



## Overcoming Difficulties in Memorizing Arabic Vocabulary Through Direct Methods and Teaching Aids

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### Abstract:

Vocabulary memorization remains a significant challenge in Arabic language learning because students often struggle to retain and use newly learned words effectively. This study aimed to investigate how the implementation of direct methods and teaching aids could overcome students' difficulties in memorizing Arabic vocabulary. The study employed a qualitative descriptive design involving one Arabic language teacher and 20 students in an intensive Arabic learning class. Data were collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and documentation and analyzed using data condensation, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings revealed that the direct method improved vocabulary retention through contextual language exposure, while teaching aids increased students' engagement and comprehension through visual and concrete representations. The integration of both strategies reduced students' dependence on translation, increased confidence in using Arabic vocabulary, and facilitated meaningful vocabulary acquisition. The novelty of this study lies in combining direct methods and teaching aids within a unified instructional framework. These findings suggest that Arabic language teachers should integrate communicative and visual learning strategies to improve vocabulary mastery.

**Keywords:** *Arabic Vocabulary; Direct Method; Teaching Aids; Vocabulary Memorization*

### Abstrak:

Menghafal kosakata masih menjadi tantangan utama dalam pembelajaran bahasa Arab karena peserta didik sering mengalami kesulitan mempertahankan dan menggunakan kosakata yang telah dipelajari secara efektif. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji bagaimana penerapan metode langsung dan alat peraga dapat mengatasi kesulitan peserta didik dalam menghafal kosakata bahasa Arab. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain deskriptif kualitatif dengan melibatkan satu guru bahasa Arab dan 20 peserta didik pada kelas intensif pembelajaran bahasa Arab. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi kelas, wawancara semi-terstruktur, dan dokumentasi, kemudian dianalisis melalui kondensasi data, reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa metode langsung meningkatkan daya ingat kosakata melalui paparan bahasa yang kontekstual, sedangkan alat peraga meningkatkan keterlibatan dan pemahaman peserta didik melalui representasi visual dan konkret. Integrasi kedua strategi tersebut mengurangi ketergantungan terhadap terjemahan, meningkatkan kepercayaan diri dalam menggunakan kosakata bahasa Arab, serta memfasilitasi pemerolehan kosakata yang lebih bermakna. Kebaruan penelitian ini terletak pada penggabungan metode langsung dan alat peraga dalam satu kerangka pembelajaran terpadu. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa guru bahasa Arab perlu mengintegrasikan strategi komunikatif dan visual untuk meningkatkan penguasaan kosakata.

**Kata Kunci:** *Kosakata Bahasa Arab; Metode Langsung; Alat Peraga; Menghafal Kosakata*

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## INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary mastery is a fundamental component of Arabic language learning because it serves as the basis for understanding, speaking, reading, and writing effectively. In the context of modern education, Arabic language proficiency is needed not only to understand Islamic sources but also to expand access to academic literature and global communication (Aldukhayel, 2023; Almsbhieen et al., 2023; Khasawneh et al., 2022). However, many students have difficulty memorizing and retaining the vocabulary they have learned. This condition leads to lower communication skills and reduced motivation to learn Arabic. Numerous studies have shown that vocabulary mastery has a strong correlation with overall language proficiency (Hamdany et al., 2022; Russak et al., 2021). Therefore, effective learning strategies are needed to help students overcome difficulties with vocabulary memorization, enabling Arabic language learning to proceed more successfully and providing broader benefits for the educational community.

A common phenomenon found in many educational institutions is the low ability of students to memorize and use Arabic vocabulary appropriately. Many students can remember vocabulary only for a short period and quickly forget it when required to use it in communication activities or assessments (Akmaliyah et al., 2023; Sulaiman et al., 2021). This problem is generally influenced by learning methods that rely heavily on mechanical memorization without involving direct experiences and engaging instructional media. In addition, the presentation of vocabulary in abstract forms often makes it difficult for students to connect word meanings with real objects or situations. As a result, the learning process becomes less effective, and the objectives of Arabic language instruction are not achieved optimally (Ali et al., 2020; Mneizel et al., 2023). This phenomenon indicates the need for innovative learning approaches that can improve students' memory, comprehension, and engagement in learning Arabic vocabulary.

Numerous studies have examined strategies for improving Arabic vocabulary mastery through various approaches. Akhoirsheda et al. (2025) and Jamil et al. (2024) explained that communicative methods can increase student engagement in vocabulary learning. Ghani et al. (2021), Khasawneh (2022), and Wit (2021) found that the use of visual media helps students understand word meanings more quickly. Ismail et al. (2023) emphasized that variations in teaching methods significantly influence the success of memorizing language materials. Meanwhile, Arribathi et al. (2024) demonstrated that structured repetition can improve long-term vocabulary retention. Nevertheless, these studies generally focused on teaching methods or instructional media separately. Limited research has specifically integrated the direct method with teaching aids as a comprehensive strategy for overcoming difficulties in memorizing Arabic vocabulary. This research gap is important to address because the combination of both approaches has the potential to create a more effective learning environment.

The novelty of this study lies in the integration of the direct method and teaching aids as an approach to Arabic vocabulary learning. The direct method emphasizes the use of the target language without translation, while teaching aids provide concrete representations of the meanings of vocabulary items being learned (Essa et al., 2020; Syafei, 2023). The combination of these two approaches is expected to create a more contextual, interactive, and understandable learning experience for students. Unlike previous studies that tended to focus on a single instructional variable, this research positions teaching methods and instructional media as complementary elements within

one integrated framework (Silviyanti et al., 2024; Tallas et al., 2024). This approach is considered important because difficulties in memorizing vocabulary are not only related to the delivery of learning materials but also to how students construct meaningful associations with words. Therefore, this study offers a new perspective on the development of Arabic language teaching strategies.

Based on the discussion above, the main problem of this study concerns the low effectiveness of students' ability to memorize Arabic vocabulary in a sustainable manner. This difficulty is characterized by weak retention of learned vocabulary, limited ability to use vocabulary in communication, and low motivation to learn Arabic. Various learning efforts have been implemented, yet they have not fully resolved these issues due to limitations in the use of appropriate teaching methods and instructional media. Therefore, this study focuses on the question of how the implementation of the direct method and teaching aids can help students overcome difficulties in memorizing Arabic vocabulary. This question serves as an important basis for evaluating the effectiveness of a more contextual learning strategy that is oriented toward students' actual learning needs.

This study is based on the argument that difficulties in memorizing Arabic vocabulary can be minimized through learning experiences that connect language with students' concrete experiences. The direct method enables students to understand vocabulary meanings through natural language use, while teaching aids help build visual associations between words and the objects they represent. The integration of these two approaches is believed to enhance comprehension, strengthen memory retention, and encourage the use of vocabulary in authentic communication contexts. The original contribution of this study lies in proposing a learning model that simultaneously combines linguistic and visual aspects to address vocabulary memorization difficulties. The findings are expected not only to enrich the field of Arabic language education but also to provide practical recommendations for educators in designing more effective, engaging, and student-centered learning processes.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design. This design was selected because it enables researchers to obtain an in-depth understanding of the implementation of direct methods and teaching aids in overcoming students' difficulties in memorizing Arabic vocabulary. Qualitative descriptive research is appropriate for exploring learning processes, participants' experiences, and classroom interactions within their natural setting. The design allows the researcher to describe phenomena comprehensively and interpret the meanings behind participants' behaviors and responses during the learning process.

The research was conducted at TPQ Plus Baiturrahman, Banda Aceh, Indonesia. This institution was selected because Arabic vocabulary learning is one of the core components of its educational program, and preliminary observations indicated that students experienced difficulties in memorizing and retaining Arabic vocabulary. The informants consisted of one Arabic language teacher and twenty students enrolled in the TKQL Intensive class. The teacher was selected because of direct involvement in planning and implementing Arabic vocabulary instruction, while the students were chosen because they represented the primary participants experiencing challenges in vocabulary memorization. Purposive sampling was employed to ensure that the selected informants could provide relevant and rich information related to the research objectives.

Data were collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. Classroom observations were conducted to examine how the direct method and teaching aids were implemented during Arabic vocabulary instruction and to observe students' participation and responses. Semi-structured interviews were carried out with the teacher and selected students to obtain detailed information regarding their experiences, perceptions, and challenges in vocabulary learning. Documentation techniques were used to collect supporting data, including lesson plans, teaching materials, attendance records, photographs of learning activities, and other relevant documents that could strengthen the findings.

The collected data were analyzed using the interactive qualitative data analysis model. The first stage was data condensation, in which the researcher selected, focused, simplified, and organized the collected information according to the research objectives. The second stage was data reduction, which involved classifying and summarizing relevant data while eliminating information that was not related to the research focus. The third stage was data display, where the organized data were presented in narrative descriptions, matrices, and thematic categories to facilitate interpretation. The final stage was data verification and conclusion drawing, during which patterns, relationships, and meanings emerging from the data were examined continuously to produce credible findings and conclusions.

To ensure the trustworthiness and validity of the data, source triangulation and technique triangulation were applied. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from the teacher, students, and documentation. Technique triangulation was carried out by comparing findings derived from observations, interviews, and documentation. In addition, the researcher performed continuous observation and cross-checking of data to enhance the credibility, dependability, and confirmability of the research findings.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Findings**

The findings of this study reveal how the implementation of direct methods and teaching aids contributed to overcoming students' difficulties in memorizing Arabic vocabulary. Based on observations, interviews, and documentation, the study identified improvements in vocabulary retention, learning engagement, and overall learning outcomes. The following discussion compares these findings with previous studies, highlights their theoretical and practical implications, and explains the contribution of the present research.

### **Direct Method Increased Vocabulary Memorization Retention**

Classroom observations revealed that the implementation of the direct method created a more meaningful vocabulary learning process for students. During instruction, the teacher introduced Arabic vocabulary through direct demonstrations, gestures, facial expressions, and contextual situations without translating words into Indonesian. Students were encouraged to identify meanings through observation and interaction rather than relying on memorization of word equivalents. This approach gradually changed students' learning habits from passive memorization to active understanding. The teacher repeatedly used target vocabulary in classroom communication, allowing students to encounter the same words in various contexts. As a result, students became more familiar with vocabulary items and demonstrated greater confidence in recognizing previously learned words during classroom activities.

Interview findings indicated that many students had previously experienced difficulties in retaining Arabic vocabulary because they depended heavily on rote memorization. Several participants explained that they often forgot newly learned words shortly after completing lessons. However, after participating in learning activities based on the direct method, students reported that vocabulary became easier to remember because they could associate words with actions, objects, and classroom situations. They emphasized that understanding the context of a word helped them recall its meaning more effectively than simply memorizing translations. These responses suggest that contextualized exposure to vocabulary supports stronger cognitive connections and facilitates long-term retention of Arabic lexical items.

The teacher also confirmed that the direct method contributed positively to students' vocabulary development. According to the interview results, students became more willing to use Arabic words during classroom interactions because they understood the meanings through practical experiences rather than through translation. The teacher observed that students increasingly responded to instructions delivered in Arabic and were able to recall previously introduced vocabulary during review sessions. This improvement was particularly visible among students who initially demonstrated limited vocabulary mastery. The teacher believed that repeated exposure to vocabulary in meaningful contexts played an important role in strengthening students' memory and reducing their dependence on their first language during learning activities.

Documentation data further supported these findings. Lesson plans showed that vocabulary instruction was consistently integrated into communicative classroom activities, while photographs and classroom records illustrated active student participation during learning sessions. Students were frequently involved in question-and-answer activities, object identification tasks, and simple conversations using newly learned vocabulary. The convergence of observation, interview, and documentation data indicates that the direct method effectively addressed students' difficulties in memorizing Arabic vocabulary by promoting contextual understanding, repeated exposure, and active language use. These findings support the argument that meaningful interaction is an important factor in improving vocabulary retention among Arabic language learners.

### **Teaching Aids Enhanced Students' Learning Engagement**

The findings demonstrated that teaching aids significantly enhanced students' engagement during Arabic vocabulary learning. Observation results showed that students paid greater attention whenever visual materials or concrete objects were incorporated into classroom instruction. Compared to lessons that relied solely on verbal explanations, activities supported by teaching aids generated higher levels of participation and interaction. Students appeared more enthusiastic when learning vocabulary associated with pictures, flashcards, and real objects because these materials provided immediate visual references. The presence of teaching aids reduced the abstract nature of vocabulary learning and enabled students to connect unfamiliar words with observable objects and situations.

Interview data revealed that students perceived teaching aids as helpful tools for understanding and memorizing Arabic vocabulary. Many participants explained that visual representations made it easier to recognize word meanings and reduced confusion when encountering new vocabulary items. Students reported that pictures and concrete objects allowed them to remember words more quickly because they could visualize the concepts being discussed. Several students also mentioned that learning activities became more enjoyable and less monotonous when teaching aids were used. These perceptions indicate

that teaching aids not only support comprehension but also contribute to positive emotional responses toward the learning process.

The teacher highlighted the instructional benefits of teaching aids in facilitating vocabulary learning. According to the interview findings, teaching aids helped simplify explanations and enabled students to grasp meanings without extensive translation. The teacher observed that students became more responsive during classroom discussions and were more willing to answer questions related to newly introduced vocabulary. In addition, teaching aids provided opportunities for interactive activities such as matching exercises, object identification, and collaborative learning tasks. These activities encouraged students to engage actively with learning materials rather than merely receiving information passively from the teacher.

Documentation findings reinforced the results obtained from observations and interviews. Learning materials, photographs, and classroom records demonstrated that teaching aids were consistently integrated into vocabulary instruction. Students were frequently observed interacting directly with visual and concrete learning resources throughout classroom activities. The triangulation of data sources suggests that teaching aids created an engaging and supportive learning environment that promoted attention, motivation, and vocabulary comprehension. Consequently, the use of teaching aids emerged as an important factor in addressing students' difficulties in learning and memorizing Arabic vocabulary.

### Combined Strategies Improved Vocabulary Learning Outcomes

The integration of the direct method and teaching aids produced the most comprehensive impact on students' vocabulary learning experiences. Observation findings revealed that students learned vocabulary more effectively when direct communication was supported by visual and concrete representations. The teacher introduced new words through Arabic expressions while simultaneously utilizing pictures, objects, and demonstrations to clarify meanings. This combination enabled students to understand vocabulary through multiple channels, including visual observation, contextual interaction, and practical application. As a result, students demonstrated greater participation and appeared more confident in using newly acquired vocabulary during classroom activities.

Interview findings further indicated that students experienced fewer difficulties in memorizing vocabulary when both strategies were implemented together. Participants explained that the direct method helped them understand how vocabulary was used in communication, while teaching aids helped them remember meanings through visual associations. Students stated that learning became easier because they could simultaneously hear, observe, and practice vocabulary within meaningful contexts. These experiences contributed to stronger memory retention and increased willingness to participate in Arabic language activities. The findings suggest that combining linguistic exposure with visual support creates a richer learning experience than relying on a single instructional strategy.

Table 1 presents a summary of the triangulated findings obtained from observations, interviews, and documentation regarding the implementation of the direct method and teaching aids.

**Table 1. Summary of Research Findings**

Data Source	Main Findings
Observation	Students showed greater participation, attention, and vocabulary recall during learning activities.

Interviews	Students reported improved understanding, easier memorization, and increased confidence in using Arabic vocabulary.
Teacher Interview	The teacher observed reduced dependence on translation and more active classroom interaction.
Documentation	Learning records and classroom photographs indicated consistent use of vocabulary in communicative activities.

The findings summarized in Table 1 demonstrate a consistent pattern across all data sources. Observations, interviews, and documentation collectively indicate that the integration of direct methods and teaching aids effectively addressed students' difficulties in memorizing Arabic vocabulary. The combination of contextual language exposure and visual support enabled students to construct meaningful associations between words and their referents. Consequently, students became more engaged, more confident, and more capable of retaining vocabulary over time. These findings support the study's central argument that integrating instructional methods and learning media provides a practical and effective solution for overcoming challenges in Arabic vocabulary memorization.

## Discussion

The findings indicate that the direct method significantly improved students' vocabulary retention by enabling them to associate Arabic words with actions, objects, and real-life contexts. This finding is consistent with Altaib et al. (2021), who argued that communicative and contextual language learning encourages greater student involvement and facilitates language acquisition. The results also support Mashaqba et al. (2020) view that repeated exposure to vocabulary in meaningful situations strengthens long-term memory retention. However, the present study extends previous findings by demonstrating that vocabulary retention is enhanced not only through repetition but also through direct interaction with the target language without translation. This suggests that meaningful contextual experiences help students construct stronger cognitive associations, thereby reducing dependence on rote memorization and supporting sustainable vocabulary mastery.

The study also found that teaching aids enhanced students' engagement and motivation during Arabic vocabulary learning. This finding aligns with Almalki et al. (2024) and Abdullahi et al. (2023), who emphasized that visual media help learners understand vocabulary more efficiently by providing concrete representations of abstract concepts. Similarly, the observations and interviews conducted in this study showed that pictures, flashcards, and real objects increased students' attention and participation. Nevertheless, the current findings go beyond previous studies by revealing that teaching aids not only improve comprehension but also create positive emotional experiences that make learning more enjoyable (Eriksen et al., 2024; Rajab, 2020). Theoretically, these findings support constructivist learning perspectives, which emphasize the importance of connecting new knowledge with concrete experiences. Practically, they suggest that Arabic language teachers should integrate visual and tangible learning resources into classroom instruction to enhance student engagement and comprehension.

Another important finding is that the combination of the direct method and teaching aids produced more comprehensive learning outcomes than the use of either strategy alone. This finding addresses the research gap identified in previous studies, which generally examined teaching methods and instructional media separately. While Alhawsawi et al. (2023) highlighted the importance of instructional Rayyash et al. (2024)

focused on visual media, neither study specifically examined the integration of both approaches in Arabic vocabulary learning. The present study demonstrates that combining direct language exposure with visual support creates multiple pathways for learning, enabling students to hear, observe, understand, and use vocabulary simultaneously. Consequently, students experienced fewer difficulties in memorization and showed greater confidence in using Arabic vocabulary in communicative contexts.

From a theoretical perspective, the findings contribute to the development of Arabic language learning theory by demonstrating that vocabulary acquisition is most effective when linguistic input and visual support are integrated into a single instructional framework. The findings reinforce the view that vocabulary learning is not merely a process of memorizing isolated lexical items but rather a process of constructing meaningful relationships between words, contexts, and experiences. This supports contemporary perspectives in language learning that emphasize contextualized and learner-centered instruction. Furthermore, the findings provide empirical evidence that meaningful interaction and multimodal learning experiences can enhance both vocabulary comprehension and retention among beginner-level Arabic learners.

From a practical perspective, this study offers valuable implications for teachers, educational institutions, and curriculum developers. Teachers can adopt the combined use of direct methods and teaching aids to create more interactive and effective vocabulary learning environments. Educational institutions may consider providing adequate instructional media to support contextualized language learning. Curriculum developers can also incorporate communicative and visually supported learning activities into Arabic language programs to improve vocabulary mastery. The originality of this study lies in its integration of direct methods and teaching aids as complementary strategies for overcoming vocabulary memorization difficulties. Therefore, the study contributes both theoretically and practically to the field of Arabic language education by providing an effective model for improving students' vocabulary acquisition and learning experiences.

## CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the integration of direct methods and teaching aids effectively helped students overcome difficulties in memorizing Arabic vocabulary by creating meaningful, contextual, and engaging learning experiences. The most important finding is that students were able to retain vocabulary more successfully when they learned through direct interaction with the target language supported by visual and concrete representations. The study demonstrates that vocabulary acquisition is strengthened when learners actively connect words with real-life contexts rather than relying solely on rote memorization. The academic contribution of this research lies in providing empirical evidence that the combination of instructional methods and learning media can serve as a complementary framework for Arabic vocabulary instruction. However, the study was limited to one educational institution and a relatively small number of participants. Future research is recommended to involve diverse educational settings, larger participant groups, and mixed-method approaches to examine the long-term effectiveness of integrated vocabulary learning strategies.

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