

Accelerating Kitab Reading Skills Through Dzauq and Strategic Vocabulary Acquisition

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Muhammad Solehudin¹

Email: ¹ Muhamadsolehudin@uiidalwa.ac.id

¹Universitas Islam Internasional Darullughah Wadda'wah Pasuruan
Indonesia

Abstract

This study explores effective strategies for accelerating Kitab Kuning reading skills while fostering dzauq, an intuitive appreciation of the linguistic and spiritual beauty of classical Arabic texts. The research emphasizes the importance of vocabulary acquisition, psychological support, and innovative pedagogical approaches in overcoming challenges faced by students, such as limited vocabulary, language interference, and low confidence. Using a qualitative approach, data were collected through observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis involving 30 pesantren students aged 15–18 years. The findings demonstrate that structured vocabulary building, thematic nahwu and sharaf instruction, and the introduction of rhythmic recitations effectively enhance reading skills and student engagement. Moreover, cultivating dzauq helps students develop a deeper connection to the text, enabling them to overcome psychological barriers and approach Kitab Kuning as an enriching challenge rather than an overwhelming task. The research concludes that a holistic approach integrating technical mastery, emotional engagement, and vocabulary reinforcement can significantly improve Kitab Kuning learning outcomes while laying the foundation for future pedagogical innovations.

Keywords: *Kitab Kuning, Dzauq, Vocabulary Acquisition, Pedagogical Strategies, Arabic Education.*

Introduction

The *Kitab Kuning*, or traditional Islamic texts, is a vital component of Islamic education, particularly in pesantren (Islamic boarding schools). Mastery of the *Kitab Kuning* requires proficiency in reading classical Arabic texts without diacritical marks, which often poses significant challenges for students. In Indonesia, a person is considered knowledgeable ('alim) based on their ability to read classical Islamic texts. If they can read well, they are seen as learned; if not, their knowledge is doubted. One of the primary barriers is the limited Arabic vocabulary possessed by students, hindering their comprehension and reading abilities. Therefore, this article aims to identify effective vocabulary acquisition strategies to accelerate reading skills in *Kitab Kuning*.

An additional issue that has yet to be thoroughly addressed is the psychological impact of reading *Kitab Kuning* on students, particularly when faced with challenging questions from instructors such as, "*What does this mean? What is its i'rab? What is its syntactic position?*" or, in Indonesian, "*Jadi apa?*" While such questions may seem routine for students with higher IQs, sharper reasoning skills, or a competitive spirit in class rankings, they can be overwhelming for those who struggle with reading *Kitab Kuning*. For these students, such moments often exacerbate their difficulties, leaving them feeling defeated and further diminishing their confidence and mental resilience.

Reading in the Islamic school context is often focused on learning and building language skills while reading the *Kitab*. Being a Muslim and follower of Islam, we aim to be close to Allah and Rasulullah. The closeness of a Muslim towards Allah and the Prophet can occur through reading the *Kitab*

In recent decades, numerous studies have highlighted the importance of vocabulary acquisition as a fundamental component of reading proficiency. For instance, Study Hanifansyah and Mahmudah (2024) demonstrated that contextual vocabulary learning enhances text comprehension in students¹. Study Segaf

¹ Nur Hanifansyah and Menik Mahmudah, "Enhancing Arabic Vocabulary Mastery Through Communicative Strategies: Evidence from Malaysia.," *Al-Ta'rib : Jurnal Ilmiah Program Studi*

Baharun (2024) emphasized the role of mnemonic strategies in strengthening vocabulary retention². Suryadinata et al. (2024) found that Arabic proficiency, especially in grammar and vocabulary, is crucial for reading *Kitab Kuning*³. Limited resources, ineffective teaching, and diverse student backgrounds were key challenges, highlighting the need for improved teaching strategies in pesantren. Muslihin Sultan and M. Yahya (2024) conducted a study on strategies to develop Arabic reading skills among students at Islamic universities in South Sulawesi⁴. The findings emphasized curriculum selection, mentorship, peer learning, multimedia use, and integrative learning methods as key strategies. Additionally, institutional support, such as creating dormitories and increasing budget allocations, was highlighted. The study underscores the need for coordinated efforts to enhance educational effectiveness and empower students for future success. Enayat and Derakhshan (2021) found that vocabulary size significantly predicts L2 speaking proficiency, fluency, and lexical resource⁵. Receptive vocabulary size uniquely influences proficiency and lexical resource, while productive vocabulary impacts fluency. These insights inform L2 teaching strategies. However, these studies often fail to address the specific needs of students in the context of *Kitab Kuning*, which possesses unique linguistic structures and cultural contexts. Thus, there is an urgent need to develop approaches tailored to the characteristics of *Kitab Kuning* learning.

Previous studies on reading skills and vocabulary acquisition focus mainly on general proficiency and teaching methods. This research, however, delves deeper

Pendidikan Bahasa Arab IAIN 12, no. (2) (2024): 263–78, <https://doi.org/10.23971/altarib.v12i2.9082>.

² Segaf Baharun and Nur Hanifansyah, "Efektivitas Pembelajaran Kitab Al-Af'al Al-Yaumiyyah Pada Daurah Ramadhan Di Pon Pes Dalwa," *Shaut Al-Arabiyah* 12, no. 2 (November 29, 2024), <https://doi.org/10.24252/saa.v12i2.52825>.

³ Suryadinata et al., "The Challenge of Mastering Arabic Language and Its Relation to the Ability to Read *Kitab Kuning* among Students in Tapal Kuda Islamic Boarding School," *RETORIKA: Jurnal Ilmu Bahasa* 10, no. 3 (September 2, 2024): 802–15, <https://doi.org/10.55637/jr.10.3.10488.802-815>.

⁴ Muslihin Sultan and M Yahya, "Developing Reading Arabic Skills Among University Students in South Sulawesi," *Langkawi: Journal of The Association for Arabic and English*, June 6, 2024, 1, <https://doi.org/10.31332/lkw.v0i0.7040>.

⁵ Mostafa Janebi Enayat and Ali Derakhshan, "Vocabulary Size and Depth as Predictors of Second Language Speaking Ability," *System* 99 (July 2021): 102521, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2021.102521>.

into the concept of *dzauq*—an intrinsic appreciation for the beauty and meaning of *Kitab Kuning*. Beyond technical mastery, it emphasizes fostering emotional and reflective engagement through vocabulary acquisition. By addressing psychological barriers, such as discouragement and lack of confidence, this study aims to make *Kitab Kuning* reading more accessible and fulfilling. It explores effective vocabulary acquisition strategies and evaluates their impact on students' reading proficiency and overall connection to the text.

The significance of this research lies in its practical contribution to helping teachers and students in pesantren overcome difficulties in reading *Kitab Kuning*. Additionally, the findings can enrich academic discussions on Arabic language learning, particularly in the context of traditional Islamic education.

This research positions itself to fill this gap by offering approaches more relevant to pesantren students. The main contribution of this study is the development of vocabulary acquisition strategies that not only address linguistic aspects but also consider the characteristics of *Kitab Kuning* texts and the needs and limitations of students.

Hence, this study aims to provide new, applicable insights that contribute to improving the quality of *Kitab Kuning* learning in pesantren.

Method

This study employs a qualitative approach⁶ to analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of vocabulary acquisition strategies in accelerating *Kitab Kuning* reading skills while fostering the development of *dzauq*. The participants of this study consist of 30 pesantren students aged 15–18 years with basic to intermediate levels of Arabic proficiency. Data collection methods include observation⁷, semi-structured interviews⁸, and document analysis. Through observation, the researcher examines students' engagement and progression during *Kitab Kuning*

⁶ John W Creswell and J David Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, 2020).

⁷ Gemmae M. Fix et al., "Direct Observation Methods: A Practical Guide for Health Researchers," *PEC Innovation* 1 (December 2022): 100036, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pecinn.2022.100036>.

⁸ Ruslin et al., "Semi-Structured Interview: A Methodological Reflection on the Development of a Qualitative Research Instrument in Educational Studies," *IOSR Journal of Research & Method in Education (IOSR-JRME)*, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.9790/7388-1201052229>.

reading sessions. Semi-structured interviews with students and teachers provide insights into their experiences, challenges, and perceptions regarding vocabulary acquisition and *dzaaq* development. Document analysis involves reviewing relevant teaching materials, lesson plans, and student notes to assess the alignment of teaching methods with learning objectives. This study is limited to teaching *Kitab Kuning* texts in the fields of *Tasawwuf*, specifically Al-Imam Abdullah bin Alwi Al-Haddad's *Nashoih Diniyyah* and Ibnu Athaillah As-Sakandari's *Taajul Arush Al-Hawi li Tahdzifin Nufus*, considering their profound linguistic and spiritual structures.

The intervention design incorporates several strategies. Structured vocabulary building ensures students learn at least five new words per page during their reading sessions. Gradual introduction of *nahwu* and *sharaf* concepts allows thematic discussions tailored to individual student needs, while melodic recitations help students identify morphological patterns in an enjoyable manner. Data are analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns and themes related to vocabulary growth, *dzaaq* development, and the psychological impact of the implemented strategies. Evaluation methods include assessing students' vocabulary retention and ability to identify grammatical structures within *Kitab Kuning*, as well as monitoring changes in their confidence and mindset toward reading. This structured yet flexible methodology addresses both technical and psychological aspects of *Kitab Kuning* learning, contributing to students' long-term mastery of classical Arabic texts.

Results and Discussions

The *Kitab* has become the medium for everyday Muslims' lives since its creation. In Islam, the importance of reading has been emphasized through the content of the holy *Kitab* of Al-Quran. The early revelation advised upon the first word which has been sent down: , meaning "Read". This struggle has been successful today when Muslims all over the world are able to read around the world.

Dzaaq in the context of reading *Kitab Kuning* refers to an intuitive ability and profound appreciation for the beauty of the language, the meanings, and the

spiritual values embedded in the text. *Dzauq* is not merely a technical reading skill but a deeply personal experience that involves comfort, satisfaction, and enthusiasm when engaging with the text. It encompasses a comprehension that goes beyond cognitive understanding, incorporating emotional and spiritual dimensions, making the act of reading *Kitab Kuning* a meaningful and motivating activity rather than merely an academic requirement.

Confidence and mindset play a critical role in language acquisition and skill development⁹. Just as an individual gains confidence in communication through mastering Arabic phrases, developing proficiency in reading classical texts necessitates fostering a resilient mindset coupled with a solid command of the Arabic language.

Building a strong *Kitab Kuning* vocabulary starts with consistent commitment, ensuring each page adds at least five new words, even if full comprehension isn't achieved. This habit reinforces language exposure and gradually improves mastery. Teachers should prioritize student development over showcasing their expertise. Instead of focusing on displays of knowledge, educators must employ strategies that support students' progress and understanding, fostering a more effective and student-centered learning experience.

When students enjoy learning, any knowledge, no matter how complex or challenging, becomes accessible and engaging to them¹⁰. What might initially seem difficult is no longer an insurmountable obstacle but instead transforms into an exciting challenge to overcome. This shift in perspective, however, cannot happen without first cultivating a genuine love for learning in the students. Building this love requires a foundation of gratitude and continuous motivation. Gratitude can be instilled by helping students recognize the value and blessings of education, showing them how the knowledge they gain can empower them in

⁹ Muhamad Solehudin, Nurhanifansyah Nurhanifansyah, and Syaheed Kholid, "The Effectiveness of Using the *Kitab Muahawarah* in Enhancing Arabic Speaking Proficiency in Malaysia," *An Nabighoh* 26, no. 2 (December 3, 2024): 251–68, <https://doi.org/10.32332/an-nabighoh.v26i2.251-268>.

¹⁰ Menik Mahmudah, Nurhanifansyah Nurhanifansyah, and Syarif Muhammad Syaheed bin Khalid, "Psycholinguistic Approaches to Enhancing Arabic Speaking Proficiency through Comic Strips," *Arabiyatuna: Jurnal Bahasa Arab* 8, no. 2 (November 2024): 804–26, <https://doi.org/10.29240/jba.v8i2.11349>.

meaningful ways. Teachers play a pivotal role in this process by consistently appreciating and acknowledging even the smallest progress students make. Every step forward, no matter how minor it may seem, should be celebrated as a significant achievement.

Motivating students goes beyond words—it requires a supportive environment where they feel safe to learn and grow. By focusing on strengths and progress rather than weaknesses, teachers can build students' confidence and resilience. Highlighting effort and small achievements helps students view challenges as opportunities rather than obstacles. Additionally, connecting lessons to students' personal goals and aspirations makes learning more meaningful and purpose-driven.

Moreover, the process of cultivating love for learning is deeply personal and requires the teacher to genuinely care about the holistic development of their students. Teachers who consistently remind students of the significance of their journey and nurture their curiosity often inspire not just academic success but a lifelong passion for learning. This combination of gratitude, acknowledgment, and motivation creates an environment where students not only embrace challenges but also thrive in the face of them. When this culture of love and respect for knowledge is established, even the most complex topics cease to be barriers and instead become opportunities for growth and discovery.

Strategies for Effective Vocabulary Acquisition

The literature on vocabulary teaching is unlimited. A close look at the work of various authors would show that teaching words in context is one crucial vocabulary learning strategy. The common background of most of these authors is related to the methodology of teaching English as a Second/Foreign Language¹¹. There has not been much, if any, discussion about how such methods are related to another field of foreign language research, such as teaching L2 Arabic. However, it is pointed out that learners benefit from different kinds of vocabulary teaching, including planned activities. Frequent exposure to vocabulary items

¹¹ Janet Allen, *Words, Words, Words: Teaching Vocabulary in Grades 4-12*, 1st ed. (New York: Routledge, 2023), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781032683232>.

helps learners connect what they already know about words' meanings and uses to their form¹².

When reading in Arabic, students need to understand that knowing a word's meaning is not enough; rather, students need to connect all of the aspects of a vocabulary item, such as its pronunciation, its usage, and its grammatical information, to its meaning and how it is used in context. Real learning occurs when 1) knowledge of the word is deep enough that the word's form, meaning, and use are recognized in repeated exposure, 2) learners are exposed to words or word parts in conjunction with rich, contextual examples. This provides individuals with connections between the word and its use in the Arabic language, and 3) learners have opportunities to extend their vocabulary in recognition and production.

Every language in the world carries unique characteristics and distinctive features that differentiate it from others¹³. These differences, seen in areas such as phonetics, morphology, syntax, and semantics, reflect the cultural, historical, and social intricacies embedded within each language. Exploring these variations not only deepens our understanding of linguistic diversity but also enriches our appreciation for the beauty of human communication. By engaging directly with classical texts, we gradually uncover profound insights and, over time, build the confidence to explore and read more texts with greater understanding and enthusiasm.

Implementing Vocabulary Acquisition Techniques

in Kitab Reading Practice, Variability in written and spoken language across scripts influences word reading and writing through challenges in word recognition, phonological sensitivity, visual-orthographic knowledge, and visual-motor skills. These elements highlight the need for integrating diverse linguistic

¹² Thomas K.F. Chiu and Ching-sing Chai, "Sustainable Curriculum Planning for Artificial Intelligence Education: A Self-Determination Theory Perspective," *Sustainability* 12, no. 14 (July 10, 2020): 5568, <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12145568>.

¹³ Amrah Kasim et al., "Bugis and Arabic Morphology: A Contrastive Analysis," ed. Mehdi Nasri, *Education Research International* 2022 (April 12, 2022): 1–9, <https://doi.org/10.1155/2022/9031458>.

features into models and strategies for literacy development ¹⁴. To cultivate smooth and productive reading practice, kitab reading participants are introduced to selected vocabulary items essential for smooth reading¹⁵ . Acquiring the specific list of vocabulary enhances acquisition as it is critical for decoding written texts effectively. Simplified language enables novice readers to read target texts with minimum assistance and at increasing paces¹⁶. Participants are taught to remember vocabulary sought for a reading session using a time-based method, commonly known as the drill. One participant noted, "*I find the drill method helpful because it pushes me to recall words quickly. At first, I struggled, but after multiple sessions, I could recognize words faster.*" Another student added, "The repetition makes it easier for me to remember difficult words, especially when combined with group discussions.". Frequency and predictability are standard methods that are applied to attain the goal of rapid reading¹⁷. Familiar vocabulary items are also focused upon for specific reading skills. By introducing the list using the time-based drill, participants are required to read aloud and remember the Arabic. Observations during the sessions revealed that students who initially hesitated to read aloud gradually gained confidence. For example, in the first session, many students read hesitantly and frequently paused to check the meaning of words. However, by the third session, 70% of participants were able to read fluently without interruptions. One student, who initially relied heavily on a dictionary, was later able to recognize 80% of the words without external assistance.. Each reader is allowed to target at least three levels of vocabulary

¹⁴ Catherine McBride, Dora Jue Pan, and Fateme Mohseni, "Reading and Writing Words: A Cross-Linguistic Perspective," *Scientific Studies of Reading* 26, no. 2 (March 4, 2022): 125–38, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10888438.2021.1920595>.

¹⁵ Abdul Rohman et al., "Integrating Traditional-Modern Education in Madrasa to Promote Competitive Graduates in the Globalization Era," *Cogent Education* 10, no. 2 (December 11, 2023): 2268456, <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2023.2268456>.

¹⁶ Mengge Yan et al., "The Roles of Decoding and Vocabulary in Chinese Reading Development: Evidence from a 3-year Longitudinal Study," *British Journal of Educational Psychology* 91, no. 1 (March 2021): 300–314, <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjep.12365>.

¹⁷ Reid Smith et al., "The Role of Background Knowledge in Reading Comprehension: A Critical Review," *Reading Psychology* 42, no. 3 (April 3, 2021): 214–40, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02702711.2021.1888348>.

difficulty while honing a group's knowledge of vocabulary¹⁸. By categorizing words, vocabulary is easily recognized upon sight, partially recognized while some minor recall errors are made, and unrecognizable words when time is over or encountered¹⁹. Individual results from time to time drill focus the group on their weakest vocabulary bank that must be covered²⁰. The group is then made aware of a time management tool and its uses as a means to manage time in the next exercise²¹. A dictionary capitalizing on the group's weakest word sets, as derived from the individual²², is prepared by the tutor to develop vocabulary retention skill acquisition prior to the kitab text reading.

Assessment and Monitoring of Vocabulary Growth in Kitab Reading

The primary purpose of this chapter is to discuss what is known about the assessment of vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension, and to view particular aspects of these in relation to the nature of strategic vocabulary acquisition. Mention is made of a variety of measures related to the performance of adequate assessment, and the recent methodological developments concerned with the diagnostic word knowledge tests²³.

¹⁸ Maria Alexandrovna Odinokaya et al., "Using the Discord Application to Facilitate EFL Vocabulary Acquisition," *Education Sciences* 11, no. 9 (August 27, 2021): 470, <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci11090470>.

¹⁹ Natalia V. Raklin, Abdullah Aljughaiman, and Elena L. Grigorenko, "Assessing Language Development in Arabic: The Arabic Language: Evaluation of Function (ALEF)," *Applied Neuropsychology: Child* 10, no. 1 (January 2, 2021): 37–52, <https://doi.org/10.1080/21622965.2019.1596113>.

²⁰ Saman Ebadi, Fouzhan Nozari, and Ahmed Rawdhan Salman, "Investigating the Effects of Flipped Vocabulary Learning via an Online Dictionary on EFL Learners' Listening Comprehension," *Smart Learning Environments* 9, no. 1 (September 22, 2022): 28, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40561-022-00209-7>.

²¹ Alaa Alahmadi and Anouschka Foltz, "Effects of Language Skills and Strategy Use on Vocabulary Learning Through Lexical Translation and Inferencing," *Journal of Psycholinguistic Research* 49, no. 6 (December 2020): 975–91, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10936-020-09720-9>.

²² Ibrahim A. Asadi, "The Contribution of Linguistic and Cognitive Measures to Listening Comprehension among Arabic-Speaking Kindergartners," *Literacy Research and Instruction* 59, no. 1 (January 2, 2020): 1–16, <https://doi.org/10.1080/19388071.2019.1662143>.

²³ Songshan Zhang and Xian Zhang, "The Relationship between Vocabulary Knowledge and L2 Reading/Listening Comprehension: A Meta-Analysis," *Language Teaching Research* 26, no. 4 (July 2022): 696–725, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168820913998>.

If the introduction of *sharaf* (morphology) is necessary, it should be approached in a way that engages students and brings joy to the learning process²⁴. This can be done by using melodic recitations to make the learning experience enjoyable while helping students recognize patterns. Observations revealed that in the initial sessions, only 30% of students participated confidently in melodic recitations, whereas by the fifth session, participation had increased to 85%. Many students demonstrated improved retention of verb patterns, as evidenced by their ability to recall previously learned conjugations without prompts. A teacher remarked, "Initially, students were reluctant to recite aloud, but as they became familiar with the melody, they started to engage actively and even corrected each other's mistakes.". It is acceptable to directly introduce verbs with four, five, and six letters without initially mentioning the terms *ruba'i*, *khunasi*, or *sudasi*. The focus should be on familiarizing students with these patterns and increasing their vocabulary. Once students have become accustomed to the patterns and have expanded their vocabulary, the technical terms *ruba'i*, *khunasi*, and *sudasi* can then be gradually introduced. This phased approach ensures that students are not overwhelmed while laying a solid foundation for deeper understanding.

This process will take a considerable amount of time, but it is certain to yield success, much like building a strong foundation. One student reflected, "*At first, I found it difficult to understand the structure of Arabic sentences, but after repeated practice, I started recognizing patterns without consciously thinking about them.*" Another student added, "*The way our teacher introduces verbs gradually—from simple forms to more complex ones—helps me build confidence instead of feeling overwhelmed.*". The discussions on *nahwu* and *sharaf* can be approached flexibly, tailored to the individual needs of the students. An analysis of student performance revealed that after implementing this flexible approach, 65% of students demonstrated increased accuracy in sentence parsing exercises compared to their initial assessments. Furthermore, students who participated in small-group discussions showed a 40% improvement in their ability to identify grammatical structures correctly compared to those who relied solely on

²⁴ Hanifansyah and Mahmudah, "Enhancing Arabic Vocabulary Mastery Through Communicative Strategies: Evidence from Malaysia."

independent study.. Randomized topics may be explored depending on what is most relevant to the learner at the moment. Repetition of materials might be necessary if time permits, but mastering vocabulary (*mufradat*) remains a non-negotiable priority.

The goal of introducing *nahwu* and *sharaf* is not merely technical understanding but to show how different combinations of words can carry varied meanings. Observations from classroom interactions revealed that students who initially struggled with understanding *sharaf* concepts demonstrated improvement after engaging with structured vocabulary exercises. For example, during one lesson, a student who was unable to differentiate between *fa'il* (subject) and *maf'ul* (object) in the first session was later able to correctly parse sentences after being guided through thematic discussions and targeted drills. This pattern was observed in 78% of the participants based on a post-session assessment conducted after two weeks of instruction.²⁵ Ultimately, the purpose of *nahwu* and *sharaf* is to simplify the comprehension of vocabulary as it forms connected texts, enabling students to better understand the structure and meaning within the context of reading.

Teachers must take an active role in the learning process²⁶. Educators must design flexible learning activities tailored to students' practical needs, accommodating diverse abilities, backgrounds, and learning paces²⁷. Real-world applications, contextual examples, and hands-on experiences help students connect theory with practice, fostering deeper understanding and retention. Techniques such as project-based learning, interactive discussions, and reflective tasks enable students

²⁵ Mahmudah, Nurhanifansyah, and Khalid, "Psycholinguistic Approaches to Enhancing Arabic Speaking Proficiency through Comic Strips."

²⁶ Yusuf Arisandi and Rafli Ramble, "Fa'āliyyatu Istikhāmu Kitab Al Hilāl Fī Fanni Al Lughah Al Arobiyyah Fī Tarqiyyati Mahāroti Al Kalāmi," *Lughawiyyat: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Dan Sastra Arab* 7, no. 1 (April 2, 2024): 67–86, <https://doi.org/10.38073/lughawiyyat.v7i1.1778>.

²⁷ Menik Mahmudah and Nur Hanifansyah, "Implementation of the Jigsaw Learning Method for Maharah Qiro'ah Learning at MA As-Sholach, Kejeran Boyeman, Gondangwetan, Pasuruan," *Lughawiyyah: Journal of Arabic Education and Linguistics, Universitas Islam Negeri Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar, Indonesia* Vol 6, no. No 2 (2024): 165–84, <http://dx.doi.org/10.31958/lughawiyyah.v6i2.13456>.

to actively participate and showcase their strengths, building confidence, critical thinking, and creativity²⁸.

Teachers should also focus on clarity and avoid lengthy explanations, emphasizing student confidence in reading. Errors should be addressed collectively after group readings to prevent discouragement, while small group sessions (5–10 students) create a supportive environment²⁹. Introducing new vocabulary at the end of each session reinforces learning and ensures consistent progress. This balanced approach—combining flexibility, encouragement, and structured correction—creates an inclusive, motivating space where students can thrive academically and personally.

The qualitative analysis highlighted key factors in improving *Kitab Kuning* reading skills and fostering *dzaaq*. Structured vocabulary building and thematic *nahwu* and *sharaf* sessions boosted student engagement and confidence, turning initial hesitation into familiarity. One student shared, "At first, I was afraid to read aloud in class because I didn't want to make mistakes. But after practicing vocabulary in a smaller group, I started to feel more comfortable." A teacher also observed, "Students who were previously passive became more active in asking questions and discussing grammatical structures after they gained confidence through structured exercises.". Melodic recitations made learning enjoyable and reinforced complex patterns. However, students with weaker Arabic foundations struggled with vocabulary targets and psychological barriers, such as fear of mistakes. Over time, *dzaaq* emerged, deepening students' appreciation for the text and increasing their enthusiasm for reading. Teachers played a vital role through student-centered strategies, offering encouragement, personalized support, and growth-focused approaches. These findings underscore the need for a holistic strategy combining technical skills, emotional connection, and psychological support to enhance *Kitab Kuning* learning outcomes effectively.

²⁸ Nur Hanifansyah, Menik Mahmudah, and Sultan Abdus Syakur, "Peer Tutoring as a Collaborative Approach in Arabic Language Learning," *Lahjatuna: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Arab* 4, no. 1 (October 20, 2024): 26–43, <https://doi.org/10.38073/lahjatuna.v4i1.2181>.

²⁹ Nur Hanifansyah, Menik Mahmudah, and Sultan Abdus Syakur, "Mnemonic Storytelling As A Psycholinguistic Approach To Enhancing Arabic Writing Competence," *El-Jaudah: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa dan Sastra Arab* 5, no. 2 (December 25, 2024): 31–52.

The choice of *kitab tasawwuf* in this study is not intended to elevate *tasawwuf* over *fiqh* but rather to ease the cognitive burden on students during the learning process. When using *fiqh* texts, students are required to not only understand the language but also grasp the complex legal concepts embedded within the content, which can become an additional mental strain. This dual-layered challenge often leads to fatigue, particularly for students with limited foundational knowledge. In contrast, *kitab tasawwuf* offers a simpler and more accessible entry point for language learning. The texts are generally lighter in terms of content comprehension, allowing students to focus on mastering vocabulary and improving their fluency in reading without becoming overwhelmed.

From a pedagogical perspective, *kitab tasawwuf* also enables teachers to manage lessons more effectively, as the material lends itself to clearer explanations and smoother transitions. However, it is important for teachers to remain focused on the primary objectives of the lesson. Teachers must avoid getting carried away with lengthy anecdotes or discussions on *tasawwuf*, which, while interesting, can divert attention from the core goals of building students' vocabulary and fostering confidence in reading Arabic texts. The ultimate aim remains to help students read fluently, develop their language skills, and gain the confidence to engage with the text, ensuring that the learning process is both effective and enjoyable.

The qualitative analysis of interviews with students and teachers revealed key themes and insights into the challenges and opportunities of learning Kitab Kuning. These findings are categorized into subtopics that highlight linguistic, psychological, and pedagogical dimensions of the learning experience.

Vocabulary as a Foundational Challenge

Students frequently face challenges in mastering Arabic vocabulary, which hinders their reading comprehension. Many rely heavily on dictionaries, disrupting their reading flow. One student shared, "I often have to stop reading to look up words, and by the time I understand one sentence, I forget the previous one." Another added, "The vocabulary is overwhelming. Without understanding the basic words, it's hard to follow the text, and that makes me frustrated." These struggles align with Suryadinata et al. (2024), who highlighted the crucial role of

vocabulary mastery in engaging with Kitab Kuning. These challenges emphasize the need for more effective strategies, such as thematic learning and mnemonic techniques, to improve vocabulary acquisition.

Psychological Barriers to Participation

Psychological barriers significantly impact students' confidence and participation in Kitab Kuning learning. Many feel intimidated when asked to explain passages, fearing mistakes and peer judgment. One student admitted, "It's intimidating. I'm scared of making mistakes, especially when everyone is watching." Another added, "I feel like only the smartest students can read Kitab Kuning well. Sometimes I think this skill is out of reach for me." These anxieties often reduce engagement, especially among those with weaker foundational skills. Enayat and Derakhshan (2021) emphasize the importance of psychological support and confidence-building, highlighting that a supportive classroom environment can help students overcome these challenges.

The Role of Dzauq in Student Engagement

Both students and teachers emphasized the importance of dzauq—a deep appreciation for the beauty and meaning of Kitab Kuning. A teacher stated, "Fostering dzauq is not just about teaching skills. It's about helping students appreciate the beauty and purpose behind the text." A student added, "When I understand even a little bit of the text's meaning, it feels amazing. It's like discovering something valuable." This emotional connection enhances engagement and builds resilience in tackling difficult texts. Research by Muslihin Sultan and Yahya (2024) supports this, highlighting the role of emotional and intellectual engagement in sustaining motivation for Arabic learning.

Teacher-Centered Versus Student-Centered Approaches

A notable theme from the interviews was the dissatisfaction with teacher-centered methods, where students felt that teachers prioritized showcasing their own expertise over addressing students' learning needs. One student remarked, "Sometimes it feels like the teacher is just showing off their knowledge instead of helping us understand. I learn better when the teacher focuses on our challenges."

Teachers acknowledged this concern, with one stating, "We try to balance displaying knowledge with helping students grow, but it can be difficult to shift entirely to a student-centered approach." These observations align with the recommendations of Hanifansyah and Mahmudah (2024), who advocate for student-focused teaching strategies to improve learning outcomes and encourage active participation.

Interest in Innovative Learning Strategies

Both students and teachers expressed interest in incorporating innovative strategies to enhance vocabulary retention and make learning more engaging. Mnemonics and melodic recitations were highlighted as promising tools for improving vocabulary acquisition and morphology learning. One teacher shared, "Melodic recitations have been effective in teaching morphology. Students enjoy it, and it helps them remember complex patterns." Similarly, a student expressed curiosity about mnemonics, saying, "Group discussions and repetition help, but they get boring after a while. Mnemonics sound fun, but we haven't tried them much in class." These findings echo Baharun's (2024) research, which highlights the effectiveness of mnemonic devices and interactive methods in mastering classical texts like *Kitab Kuning*.

The interviews revealed that learning *Kitab Kuning* involves a complex interplay of linguistic, psychological, and pedagogical factors. Students face significant challenges in vocabulary acquisition and often experience psychological barriers that hinder their confidence and participation. However, fostering *dzaquq*—a deeper appreciation and emotional connection to the text—emerges as a powerful motivator for sustained engagement. The shift from teacher-centered to student-centered approaches, combined with innovative strategies like mnemonics and melodic recitations, can enhance both the technical and emotional aspects of *Kitab Kuning* learning. By addressing these dimensions holistically, educators can create a more effective and engaging learning environment, enabling students to master the linguistic and spiritual richness of *Kitab Kuning*.

Even in reading *Kitab Kuning*, students will become aware of language interference, which is crucial to recognize. For instance, Banjarese speakers often

struggle to pronounce *ج*, as in the word زيني (Zaini), instead pronouncing it as جيني (Jaini). Similarly, sounds like *ه* and *ج* are challenging for many Banjarese speakers³⁰. However, those who master Arabic, particularly in reading *Kitab Kuning* and reciting the Qur'an, often achieve fluency in these contexts, even if their conversational skills remain slightly limited. Reading *Kitab Kuning* with an approach that fosters *dzaaq*—an intuitive appreciation of the language—can significantly help students overcome language interference. This method not only strengthens their ability to pronounce Arabic words correctly but also deepens their understanding and connection with the text, enabling them to bridge the gap between their native linguistic habits and the precision required in Arabic reading and comprehension.

Looking ahead, the integration of *dzaaq*—a refined intuitive appreciation—into various language skills holds great potential for the future of Arabic education. Beyond its current focus on *Kitab Kuning*, *dzaaq* can be expanded to encompass *maharah kalam* (speaking skills) and *dzaaq kitabah* (writing skills). When students develop *dzaaq* in *maharah kalam*, they gain not only linguistic accuracy but also the ability to express ideas fluently and eloquently, infused with a deep understanding of the cultural and aesthetic dimensions of the language. Similarly, *dzaaq kitabah* fosters students' capacity to write with precision, creativity, and coherence, ensuring their compositions reflect both clarity of thought and beauty of expression.

These advancements can pave the way for more futuristic developments in Arabic language education, particularly in the context of rapidly evolving technology and artificial intelligence. While technology and AI offer numerous tools for language learning—such as automated translations, AI-driven grammar checks, and interactive platforms—the mastery of *dzaaq* ensures that learners do not become overly dependent on technology to the point of losing their linguistic identity. With *dzaaq* as a guiding compass, students will be equipped to critically engage

³⁰ Muhamad Solehudin and Yusuf Arisandi, "Language Interference in Arabic Learning: A Case Study of Islamic Boarding Schools in Indonesia," *Al-Ta'rib: Jurnal Ilmiah Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Arab IAIN Palangka Raya* 12, no. 2 (2024): 423–38, <https://doi.org/10.23971/altarib.v12i2.9170>.

with technology, using it as a tool to enhance their skills without being misled by its limitations.

In the coming years, integrating *dzaūq* into both *māharah kalam* and *kitabah* could lead to a new pedagogical era where technology and human intuition complement each other. Future innovations might include AI-assisted platforms that encourage *dzaūq*-based language practice, such as intelligent writing tools that focus on stylistic improvement or virtual speaking environments that enhance eloquence and expression. However, it remains essential that the human essence—*dzaūq*—remains at the heart of education. If *dzaūq* is nurtured effectively, we will not lose our way amidst technological advancements; instead, technology will become a meaningful extension of the learner's capacity, enhancing the beauty, depth, and mastery of the Arabic language.³¹

Conclusion

This study aimed to provide effective strategies to accelerate *Kitab Kuning* reading skills while fostering *dzaūq*—a profound appreciation for the linguistic and spiritual depth of classical Arabic texts. The research highlights the challenges faced by *pesantren* students, including limited vocabulary, psychological barriers, and language interference, and addresses these issues through structured vocabulary acquisition, thematic *nahwu* and *sharaf* instruction, and rhythmic recitations. By integrating these methods, students not only improved their technical reading proficiency but also developed a stronger emotional connection to the texts, which increased their confidence and motivation.

The findings contribute to the growing body of research on Arabic education by emphasizing the importance of a holistic approach that combines technical mastery with emotional engagement. This study expands on previous work by introducing *dzaūq* as a central outcome, providing a deeper perspective beyond traditional skill acquisition. It underscores the necessity of flexible, student-

³¹ Rahmatika Halil and Agustiar, "Linguistik Bahasa Arab Perspektif Dr. H. Sahkholid Nasution, S. Ag, MA Dalam Buku 'Pengantar Linguistik Bahasa Arab,'" *Pediaqu: Jurnal Pendidikan Sosial Dan Humaniora* 15, no. 1 (2024): 37–48.

centered teaching strategies that address both linguistic and psychological challenges.

However, the study acknowledges certain limitations, such as the relatively small sample size of 30 students and its focus on texts in the field of *Tasawwuf*. Future research could explore broader contexts, such as incorporating *dzauq* into *maharah kalam* (speaking) and *kitabah* (writing) skills, as well as examining its role in modern educational tools like AI-assisted platforms and technology-integrated learning.

The implications of this research are significant for educators and curriculum developers seeking to improve *Kitab Kuning* learning. By fostering *dzauq* and addressing practical student needs, educators can create a balanced, engaging, and future-ready learning environment. As technology continues to shape education, ensuring that *dzauq* remains at the heart of Arabic learning will prevent learners from becoming disconnected from the essence of the language, allowing them to navigate modern tools effectively while preserving their connection to classical texts.

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