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The Effectiveness of Crossword Puzzle in Improving *Mufradat* Skills

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ABSTRACT

Arabic *mufradat* is an element of various language elements, where the richness of vocabulary is part of the indicator of language proficiency. In reality, vocabulary learning often encounters obstacles, therefore choosing the right media is part of an effort to overcome the existing difficulties. This study aimed to test the effectiveness of the puzzle in improving Arabic vocabulary skills. This study was conducted with a quasi-experimental approach where data were obtained through pre-test and post-test. Based on the results, the use of puzzle games as learning media was effective to improve *mufradat* skills.

Crossword puzzle, *Mufradat*, Learning media

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مستخلص البحث

المفردات العربية هي عنصر من عناصر اللغة المختلفة، حيث ثراء المفردات هو جزء من مؤشر الكفاءة اللغوية. في الواقع، غالبًا ما يواجه تعلم المفردات عقبات، وبالتالي فإن اختيار الوسائط المناسبة هو جزء من جهد للتغلب على الصعوبات الحالية. هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى اختبار فاعلية اللغز في تحسين مهارات المفردات العربية. أجريت هذه الدراسة بمنهج شبه تجريبي حيث تم الحصول على البيانات من خلال الاختبار القبلي والبعدي. بناءً على النتائج، كان استخدام ألعاب الألغاز كوسائط تعليمية فعالاً في تحسين مهارات المفردات.

لغز الكلمات المتقاطعة، المفردات، الوسائط التعليمية

كلمات أساسية

INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary or in Arabic known as *mufradat* is an element of language. As an element of language, having vocabulary skills is important (Alqahtani, 2015); (Khan et al., 2018). Without a rich vocabulary, a person will not be able to use language communicatively so that it is difficult to understand written language (Alahmadi & Foltz, 2020).

Vocabulary is very important in supporting the ability to understand the text and communicate, although in learning it is often faced with various problems, such as difficulties in understanding vocabulary, difficulties in memorizing vocabulary learned, and

other problems experienced by teachers and students. For this reason, several efforts have been made by teachers and lecturers in overcoming difficulties in learning vocabulary. Sartika and Ritonga conducted a study on the influence of audio-visual media in improving learning outcomes on MI students that the use of audio-visual media improves vocabulary skills (Sartika & Ritonga, 2020).

Holimi conducted a study in 2019 and concluded that the use of visual media can increase knowledge of Arabic vocabulary (Holimi, 2019). Astuti conducted a study on various strategies to be used in teaching *mufradat* (Astuti, 2016). Zainuddin focused his study on the use of multimedia in Arabic vocabulary learning (Zainuddin & Sahrir, 2016). Another study found vocabulary learning strategies to equip students to continue to higher education (Baharudin & Ismail, 2014). There were studies on the analysis of Arabic vocabulary skills (Samsun Baharun et al., 2021); (Rabiatul Aribah et al., 2014). A study on the correlation of Arabic language skills with Hifzil Quran found that students with *maharah al-lughah* had higher Quran memorization abilities (Fauziah et al., 2020).

Previous studies mentioned above are an indication of the high attention on Arabic vocabulary learning. Therefore, this study aimed to test the effectiveness of the puzzle in improving Arabic vocabulary skills. Related to puzzle games as media, researchers also conducted an analysis of puzzle games. Ritonga et al conducted a study on whether puzzle games were used as a medium for HOST, MOTS, or LOTS (Ritonga et al., 2021).

In the current era of rapidly developing technology, the use of media that is closer to the daily lives of students is very appropriate to use. There are various media that are compatible with Arabic learning such as crossword puzzles that can be used for *mufradat* learning. Innovation in learning is needed, given the rapid development that sometimes affects the lives of students. In accordance with the results of initial observations conducted at MTs Negeri 1 Pasaman, students had low *mufradat* skills. Therefore, researchers have the desire to conduct experiments on crossword puzzles as a medium of learning media.

METHOD

This study was conducted in MTs Negeri 1 Pasaman due to low Arabic vocabulary understanding. This study was conducted for 90 (ninety) days, from February to April 2020.

This study used a quantitative approach quasi-experimental. The approach and type of study were chosen because of the intention to determine the effectiveness of crossword puzzles as learning media. Therefore, this study used quantitative data. The population of this study was all or 120 VIII-grade students of MTs Negeri 1 Pasaman. The sampling was carried out using the cluster technique (Galway et al., 2012); (Frey, 2018). The samples of this study were 68 students, 34 in the experimental class and 34 in the control class as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Samples

No	Experiment Class		Control Class	
1	VIII.4	34	VIII.1	34

The selection of VIII.4 as the experimental class was due to the ability of the students in this class to be lower than that of class VIII.1 as the superior class. Therefore, a new treatment using crossword puzzles as a medium was intended for class VIII.4.

Data were collected through pre-test and post-test, where researchers distributed 50 questions related to Arabic vocabulary to the experimental class and the control class. Data

analysis was carried out by looking at the changes occurred in each class, whether there were differences in results between before and after treatment.

RESULTS&DISCUSSION

Pre-Test Results

To find out the results obtained before the experiment, the researchers conducted a pre-test to the experimental class and control class by distributing 50 questions consisting of translating words from Arabic to Indonesian, translating words from Indonesian to Arabic, looking for synonyms, looking for antonyms, and filling the correct word for the provided sentence. The pre-test results can be seen in Diagram 1.

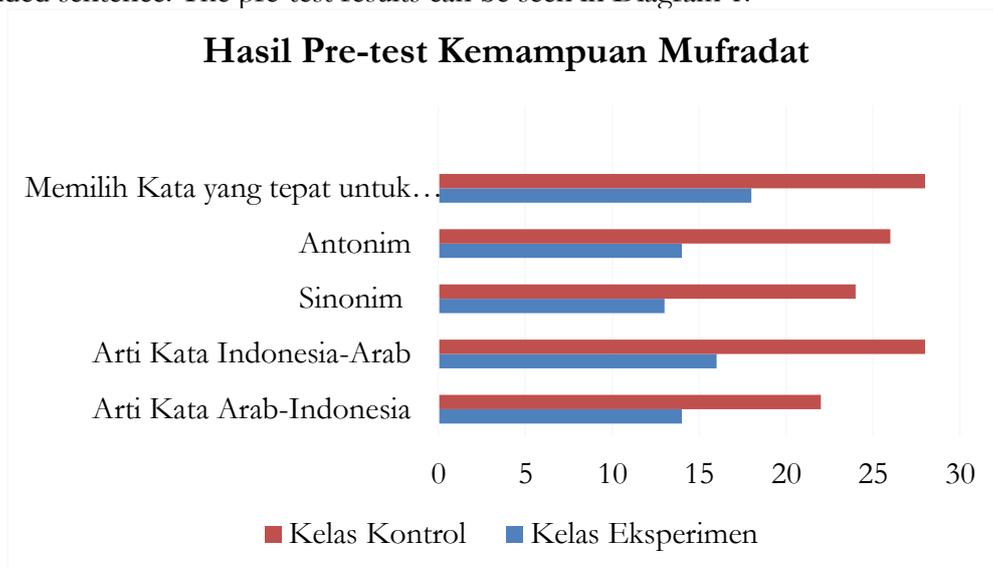


Diagram 1. free-Test Results on Vocabulary Skills

Diagram 1 shows that the best results were found in the control class. In the question of translating words from Arabic to Indonesian, in the control class, 22 students passed, while in the experiment class, 14 students passed. In the question of translating words from Indonesian to Arabic, in the control class, 28 students passed, while in the experiment class, 16 students passed. In the synonym question, in the control class, 24 students passed, while in the experiment class, 13 students passed. In addition, in the antonym question, in the control class, 26 students passed, while in the experiment class, 14 students passed. Finally, in the question of filling in the correct words for the sentence provided, in the control class, 28 students passed, while in the experiment class, 18 students passed.

Seeing these differences, the researchers conducted experiments by teaching mufradat using crossword puzzles for the experimental class and learning as usual in the control class. The crossword puzzle used can be seen in Figure 1.

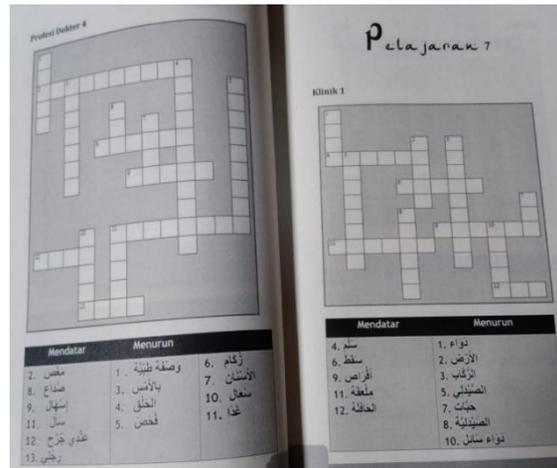


Figure 1. Crossword Puzzle

The experiment was carried out in 8 (eight) meetings, the vocabularies taught both in the experimental class and the control class were the same, namely relating to the translation of Arabic-Indonesian, Indonesian-Arabic, synonyms, antonyms, and filling the right words in the sentences provided. After the experiment, researchers conducted post-tests in both classes. The post-test can be seen in Diagram 2.

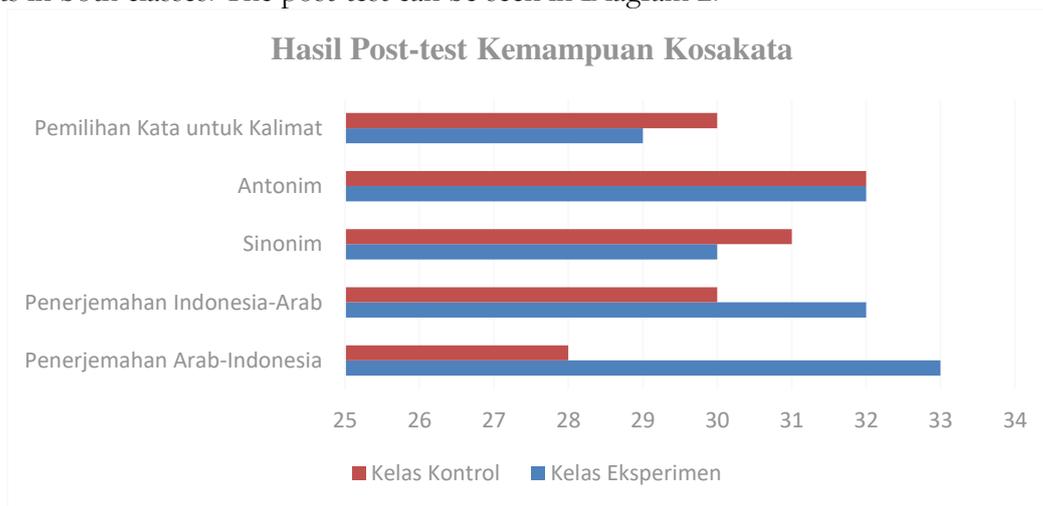


Diagram 2. Post Test Results on Vocabulary Skills

Based on Diagram 2, in the question of translating words from Arabic to Indonesian, in the control class, 28 students passed, while in the experiment class, 33 students passed. In the question of translating words from Indonesian to Arabic, in the control class, 30 students passed, while in the experiment class, 32 students passed. In the synonym question, in the control class, 31 students passed, while in the experiment class, 30 students passed. In addition, in the antonym question, in the control class, 32 students passed, the same as in the experiment class, 32 students passed. Finally, in the question of filling in the correct words for the sentence provided, in the control class, 30 students passed, while in the experiment class, 29 students passed.

Seeing the changes in the results of the pre-test with the post-test described above, the use of crossword puzzles as a learning media was effective in improving Arabic vocabulary skills. This statement is based on a significant change of post-test results in the experimental class. This finding is in line with several studies conducted by researchers who

have previously conducted studies on the use of crossword puzzles (Rakimahwati, 2014); (Fachrozi et al., 2021); (Rusmawan, 2018); (Kolte et al., 2017); (Davis et al., 2009); (Patrick et al., 2018).

The improvement of Arabic vocabulary skills in the post-test results is part of the effectiveness indicator of crossword puzzle media for mufradat learning. This finding affirmed that the selection and use of appropriate learning media will result in good learning outcomes (Zurqoni et al., 2020); (Sahuni et al., 2020); (Xuan et al., 2020); (Alotaibi et al., 2019).

Vocabulary understanding of students had an improvement after participating in learning using crossword puzzles as media. This achievement cannot be separated from the suitability of the media with daily habits. Therefore, the selection of learning media and their use requires prior study before the media is selected and determined, and used in the learning process.

CONCLUSIONS

From the description above, vocabulary skills can be improved by selecting and using appropriate learning media for students. The free-test and post-test results proved that the use of media such as crossword puzzles resulted in a significant improvement of Arabic vocabulary skills. The findings of this study suggested that all teachers at various levels of education should always innovate in improving abilities, teachers cannot only rely on their abilities to carry out learning but must improve their abilities according to the times.

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