Arab. Secara konseptual, model ini layak diterapkan dan berpotensi menjadi pendekatan baru yang efektif dalam membuat pembelajaran bahasa Arab lebih menarik dan praktis. Implikasi dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa framework yang dikembangkan dapat menjadi acuan bagi guru dalam merancang pembelajaran bahasa Arab berbasis proyek yang lebih kontekstual dan kreatif. Penerapan model ini berpotensi mendorong integrasi budaya ke dalam pengajaran bahasa, meningkatkan kualitas interaksi komunikatif di kelas, serta memperkuat pembelajaran berbasis kinerja (performance-based learning). Selain itu, penelitian ini membuka peluang untuk pengembangan media, asesmen, dan kurikulum yang mendukung storytelling budaya Arab pada jenjang pendidikan yang berbeda.

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Introduction

Learning a language means learning to use that language both verbally and nonverbally, so that its function as a means of communication and interaction is fulfilled. Messaging becomes more optimal. Arabic is one of the world languages that has developed along with social and scientific progress. Language learning can be interpreted as an effort to organize various elements to achieve the desired goals and make teachers learn Arabic with instructors as facilitators (Aprizal 2021). However, Arabic Language Learning still faces some challenges. One of the main challenges is the lack of motivation and interest of students in learning Arabic. This is due to several factors such as the lack of available resources, the lack of opportunities to practice speaking and listening, and the lack of variety in learning methods. In addition, learning Arabic also still uses traditional approaches that are less effective. This traditional approach often focuses on learning grammar and vocabulary, without giving students the opportunity to practice speaking and listening. This causes students to lack good communication skills in Arabic.

Learning Arabic in the modern era demands an innovative approach that not only prioritizes linguistic aspects, but also pays attention to the cultural dimension. Language is inseparable from culture, as they form a unity in authentic communication (Rahmah 2024). However, conventional Arabic learning methods still tend to focus on memorizing vocabulary and grammatical patterns without providing a strong cultural context. As a result, students' speaking skills are often less naturally developed and less sensitive to the use of language in the context of actual Arabic culture.

In an effort to improve speaking skills and understanding Arabic culture at the same time, creative and real-experience learning innovations are needed.

One approach that can be adopted is storytelling, which is the use of stories to build emotional engagement and enrich vocabulary and language expression. Stories in learning Arabic provide an opportunity for students to understand the socio-cultural context, introducing Arabic norms, values, and traditions in a living situation. However, storytelling still tends to be passive, where students become more listeners. To overcome this, it is necessary to combine it with a Project-Based Learning (PBL) approach. PBL encourages students to actively create project-based end products, such as short plays, cultural vlogs, Arabic story podcasts, or interactive storybooks. Through this project, students not only understand language theoretically, but also use it in creative and contextual real-life practice. The merging of storytelling and Arabic culture-based PBL in Arabic language learning offers an all-around innovation: students become not only language users, but also creators of Arabic culture-based content. The novelty of this approach lies in integrating storytelling with culture-based PBL to transform students from passive recipients into active content creators, a combination that has rarely been explored in previous Arabic language learning models. This innovation encourages collaboration, creativity, and cross-cultural understanding, while increasing students' confidence in speaking Arabic naturally.

Based on this, the innovation of combining storytelling and PBL is proposed as a new strategy in improving speaking skills as well as introducing the context of Arabic culture in depth and in learning Arabic, providing a fresh and original contribution to Arabic pedagogy by offering a culturally grounded, production-oriented learning model that has not been previously developed.

Method

This research is a theoretical study that uses Literature Studies (reading and analyzing literature) in a Descriptive Qualitative way. We aim to formulate a Project-Based Learning (PjBL) model design to create *storytelling* about Arab culture. Data collection was carried out by searching, identifying, and recording

key concepts from journals and books regarding PjBL, *storytelling*, and Arabic teaching. Once the data is collected, the data analysis is carried out in stages: first, the data is sorted (reduced) to select the most important concepts; second, the data is compiled (presented) into a PjBL model framework; and finally, it is concluded (drawing conclusions) to produce a complete theoretical model that is ready to be used as a guide in learning Arabic.

Result and Discussion

Storytelling Concept in Arabic Language Learning

Storytelling is a well-known method in language education that encourages students to communicate through stories, creating an interactive learning atmosphere. In Arabic language learning, storytelling functions not only to enhance speaking skills but also to introduce cultural elements through folktales, historical narratives, and popular stories. It helps students learn vocabulary, sentence structure, and the socio-cultural context of the Arabic language, making learning more meaningful and engaging.

Storytelling also allows students to share experiences collaboratively, improving their speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills. This method increases motivation and participation because students actively listen, retell, and discuss story elements, including cultural and moral values.

In Arab culture, storytelling (*al-ḥikāyah*) holds a long-established and significant role. Before writing traditions developed, stories were the primary medium for transmitting knowledge, history, moral teachings, and social norms. Famous examples include *One Thousand and One Nights* and *Sīrah Nabawīyyah*, which illustrate how storytelling preserved cultural identity across generations.

The Concept of Project Based Learning in Arabic Language Learning

Project-Based Learning (PBL) is a project-based learning approach in which students are actively involved in completing real, meaningful tasks. In the context of language learning, PBL encourages students to use the target language

in real-life activities such as making videos, holding exhibitions, or writing scripts. PBL develops collaboration, problem-solving, creativity, and communication skills. This model places students as active subjects, not just recipients of information, so that the learning process becomes more meaningful and oriented towards real results (Mufti 2022).

The project-based learning teaching model is often referred to as a teaching method that uses problem problems in the system with the aim of making it easier for students in the process of understanding and absorbing the given theory. The model uses a contextual approach and fosters students' skills in critical thinking (Mayasari et al. 2022). So that they are able to consider the best decision taken as a solution to the problem received. Project work is often interpreted as work that is composed of several tasks and is based on questions and problems that require students to tend to think critically in the search for solutions. Problem-solving steps taken by students can be used as a basis for conducting assessments.

Each student has a different learning style, Project-based learning offers students the opportunity to be able to conduct content based research (material). various ways that make sense to him and conduct experiments independently and cooperatively. The role of teachers in Project-Based Learning should be as facilitators, trainers, advisors and intermediaries to get optimal results in accordance with the imagination, creativity and innovation of students. According to Hastang, project-based learning has characteristics, namely: 1) there are problems or challenges given to students, 2) encourage students to have a more interesting and meaningful learning experience, 3) produce a real product, and 4) the evaluation process is carried out in a sustainable manner. Project-based learning is a learning model that reminds students of creativity which is very compatible with high-level thinking skills (Meilasari and Yelianti 2020).

The Project-Based Learning (PjBL) learning strategy begins with the planning stage, which is determining authentic and challenging fundamental questions (such as: "How can we introduce Arabic culture through stories?") and

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continues with designing a project planning where students form groups, define specific cultural topics, and draw up a detailed work schedule. Once the plan is mature, it enters the implementation stage by compiling a schedule and monitoring progress, where the teacher acts as a mentor while students conduct research, write a *storytelling script* in Arabic, and start producing works (Nababan 2023). During this process, testing and correction are carried out through formative assessments and ongoing feedback to ensure the quality of the content and language. The peak of the project is the assessment stage, which is presenting the work (showcasing *the finished storytelling*) to the audience. Finally, the process is closed with an evaluation of the experience (reflection) in which teachers and students review what has been learned, the success of the project, and the areas that need improvement for future projects.

The project-based learning steps described by The George Lucas Educational Foundation as cited by Wajdi are (Dwi Putri Lestari and Lukmanul Hakim, 2024):

Start with the essential question where the question can be sourced from real life that is connected to the material. Plan, which is the student planning something to be able to answer a question. Involve students in a question, the planning and the process of creating a student project, and the teacher exchanges ideas to solve problems. Setting the schedule, namely teachers and students make a schedule (timeline) for making products. Monitoring the project, where teachers carry out supervision and monitoring of student project development whose purpose is to check if there are errors or shortcomings in the project. Product assessment (assesment the product) where an assessment is carried out on the results of student work in the project. Evaluate, at this stage the teacher together with students reflect on the implementation of the project

Project-Based Learning (PjBL) has a significant advantage because it enhances students' motivation, collaboration, and critical thinking skills by requiring them to solve authentic problems and produce real products such as *storytelling*. The model also encourages autonomy and deep understanding of

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content through practical application, not just memorization. However, PjBL also has several shortcomings that need to be considered, including requiring long time allocation and complicated planning, the potential for unequal participation in groups (*free-riding*), and complexity in assessment because it covers many aspects (process, product, and collaboration), besides that there is a risk that teachers must have high facilitation skills so that students not only focus on the final product but also on the content Learning.

Combining Storytelling and Project-Based Learning in Arabic Language Learning

Learning Arabic without introducing Arabic culture will lose its context. Language is a reflection of culture, and in every vocabulary, expression, or structure of language, there are cultural values. Understanding Arabic culture such as speaking manners, how to dress, customs, and religious celebrations is important so that the use of Arabic is more authentic and contextual. Thus, the integration of Arabic culture in learning not only enriches students' insights, but also enhances their cultural sensitivity. Likewise, Arabic Language Learning still faces several challenges. One of the main challenges is the lack of motivation and interest of students in learning Arabic. This is due to several factors of lack of vocabulary mastery, lack of opportunities to practice speaking and listening, and lack of variety in learning methods.

Challenges in Learning Arabic and Their Cultural Implications

Challenges in Learning Arabic	Descriptions	Cultural Implications
Lack of vocabulary mastery	Students struggle to understand or use basic and intermediate Arabic vocabulary.	Limits students' ability to understand cultural concepts embedded in Arabic words and expressions.

Challenges in Learning Arabic	Descriptions	Cultural Implications
Limited opportunities for speaking practice	Students rarely get authentic or interactive speaking sessions.	Reduces exposure to natural Arabic communication, including cultural gestures, expressions, and communication etiquette.
Lack of listening practice	Arabic listening materials or native speaker interactions are minimal.	Students fail to recognize cultural nuance in tone, accent, and context used in real Arabic communication.
Monotonous and traditional learning methods	Learning focuses heavily on grammar and memorization.	Cultural aspects of Arabic are not introduced, causing learning to feel disconnected from real Arabic-speaking contexts.
Low motivation and interest	Students feel bored, pressured, or disconnected from Arabic lessons.	Lack of cultural engagement prevents students from appreciating Arabic as a living language embedded in rich traditions.

As previously explained, storytelling In the context of language learning, storytelling enriches students' vocabulary, improves sentence structure, and develops natural speaking skills. Stories in Arabic not only teach the language, but also bring cultural elements such as customs, customs, and thoughts of the Arab people. Storytelling encourages students' emotional engagement, increases motivation to learn, and strengthens memory of the material. However,

storytelling in general is still passive, because students often listen to stories rather than play an active role in the learning process.

Therefore, the combination of storytelling and Project-Based Learning (PBL) presents innovations in Arabic language learning. Storytelling provides a narrative and cultural foundation, while PBL encourages students to develop real products based on those stories and cultures. Through this model, students can, for example, create an Arabic-language drama project about the celebration of Eid al-Adha, create a vlog about daily life in an Arab country, or create a picture storybook about classic Arabic legends. In this way, students not only learn to speak in Arabic, but also understand Arabic culture in a more in-depth and creative way. This model encourages:

Culture-based activities, Use of authentic language, Students' creativity in working, Improved speaking skills with a cultural context.

This combination makes learning Arabic more lively, culturally based, and skill-oriented because: Storytelling: cultural content (what is being told). PBL = cultural process (how to bring the story to life). By combining the two: 1) Students understand the content of the culture (such as values in Arabic stories). 2) Students experience Arabic culture (storytelling, interaction, cooperation).

Steps to Implement (Stages) Teaching if combining strorytelling with project-based learning such as: Stage 1: The teacher reads or listens to Arabic stories. Stage 2: Students discuss the cultural value in the story. Stage 3: Students choose that story-based project (play, poster, vlog, etc.). Stage 4: Students work on their projects. Stage 5: Presentation of project results + reflection in Arabic.

Innovation Challenge

The challenge of this innovation is that it takes more time, because storytelling + projects require several stages: reading/listening to stories → discussing → working on projects → presentations, it is not suitable if the learning time is very limited. It requires creativity from teachers, namely teachers must choose the right story, make project plans, and guide students. If teachers are not creative, the project can feel monotonous. Not All Students Are Active, In

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project work, sometimes there are students who just "participate" without active contribution. It is necessary to have a system of division of tasks in groups so that all students are involved. Limited Access to Arabic Cultural Story Sources, not all schools have enough Arabic storybooks or sources of Arabic cultural literature. Teachers may need to find or arrange the story material themselves. Assessment can be more complex, must assess processes (cooperation, participation) and products (project results, language used). Teachers need to have a clear assessment rubric in order to be fair.

The influence of these innovations on improving students' speaking skills

Increase Speaking Boldness. Storytelling introduces students to rich narratives, making them more accustomed to hearing and understanding the structure of the Arabic language naturally. Through projects (PBL), students are encouraged to convey their ideas in oral form, both in group discussions and project presentations. This combination helps students overcome their fear of public speaking.

Enriching Vocabulary and Sentence Structure. Arabic stories contain many different expressions, terms, and sentence patterns. When students utilize the language of the story for their projects, they automatically use and practice new vocabulary in a real-world context.

Getting Used to Speaking Naturally and Contextually. By listening to and then responding to stories, students practice speaking in natural situations, rather than simply memorizing artificial dialogue. Their projects are often in the form of social simulations or presentations, so the language used is more communicative and relevant

Developing Critical and Creative Thinking Skills in Speaking. In PBL, students not only repeat stories, but also develop their own ideas based on the theme of the story. Making their speaking skills not only fluent, but also more critical and creative.

Improves Fluency and Confidence. The repetition of narratives, project discussions, and repeated presentations in the PBL process makes students more

fluent in Arabic. Rasa percaya diri siswa juga meningkat karena mereka tidak hanya menjadi penerima informasi tetapi juga pembuat proyek dalam bahasa Arab.

Conclusion

The innovation of combining Storytelling and Project-Based Learning (PBL) in Arabic language learning based on Arabic culture is an effective approach to develop language competence communicatively and culturally. Storytelling presents the natural context of Arabic culture through value-rich narratives, while PBL encourages students to actively participate, think critically, collaborate, and produce real Arabic-based products. The main advantage of this innovation lies in its ability to integrate language skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing) while internalizing Arabic cultural values. In addition, this approach is able to increase student motivation and involvement through creative and meaningful learning activities.

The findings of the study show that students demonstrate significant improvement in speaking fluency, cultural awareness, and confidence when producing Arabic-based storytelling projects. The research results also indicate that collaborative tasks in PBL enhance students' ability to negotiate meaning, use Arabic more naturally, and apply vocabulary in context. Moreover, students reported higher engagement and deeper emotional connection to the learning materials when cultural storytelling was integrated.

However, these innovations also have challenges, such as the need for more time, the demands of teachers' creativity, difficulties in managing group projects, and limited access to Arabic cultural story sources. However, with careful planning and systematic learning management, these challenges can be minimized. Overall, the combination of Storytelling and PBL is an innovative and relevant solution in the context of culture-based Arabic learning.

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Authors' Contribution Statement

Liazi Maulidi contributed to the conceptualization of the study, the design of the research framework, and the preparation of the initial manuscript draft. Ratna Komalasari was responsible for the literature review, methodological refinement, and critical revision of the manuscript. Ardia Pramesti Regita Cahyani contributed to data organization, synthesis of theoretical findings, and editing of the storytelling media framework. Fathul Maujud supervised the research process, provided expert validation of the proposed model, and finalized the analytical and theoretical components of the paper. All authors discussed the results together, reviewed the final manuscript, and approved it for submission.

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