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## Depth-Knowledge of Vocabulary and Its Role in Prior Knowledge-Based Arabic Learning: Systematic Literature Review

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### Abstract

*This study aims to (1) determine the role of knowledge of Arabic vocabulary depth on reading ability, (2) determine the influence of Arabic vocabulary depth on students' speaking ability, (3) describe the role of the Prior Knowledge approach in learning Arabic. This study uses a qualitative approach with a literature study method. The technique used is "systematic literature review" (SLR); this was chosen because it can use a comprehensive and thorough method and an impartial approach to the literature reflection process. The data shows that in-depth vocabulary knowledge is crucial for effectively acquiring Arabic. This depth includes the meaning of words and their use in various contexts and morphological variations. The review also highlights that prior knowledge is helpful in learning, as learners can relate new vocabulary to familiar concepts, facilitating better understanding and retention. In addition, this review identified that learners with strong basic knowledge are more proficient in acquiring and applying new vocabulary. This study recommends further research to explore innovative teaching methods that can optimize vocabulary learning and effectively integrate prior knowledge in the context of Arabic language education.*

**Keywords:** Vocabulary Depth Knowledge, Arabic Learning, Prior Knowledge

## A. Introduction

Knowledge of vocabulary is crucial in facilitating reading comprehension and speaking mastery in Arabic (Ramadani & Baroroh, 2020). A rich and varied vocabulary allows one to understand the text more deeply and capture nuances of meaning that learners with limited vocabulary may have missed (Akbar et al., 2024). In oral communication, using the right and contextual vocabulary is very helpful in conveying messages clearly and effectively and increasing confidence in interacting using Arabic (Khairani et al., 2024; Laudhita et al., 2024). However, this triggered an obstacle, including limited vocabulary knowledge. Poor and less varied vocabulary causes students to have difficulty understanding the text and often fail to grasp the nuances of important meanings (Mansyur, 2022). In addition, the inability to use the right vocabulary and according to the context results in unclear and ineffective message delivery, resulting in decreased confidence in interacting with Arabic (Al Ghozali & Mathoriyah, 2020).

The role of vocabulary is very crucial in mastering the Arabic language. Mastering a broad and deep vocabulary allows individuals to communicate more effectively verbally and in writing (Setiyadi et al., 2023). In language learning, adequate vocabulary depth knowledge helps students understand instruction and academic texts and participate in discussions more confidently (Qomaruddin et al., 2023). In addition, good vocabulary also enriches students' ability to produce complex and varied sentences so that they can express ideas and feelings better in Arabic (Awwaludin et al., 2022). However, the limitation of vocabulary is a crucial problem in mastering the Arabic language. In language learning, inadequate vocabulary knowledge hinders students from understanding texts and makes it difficult to participate in discussions confidently (Agus, 2023). In addition, the lack of good vocabulary limits students' ability to produce complex and varied sentences, making it difficult for them to express ideas and feelings well in

Arabic (Abdullah Alharbi & Mohammed Hassan Al-Ahdal, 2024; Yahia, 2024). Therefore, every learner needs to continue developing and enriching their vocabulary to achieve better and more effective mastery of Arabic.

Seeing this phenomenon, several researchers have conducted this study. Related research on (1) the role of vocabulary depth on students' reading ability, including; (Cai & Liao, 2024; Moghadam et al., 2012; Tong & Tong, 2022). (2) the influence of vocabulary depth on students' speaking ability, including; (Janebi Enayat & Derakhshan, 2021; Khan et al., 2018; Uchihara & Clenton, 2020). Sementara itu, (3) research on the role of The Model of Prior Knowledge in Arabic language learning, including (Al-Faki & Siddiek, 2013; Teng, 2024). The objectives of this study are (1) to determine the extent to which knowledge of vocabulary depth can affect students' reading comprehension and fluency in Arabic. (2) knowing that learning Arabic based on prior knowledge can support students' success in mastering Arabic.

## **Literature Review**

### **Vocabulary in Depth Knowledge**

Knowledge of vocabulary depth refers to a deep understanding of words in a language, including basic and contextual meanings, synonyms and antonyms, and collocations that often accompany the words (Hasan & Shabdin, 2016; Schmitt, 2014; Zhang & Lu, 2015). It also involves understanding the nuances of meaning, changing the shape of words, associations with certain concepts, and using words in various contexts, such as formal or informal. In addition, this knowledge includes proper pronunciation, frequency of use in everyday communication, and specific cultural meanings (Bonvillain, 2019). In Arabic, for example, in-depth knowledge of the root of the word helps to understand its various forms and

uses, such as "ك ت ب" which means "to write" and produce related words such as "كتاب" (book) and "كاتب" (author). Knowledge of vocabulary depth is essential to improving communication skills, understanding complex texts, expressing ideas clearly in writing, and increasing confidence in language use (Feng et al., 2023; Susanto, 2017).

### **The Model of Prior Knowledge**

The model of Prior Knowledge is an approach to learning that emphasizes the use of information, experiences, and concepts already possessed by students as a basis for learning new material (Gurlitt & Renkl, 2010; Xu et al., 2024). This model focuses on how existing knowledge can be connected to new information, strengthening the understanding and retention of newly learned material (Ausubel, 2012; Ritchie & Karge, 1996). Using prior knowledge as a frame of reference, students can more easily integrate new information, identify relevance to what is known beforehand, and develop critical thinking and analytical skills. This model also helps address knowledge gaps and increase learning motivation, as students feel more confident and motivated when they can relate new learning to their existing experiences or knowledge (Novak, 2009). Therefore, emphasizing prior knowledge is crucial in education, as it helps create a more relevant and effective learning environment.

### **B. Methods**

This study uses a qualitative approach with the library research method. The data collection technique uses a "Systematic Literature Review" (SLR). This methodology was chosen because of its ability to apply a thorough, rigorous, and impartial approach to other literature review processes. In addition, Vårheim et al. emphasized that to ensure the credibility of the

results, it is very important to conduct a systematic qualitative review by documenting a comprehensive search and transparent procedures (Vårheim et al., 2019) The steps are as follows: First, determine the scope of the review, which is an explicit criterion to assess the direction of the research. The object of research in this paper is the factor of knowledge depth of vocabulary in terms of meaning and use in Arabic. The Prior Knowledge approach can support students' success in communicating Arabic in Arabic language learning. As a result of the problems that occurred, this study examines the role of the Prior Knowledge approach in learning Arabic. In addition, this researcher also revealed several factors of the Depth of Arabic vocabulary as a form of students' competence towards fluency in reading and speaking Arabic. Following the formulation that the researcher has determined, this study focuses on three "Research Questions" (RQ), i.e., RQ1: What is the role of Arabic vocabulary depth on students' reading ability?; RQ2: How does vocabulary Depth knowledge affect students' Arabic speaking ability?; and RQ3: How can the model of the Prior Knowledge approach play a role in learning Arabic?; The researcher presents this form of formulation in the table. 1, 2, and 3.

Second is the stage of literature search, which involves keywords to search for information. The search string or keywords are arranged for comprehensive results in this context. The research databases are "Google Scholar" and "ScienceDirect." The author uses search strings: "Vocabulary Depth," or "VD," "Arabic Learning," or "AL," and "Prior Knowledge" or "PK." By searching the three keywords that are by the year's vulnerability, the author obtained data from 664 articles. This large amount of preliminary data consists of several works, such as "books, journal articles, proceedings, websites, and student final research (thesis, thesis, & dissertation)." There are four main criteria for data acquisition in this topic of research.

Third, the stage of literature screening is carried out by filtering works that are not included in the scope of research. At this stage, the author

uses several criteria as an embodiment of the principle of inclusion and exclusion in SLR, namely (1) the literature must be relevant to the research theme, or in other words, must contain three items: "depth of vocabulary, Arabic Learning, and Prior Knowledge"; (2) literature must be published between 2019 as the beginning of the emergence of research related to "Depth of Arabic Vocabulary Learning, and Prior Knowledge" until 2024 to indicate novelty; (3) the literature must be related to the three keywords as the main focus in the research topic; (4) The literature must be by the four criteria that have been mentioned. After an in-depth study of the title, assisted by the "Publish or Perish" (PoP) program, the author obtained the main literature as a primary data source of 50 articles.

Fourth, Report the results. The researcher adopted a systematic approach to reporting the findings of the study. The introductory section provides background to our study and research questions. The methodology section provides precise details on how the review is conducted. After the analysis stage, the researcher filters all the data obtained to report the data found. In this section, the researcher reviews the suitability of data related to "knowledge, depth of vocabulary and the role of the Prior Knowledge approach in learning Arabic. Thus, the researcher can provide a framework for future research, the limitations of our study, and conclude a summary of the data findings on this research topic.

### **C. Result And Discussion**

Knowledge of vocabulary depth significantly impacts students' reading and speaking skills. This can be seen through the results of the exposure in this article. In addition, with prior knowledge, students can also improve the quality of Arabic language skills, from reading to communicating. Obtaining search results from various sources, it is known that there are 22 articles, proceedings, and books that can represent the

Research Question in this article. The following researcher presents the data obtained from RQ1, RQ2, and RQ3.

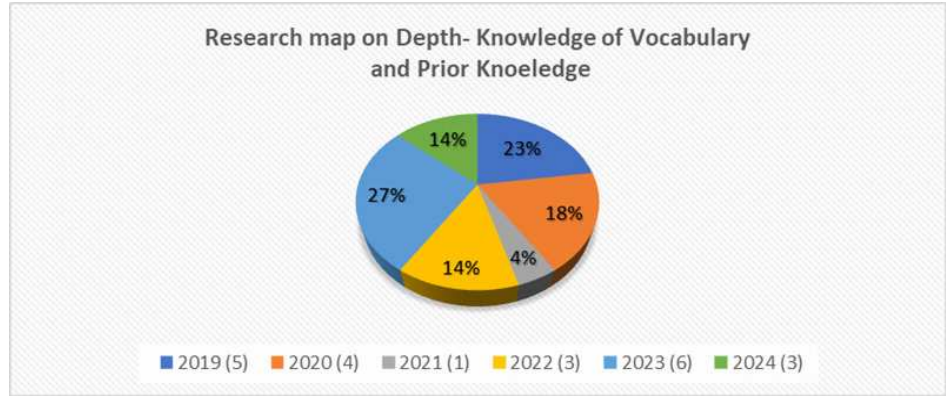


Figure 1. Overall research on vocabulary depth and prior knowledge

RQ1: How does Arabic vocabulary depth affect students' reading ability?

Table 2. Map of the Role of VD on Students' Reading Ability

| No | Author                       | Year   | Type    | Topic                                                                                                                 | Approach    |
|----|------------------------------|--------|---------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| 1  | Nona Lolita, Harun Al Rasyid | (2023) | Journal | The Influence of Learning Arabic Vocabulary on Students' Reading Skills at Islamic Junior High School                 | Kuantitatif |
| 2  | Baharudin et al.             | (2023) | Journal | The Size and Depth of Arabic Vocabulary among Students in Malaysia's Selangor Religious Secondary Schools             | Kuantitatif |
| 3  | Reem Ibrahim Rabadi          | (2023) | Journal | Examining the Role of Breadth and Depth of Vocabulary Knowledge in Reading Comprehension of English Language Learners | Kuantitatif |

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|---|-------------------------------------------|--------|---------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| 4 | Animut Tadele Dagnaw                      | (2023) | Journal | Revisiting the role of breadth and Depth of vocabulary knowledge in reading comprehension              | Kuantitatif |
| 5 | Vered Vaknin-Nusbaum Elinor Saiegh-Haddad | (2020) | Journal | The contribution of morphological awareness to reading comprehension in Arabic-speaking second graders | Kuantitatif |
| 6 | Zurqoni et al.                            | (2020) | Journal | Has Arabic Language Learning Been Successfully Implemented?                                            | Kuantitatif |
| 7 | Fadi Al-Khasawneh                         | (2019) | Journal | The Impact of Vocabulary Size on the Receptive Skills of Saudi EFL Learners                            | Kuantitatif |

The results in Table 1 have been found in as many as seven research articles. The Depth of vocabulary in Arabic has an important role in improving students' reading skills. First, Depth of vocabulary includes a deep understanding of the meaning of words, variations in use, connotations, and their cultural and linguistic contexts (Amirbayeva, 2024; Munzlinger et al., 2024). With this understanding, students can more easily understand the text they read in stories, articles, or academic writing. Students with an in-depth knowledge of Arabic vocabulary will be able to better recognize and interpret words in various contexts to understand the text more quickly and accurately. For example, understanding words with multiple meanings or synonyms allows students to choose the most appropriate interpretation based on the context of the sentence or paragraph.

Secondly, the Depth of vocabulary also helps students enrich their reading experience by allowing them to capture the nuances and finer details of the text (Reis et al., 2023; Stewart & Correia, 2023). Students with in-depth vocabulary knowledge can understand the idioms, metaphors, and cultural

expressions often used in Arabic texts, improving their understanding and providing broader insight into the cultures and societies that use the language (Lahiani, 2024). This enriches the students' reading experience and makes them better able to capture hidden meanings or indirect messages in the text. Thus, the Depth of vocabulary not only improves the ability to understand the text literally but also supports a deeper and more critical understanding of the text, an important aspect of literacy in Arabic.

The Depth of Arabic vocabulary is important in improving students' reading ability, as evidenced by various research studies. Studies have shown a positive correlation between the Depth of vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension (Rabadi, 2023). In particular, research on EFL learners highlighted that vocabulary depth is a more significant predictor of reading comprehension than vocabulary breadth, emphasizing the importance of expanding and deepening vocabulary knowledge in educational settings (Rabadi, 2023). In addition, studies conducted at universities in Sudan and Saudi Arabia emphasize the importance of vocabulary depth in improving reading skills and academic success among students (Alsahafi, 2023). Furthermore, an investigation into the acquisition of L2 among English-Arabic learners revealed that vocabulary depth, especially knowledge of the meaning and use of words, significantly contributes to reading comprehension performance, highlighting the importance of focusing on vocabulary depth in a language learning environment (Alkhudiry, 2018).

The Depth of vocabulary in Arabic plays an important role in language mastery and reading comprehension. Studies have shown that vocabulary depth, defined as knowledge of the meaning and use of a word, significantly impacts reading performance (Alkhudiry, 2018; Rabadi, 2023). In Arabic, the presence or absence of short vowel diacritics affects the processing of written words, making Arabic orthography a unique blend of deep and superficial features (Grosvald et al., 2019). In addition, research on

acquiring Arabic vocabulary in a multimedia learning environment shows that deeper semantic processing, such as that facilitated by spatial-based interfaces, leads to improved long-term vocabulary retention, highlighting the importance of Depth in vocabulary learning (Alzahrani & Roberts, 2020). Therefore, understanding and increasing the Arabic vocabulary depth is essential for language learning and effective reading comprehension.

RQ2: How does vocabulary Depth knowledge affect students' Arabic speaking ability?

Table 2. The Effect of Vocabulary Depth on Speaking Ability

| No | Author           | Year   | Type    | Topic                                                                                                                                                       | Approach    |
|----|------------------|--------|---------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| 1  | Anuar Bin Sopian | (2024) | Journal | Arabic Vocabulary Mastery Through Jaulah Arabiyyah Program in Improving Arabic Language Communication                                                       | Kuantitatif |
| 2  | Nurjannah et al. | (2024) | Journal | The Effectiveness Of The Mim-Mem Method In Mastering Arabic Vocabulary At Muhammadiyah High School 3 Makassar                                               | Kuantitatif |
| 3  | Morad Alsahafi   | (2023) | Journal | The Relationship Between Depth of Academic English Vocabulary Knowledge and Academic Success of Second Language University Students                         | Kuantitatif |
| 4  | Ghifari et al.   | (2024) | Journal | The Effectiveness Of Role-Playing Learning Method In Improving The Mastery Of Arabic Vocabulary In Speaking Skills Of Students Of Class VII MTsN I Makassar | Kuantitatif |

|    |                  |        |             |                                                                                                            |             |
|----|------------------|--------|-------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| 5  | Sukendra et al.  | (2023) | Journal     | The Correlation between Vocabulary Complexity Mastery and Students' Speaking Skills                        | Kuantitatif |
| 6  | Azhar et al.     | (2022) | Journal     | Arabic Language Learning with Communicative Method and Factors Affecting Student's Speaking Ability        | Kuantitatif |
| 7  | Wati & Maula     | (2021) | Proceedings | Correlation Between Vocabulary Mastery and Arabic Debate Ability                                           | Kuantitatif |
| 8  | Putri & Refnaldi | (2020) | Journal     | The Correlation Between Students' Vocabulary Mastery And Speaking Ability In Grade 8 Of Junior High School | Kuantitatif |
| 9  | Alharthi         | (2019) | Journal     | Investigating the Relationship Between Vocabulary Knowledge and FL Speaking Performance                    | Kuantitatif |
| 10 | Masrai & Milton  | (2019) | Journal     | How many words do you need to speak Arabic? An Arabic vocabulary size test                                 | Kuantitatif |

The results in Table 2 have been found in as many as ten research articles. Knowledge of vocabulary depth significantly influences students' Arabic speaking ability. First, Vocabulary depth includes not only an understanding of the basic meaning of words but also knowledge of variations in meaning, use in various contexts, synonyms, antonyms, as well as collocations or words that are often used together (McKeown, 2014; Mukarto, 2005). With a good depth of vocabulary, students can choose the right words according to the context of the conversation, which helps them to express ideas and feelings more clearly and effectively. For example, students who understand

the synonyms for "good" in Arabic can choose the word that best suits a particular situation to make their conversations more lively and rich.

Second, knowledge of vocabulary depth allows students to avoid mistakes in using words that can disrupt the flow of communication (Schmitt & Schmitt, 2020). By understanding words' connotative and denotative meanings, students can avoid using words that are inappropriate or have negative connotations in certain contexts. This improves speaking fluency and makes communication more effective and on point. Students with a good vocabulary depth also tend to be more confident in speaking because they feel better prepared and able to handle various situations that may arise (Valente, 2022). Thus, knowledge of vocabulary depth directly improves students' Arabic speaking skills.

Some data findings from the research paper provide valuable insights into the relationship between the Depth of vocabulary knowledge and students' speaking ability. Studies by Alsahafi and Guſtian emphasize a significant correlation between vocabulary mastery and speaking fluency (Alsahafi, 2023; Dede Guſtian, 2021). Alsahafi's study on Saudi EFL university students highlights a positive correlation between the Depth of academic vocabulary knowledge and academic success, demonstrating the importance of Depth of vocabulary in language proficiency (Alsahafi, 2023). In addition, Guſtian's research on third-grade students showed that vocabulary mastery is important in improving speaking skills, emphasizing the need for students to enhance their vocabulary knowledge to improve their speaking fluency (Dede Guſtian, 2021). Therefore, the Depth of strong vocabulary knowledge positively affects students' Arabic speaking ability, underscoring the importance of Depth of vocabulary in language proficiency and communication skills.

RQ3: What is the role of the model of the Prior Knowledge Approach in Arabic Learning?

Table 3. The Role of Prior Knowledge in Arabic Language Learning

| No | Author               | Year   | Type         | Topic                                                                                                                                                                                    | Approach     |
|----|----------------------|--------|--------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| 1  | Lahlou & Abdul Rahim | (2020) | Journal      | The influence of Prior Knowledge on Learning Scientific Terminology: A Corpus-based Cognitive Linguistic Study of acceleration in Arabic and English                                     | Kuantitatif  |
| 2  | Muhammed et al.,     | (2022) | Journal      | The Effect of the Strategy of Activating Prior Knowledge on the Acquisition of Syntactic Concepts among Fourth Preparatory Grade Students and the Development of Their Systemic Thinking | quantitative |
| 3  | Berrichi & Mazroui,  | (2019) | Proceeding   | Guiding word alignment with prior knowledge to improve English-Arabic Machine Translation                                                                                                | quantitative |
| 4  | ALSalamah et al.,    | (2019) | Book Chapter | Using Prior Knowledge to Facilitate Computational Reading of Arabic Calligraphy                                                                                                          | -            |
| 5  | Fiandra et al.       | (2022) | Journal      | The Effect of Prior Knowledge and ASSURE Model on Simulation and Digital Communication Learning Outcomes in Vocational High School                                                       | Kuantitatif  |

The results in Table 3 have been found in as many as five research articles. First, The Prior Knowledge Approach model in learning Arabic plays an important role by enabling a more directed and effective learning process. By understanding and acknowledging students' prior knowledge, teachers can design teaching materials and strategies appropriate to students' understanding. This initial knowledge includes a sense of language, culture,

and social contexts that can be linked to the Arabic material to be taught. For example, if students are familiar with the Latin alphabet, teachers can use comparisons to make it easier to recognize the Arabic alphabet. This approach makes learning more relevant and meaningful for students. It helps them build stronger connections between old and new knowledge, improving their understanding and retention of Arabic language materials.

Second, In addition, the Prior Knowledge Approach also plays a role in increasing student motivation and participation. When students feel that the knowledge they previously possessed is recognized and considered important in the learning process, they tend to be more eager to be actively involved. It also allows teachers to quickly identify and address any misunderstandings or misconceptions students may have about the Arabic language. Thus, learning becomes more efficient because teachers can immediately focus on areas that need more attention. This approach allows for more dynamic, adaptive, and responsive Arabic language learning to students' needs and backgrounds.

The Prior Knowledge Model significantly impacts learning Arabic grammar by increasing students' acquisition of syntactic concepts and systemic thinking. This model emphasizes activating prior knowledge to facilitate the learning process. In addition, research on language variants in Arabic pre-trained models highlights the importance of variant proximity in pre-trained data to refine the data, demonstrating an important role in optimizing language model performance. Furthermore, studies on the influence of learners' language and pre-existing knowledge in understanding physics terminology reveal that learners often mix concepts such as acceleration and velocity, demonstrating the relevance of prior knowledge in understanding complex linguistic and scientific terms effectively. These findings collectively emphasize the positive impact of utilizing previous knowledge models in improving Arabic grammar learning outcomes.

## D. Conclusion

The Depth of vocabulary knowledge plays a very important role in learning Arabic based on prior knowledge. Depth of vocabulary knowledge refers to a deep understanding of Arabic words' meaning, use, and connotation. The study found that a deep understanding of vocabulary is important for mastering Arabic effectively, especially since it has significant morphological and semantic complexity. Furthermore, this study highlights that prior knowledge is crucial in facilitating the learning of new vocabulary. Individuals with a basic understanding of language or cultural context tend to master new vocabulary easily. Therefore, in learning Arabic, integrating prior knowledge and Depth of vocabulary understanding can help learners associate new concepts with the information they have mastered, thereby accelerating the learning process.

The implications of these findings suggest that an effective Arabic teaching strategy should pay attention to the importance of Depth of vocabulary knowledge and how prior knowledge can be integrated to strengthen understanding. Teaching methods that emphasize vocabulary enrichment and association with familiar contexts by learners can improve overall language competence. The study also recommends further studies to explore teaching techniques that can optimize vocabulary comprehension in Arabic language learning. In addition, additional research is needed to understand how different levels of prior knowledge affect the effectiveness of learning new vocabulary. Overall, the Depth of vocabulary knowledge and its integration with previous knowledge is a vital component in learning Arabic that can significantly improve students' language skills and comprehension.

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