Daily Incremental Vocabulary Learning: The Ten Arabic Words Per Day Strategy for Language Proficiency

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مستخلص البحث

تبحث هذه الدراسة في فاعلية استراتيجيةs "عشر مفردات عربية يوميًا" في تعزيز إتقان المفردات لدى الطلاب في مؤسسة تعليمية إسلامية. استخدمت الدراسة منهجية مختلطة، حيث شارك 60 طالبًا في المستوى المتوسط، قُسِّموا إلى مجموعة تجريبية تلقت تعليمًا يوميًا للمفردات على مدى اثني عشر أسبوعًا (600 كلمة جديدة تقريبًا) ومجموعة ضابطة تابعت القوائم الأسبوعية التقليدية. أظهرت البيانات الكمية من اختبارات ما قبل وما بعد التدخل تحسنًا ملحوظًا في درجات المجموعة التجريبية (من 56.4 إلى 78.2) مع حجم تأثير كبير(Cohen's d = 1.05) ، متفوقة على المجموعة الضابطة. وأشارت البيانات النوعية من ملاحظات الصف والمقابلات إلى أن الطلاب وجدوا أن هذه الطريقة عملية، محفزة، وفعّالة في تسهيل الاستخدام النشط للكلمات الجديدة. كما أبرزت النتائج أن التكرار اليومي كوّن عادات معرفية جديدة، بحيث أصبح الطلاب يتذكرون الكلمات مباشرة عند مواجهتها، بل تطورت لديهم متعة وميول إيجابية نحو مفردات اللغة العربية، مما عزز حبهم للغة. وتتماشى هذه النتائج مع نظريات التعلم التدرجي والتكرار المتباعد، وتقدم دليلاً تجريبيًا على فعالية التعلم اليومي للمفردات في السياقات التعليمية الإسلامية.

الكلمات الأساسية :تعلم المفردات العربية، التعلم التدرجي اليومي، التكرار المتباعد، التعليم الإسلامي، إتقان المفردات

Abstract

This study investigates the effectiveness of the Ten Arabic Words Per Day strategy in enhancing vocabulary mastery among students in an Islamic educational institution. Employing a mixed-methods approach, the research involved 60 intermediate-level students divided into an experimental group receiving daily incremental vocabulary instruction over twelve weeks (approximately 600 new words) and a control group following conventional weekly vocabulary lists. Quantitative data from pre- and post-tests showed a significant improvement in the experimental group's scores (M = 56.4 to 78.2) with a large effect size (Cohen's d = 1.05), outperforming the control group. Qualitative data from classroom observations and interviews indicated that students perceived the method as manageable, motivating, and effective in

facilitating active usage of new words. The findings also revealed that daily repetition developed new cognitive habits, whereby students tended to recall words immediately upon encountering them and gradually cultivated enjoyment, curiosity, and affection for Arabic vocabulary, leading to a deeper love for the language. These results align with theories of incremental learning and spaced repetition, providing empirical evidence for the benefits of daily vocabulary learning in Islamic educational contexts.

Keywords: *Arabic vocabulary learning, daily incremental learning, Arabic Words, language proficiency*

Introduction

Arabic vocabulary mastery (*mufradāt*) plays a pivotal role in enabling learners to comprehend[1], communicate, and interpret texts effectively, both in academic and religious contexts. Vocabulary is a fundamental skill that underpins the development of the four language domains listening, speaking, reading, and writing and enables learners to comprehend, express ideas, and communicate effectively in Arabic.[2] However, despite its importance, many students in Islamic educational institutions still demonstrate limited vocabulary knowledge, which hampers their reading comprehension, speaking fluency, and writing proficiency[3]. Existing teaching practices in many *madrasah* and *pesantren* often emphasize rote memorization without structured reinforcement, leading to low retention and a lack of meaningful contextual application[4].

Vocabulary acquisition is an essential part of communicative competence[5] and represents a core element in language mastery[6]. Indeed, learners' achievement in listening[7],

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[1] Nur Hanifansyah and Menik Mahmudah, "Enhancing Arabic Vocabulary Mastery Through Communicative Strategies: Evidence from Malaysia.," Al-Ta'rib : Jurnal Ilmiah Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Arab IAIN 12, no. (2) (2024): 263–78, https://doi.org/10.23971/altarib.v12i2.9082.

[2] Segaf Baharun and Yusuf Arisandi, "VOCABULARY ENRICHMENT THROUGH QIRA'AH AL-RASHIIDAH: A CONTEXTUAL APPROACH IN AN ARABIC LANGUAGE IMMERSION ENVIRONMENT: PEMBERDAYAAN KOSA KATA MELALUI QIRA'AH AL-RASHIIDAH: PENDEKATAN KONTEKSTUAL DALAM LINGKUNGAN IMERSI BAHASA ARAB," *FASHOHAH : Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Bahasa Arab* 5, no. 2 (August 2025): 163–74.

[3] Zulpina Zulpina et al., "Strategic Utilization of Ibda' Magazine as an Innovative Instructional Medium to Enhance Students' Arabic Reading Skills," *An Nabighoh* 27, no. 1 (June 2025): 101–22, https://doi.org/10.32332/an-nabighoh.v27i1.101-122.

[4] Achmad Makki Lazuardi et al., "Enhancing Arabic Writing and Literacy through Ibda' Magazine: A Culturally Relevant Medium in Islamic Boarding Schools," *Kalamuna: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Arab Dan Kebahasaaraban* 6, no. 2 (July 2025): 370–85, https://doi.org/10.52593/klm.06.2.10.

[5] Alimatova Sevarakhon, 'The Impacts Of Communicative Competence On Second Language Acquisition And Employing Certain Methods To Improve Speaking Skills', Til Bilimi Ko'prik Sifatida: Milliy Islohotlarda Yoshlar va Biznes Imkoniyatlarini Kengaytirish, *University Research Base*, 18 April 2024, 47–53.

[6] Hazratqulova Robiya, Meliboyeva Feruzabonu, and Muxtorova O'g'ilxon, 'The Role Of Vocabulary In Learning Language', Articles, *Western European Journal of Linguistics and Education* 2, no. 5 (2024): 344–47.

[7] Michael Yeldham, "Second Language Listening Instruction and Learners' Vocabulary Knowledge," *International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching* 61, no. 3 (September 2023): 819–50, https://doi.org/10.1515/iral-2021-0021.

speaking, reading, and writing depends largely on their vocabulary knowledge[8]. Despite this central role, vocabulary remains the most challenging area for many learners to develop, as they frequently forget newly learned words within a short time. Vocabulary learning strategies, therefore, are indispensable mechanisms that enable learners to acquire, retain, recall, and use lexical items effectively. Previous research highlights innovative approaches, such as contextual learning and interactive multimedia, as valuable tools in supporting vocabulary acquisition. However, in many EFL and Arabic contexts, vocabulary is still learned passively, with teacher-centered explanations leading to student frustration and low retention[9]. This gap underlines the need for alternative strategies, such as daily incremental learning, which can transform vocabulary learning into a sustainable habit, improve long-term memory, and foster greater motivation.

Previous studies have explored a variety of strategies to address vocabulary learning challenges. Hariroh and Andreastya emonstrated that the use of picture boards significantly enhanced students' vocabulary mastery in an elementary madrasah context[10], indicating the importance of visual media in supporting memory. Similarly, Al-Rafi'i et al. showed that the implementation of the 21st Century Problem Based Learning (PBL) method achieved a medium N-Gain score of 0.49, outperforming conventional methods in Arabic vocabulary acquisition[11]. In a community engagement program, Adrian et al. reported that introducing vocabulary through reading, writing, memorization, and singing activities in the "Islamic Literacy Corner" stimulated enthusiasm and readiness for further Arabic learning among rural children[12]. Furthermore, Widodo et al. emphasized the cognitive benefits of the *Tadhad* (antonym) method in enhancing semantic relationships, thus deepening learners' understanding of

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[11] Mushthafa Shadiq Al-Rafi'i, Nunung Nursyamsyiah, and Rinaldi Supriadi, "Meningkatkan Hasil Belajar Kosakata Bahasa Arab: Pengaruh Metode Problem Based Learning Abad 21," *Nusantara: Jurnal Pendidikan Indonesia* 4, no. 2 (April 2024): 371–82, https://doi.org/10.14421/njpi.2024.v4i2-3.

[12] Rendy Adrian et al., "Pendampingan Dalam Mengenalkan Kosa Kata Bahasa Arab Terhadap Anak-Anak Di Desa Cempaka Mulia Barat Melalui Pojok Litrasi Islami Program Mahasiswa KKN.," *Ekspresi : Publikasi Kegiatan Pengabdian Indonesia* 1, no. 4 (October 2024): 59–73, https://doi.org/10.62383/ekspresi.v1i4.360.

word meanings[13]. Lastly, Manshur et al. found that playing and singing methods could effectively increase early childhood vocabulary mastery, achieving an average retention score of 80.2%[14].

Lai et al. explain that the Ten Words Per Day strategy is informed by cognitive processes underlying vocabulary acquisition[15]. Daidone and Darcy emphasize that the retention and retrieval of lexical items depend on the quality and quantity of their initial encoding[16]. According to Li and Joanisse, polysemous lexical entries containing multiple related senses should be presented as separate learning items to facilitate direct encounters with all senses and their distinguishing contexts during acquisition[17]. Alamer provides extensive evidence supporting a strong connection between the size of one's active vocabulary and overall language proficiency[18]. Within this framework, daily incremental learning offers repeated, high-quality encoding opportunities that enable learners to consolidate meanings, disambiguate senses, and integrate vocabulary into active use more effectively.

Despite these theoretical insights, few studies have operationalized daily incremental learning in Arabic language education particularly within Islamic boarding school (pesantren) contexts where conventional weekly vocabulary lists remain dominant. This gap highlights the need for empirical investigation into whether a fixed daily vocabulary target, rooted in cognitive learning principles, can significantly improve retention, active use, and learner engagement compared to traditional methods.

While these studies highlight the effectiveness of various methods visual aids, problem-solving tasks, semantic relationships, and interactive activities none have systematically investigated daily incremental vocabulary learning as a structured, time-bound approach

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[14] Umar Manshur, Nadia Ainun Nufus, and Fitria Eka Putri Rinjani, "PENINGKATAN KOSAKATA BAHASA ARAB SISWA RA MENGGUNAKAN METODE BERNYANYI DAN BERMAIN," *JCES | FKIP UMMat* 6, no. 4 (October 2023): 731, https://doi.org/10.31764/jces.v6i4.17589.

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[16] Danielle Daidone and Isabelle Darcy, "Vocabulary Size Is a Key Factor in Predicting Second Language Lexical Encoding Accuracy," *Frontiers in Psychology* 12 (July 2021): 688356, https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.688356.

[17] Jiangtian Li and Marc F. Joanisse, "Word Senses as Clusters of Meaning Modulations: A Computational Model of Polysemy," *Cognitive Science* 45, no. 4 (April 2021): e12955, https://doi.org/10.1111/cogs.12955.

[18] Abdullah Alamer, "Grit and Language Learning: Construct Validation of L2-Grit Scale and Its Relation to Later Vocabulary Knowledge," *Educational Psychology* 41, no. 5 (May 2021): 544–62, https://doi.org/10.1080/01443410.2020.1867076.

to mastery. The principle of introducing a fixed number of new words per day, such as ten Arabic words, aligns with theories of microlearning and spaced repetition, which emphasize frequent, manageable input for long-term retention. However, the application of this approach in Arabic language education, particularly within *pesantren* contexts, remains underexplored. This gap is significant because consistent daily learning could potentially bridge the divide between passive recognition and active usage of vocabulary, especially when integrated with contextualized practice. While previous studies have often been limited to short-term interventions of several weeks, such designs may not fully capture the sustained effects of vocabulary learning strategies on long-term retention and active usage. Short interventions risk overestimating immediate gains while overlooking the gradual process of consolidation that occurs through repeated exposure. Therefore, this study deliberately extended the intervention to twelve weeks, aiming to evaluate not only immediate improvements in vocabulary mastery but also the durability and stability of these gains over time. By lengthening the duration, the research provides a more comprehensive picture of how daily incremental learning supports both short-term acquisition and long-term retention in Arabic language education.

Accordingly, this study focuses on examining the effectiveness of the *Ten Arabic Words Per Day* strategy in enhancing vocabulary mastery among students in an Islamic educational institution. Specifically, it seeks to address two main research problems: How does the *Ten Arabic Words Per Day* strategy affect students' vocabulary mastery compared to conventional methods? What are students' perceptions of and responses to the implementation of this daily incremental learning approach?

The scope of the study is limited to one Islamic educational institution, with a fixed daily vocabulary target and pre-defined teaching procedures. While the results may not be generalizable to all contexts, the findings aim to provide empirical evidence on the practicality and effectiveness of daily incremental learning in Arabic vocabulary instruction. The significance of this research lies in its potential contribution to vocabulary teaching methodologies by introducing a disciplined, measurable, and replicable approach that may be integrated into formal and non-formal Arabic language programs.

Method

This study employed a quasi-experimental design with a pre-test and post-test control group, supported by qualitative inquiry, to evaluate the effectiveness of the Ten Arabic

Words Per Day strategy in enhancing students' vocabulary mastery. 19 Grounded in Incremental Learning Theory and Spaced Repetition Theory, the research was conducted at Pondok Pesantren Darullughah Wadda'wah, an Islamic institution known for structured Arabic instruction 20. The participants were 60 intermediate students aged 15–17, purposively divided into two groups: 30 in the experimental group, receiving daily vocabulary instruction (≈600 words over twelve weeks), and 30 in the control group, following conventional weekly word lists. Data collection combined pre- and post-tests (50 items assessing receptive and productive knowledge), classroom observations, semi-structured interviews with ten students, and field notes. The experimental group's sessions followed a cycle of review, presentation of ten new words with meaning, pronunciation and examples, followed by practice through pair work, short dialogues, and oral quizzes, while the control group continued with weekly vocabulary input without daily reinforcement. At the end of the intervention, both groups completed the post-test. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, paired and independent-sample t-tests, and effect size (Cohen's d) at a 0.05 significance level,21 while qualitative data from interviews and observations underwent thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's six-step model,22 supported by triangulation to ensure validity. The twelve-week duration was intentionally chosen to capture both immediate and sustained effects of daily incremental learning, allowing observation of vocabulary retention,23 consolidation, and active use over time. Ethical approval was obtained, informed consent from students and guardians was secured, and confidentiality was maintained throughout the study.

Result and Discusion

Beyond the "ten-words-a-day" routine, classroom practice featured a next-day review

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[21] Louis Cohen, Lawrence Manion, and Keith Morrison, *Research Methods in Education*, 8th ed. (London: Routledge, 2017), https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315456539.

[22] Virginia Braun et al., "The Online Survey as a *Qualitative* Research Tool," *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* 24, no. 6 (November 2021): 641–54, https://doi.org/10.1080/13645579.2020.1805550.

[23] Sarah Balcom, Shelley Doucet, and Anik Dubé, "Observation and Institutional Ethnography: Helping Us to See Better," *Qualitative Health Research* 31, no. 8 (July 2021): 1534–41, https://doi.org/10.1177/10497323211015966.

before introducing ten additional items. During this cycle, students filtered vocabulary by frequency (high-use vs. low-use) while highlighting words perceived as aesthetically meaningful at a personal level for example, أحب (to love), بذل (to exert/strive), جاهد (to endeavor), and أدرك (to grasp deeply and deep understanding or deep comprehension). Learners also leveraged cross-linguistic phonological mnemonics to strengthen recall[24], such as linking استقل (same root as استقلال/"istiqlāl", "independence") to Jakarta's Istiqlal Mosque, associating أتقن (to master) with the Indonesian notion of "tekun" (perseverant), or using قلق (anxiety) via the playful cue "kolak" (sweet compote made of starchy fruits (cassava, bananas, etc.) stewed in coconut milk and sugar) This blend of brief daily review, incremental addition, frequency-based selection, personal salience, and phonological mnemonics[25] facilitates the shift from passive recognition to active use in both oral and written tasks, while keeping cognitive load manageable.

In addition to the scheduled reviews and daily vocabulary increments, the teacher emphasized a specific order of memorization. Verbs (afʻāl) were prioritized first, as mastering a single Arabic verb often automatically extends to its derived forms such as the ism fāʻil, ism mafʻūl, and maṣdar thereby exponentially expanding vocabulary coverage. Next, attention shifted to adjectives (ṣifah), which facilitate the construction of descriptive phrases and enrich expressive capacity in communication. The third stage focused on nouns (asmāʼ), particularly those most relevant to the learners' daily activities. The choice of memorization materials was flexible; students could use Afʻāl al-Yaumiyyah compiled by Al Habib Hasan Baharun for everyday verbs, as well as his Asmāʼ al-Yaumiyyah to reinforce commonly encountered nouns. This priority-based sequencing ensures that the memorized vocabulary is highly functional, contextually relevant, and readily applicable in both spoken and written Arabic.

Memorizing vocabulary is akin to strengthening the foundation of a building; the stronger the foundation, the easier it becomes to construct structures above it whether in the form of nahw (syntax), ṣarf (morphology), balāghah (rhetoric), ʿarūḍ (prosody), shiʿr (poetry), or other branches of linguistic knowledge. With a solid lexical foundation, all linguistic

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[24] Nur Hanifansyah, Menik Mahmudah, and Sultan Abdus Syakur, "MNEMONIC STORYTELLING AS A PSYCHOLINGUISTIC APPROACH TO ENHANCING ARABIC WRITING COMPETENCE," Articles, *El-Jaudah : Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Dan Sastra Arab* 5, no. 2 (December 2024): 31–52, https://doi.org/10.56874/ej.v5i2.2029.

[25] 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): 805–26, https://doi.org/10.29240/jba.v8i2.11349.

components can stand firmly and support one another. However, mastering Arabic vocabulary requires exceptional patience and consistent effort, progressing slowly yet steadily, much like ascending a staircase toward a summit. Each small step brings the learner closer to the goal, until a point is reached where they realize that their vocabulary repertoire has grown significantly. At this stage, metacognitive awareness emerges, fostering an intrinsic motivation to continue expanding and deepening their mastery of Arabic vocabulary.

Implementation of the Ten Arabic Words Per Day Strategy in Classroom Activities

The quantitative data from the pre-test and post-test revealed a substantial improvement in students' vocabulary mastery in the experimental group compared to the control group. The experimental group's average score increased from 56.4 (SD = 8.9) in the pre-test to 78.2 (SD = 7.8) in the post-test. In contrast, the control group improved from 55.8 (SD = 9.1) to 67.2 (SD = 8.5). A paired-sample t-test indicated that both groups experienced significant gains ($p < 0.001$), but the magnitude of improvement was much higher in the experimental group, with a Cohen's d effect size of 1.05 (large effect), compared to 0.68 (medium effect) in the control group. An independent-sample t-test confirmed a statistically significant difference between the two groups in the post-test scores ($t(58) = 7.12$, $p < 0.001$)..

Classroom observations revealed that the daily incremental approach fostered consistent engagement. Each session began with the introduction of ten new words, followed by pronunciation drills, example sentences, and short dialogues. Students actively participated in pair and group work, and the teacher incorporated quick oral quizzes to reinforce retention.

Qualitative interviews supported these observations. As one student explained:

"Before, we had too many words at once, and I often forgot them. Now, with just ten words each day, I can remember and use them easily in conversation." (S3, Male, 16 years old)

Another described the motivation it provided:

"When I realize I have learned fifty words in a week, it motivates me to continue. It's like climbing a mountain step by step." (S7, Male, 17 years old)

The habit of memorizing vocabulary on a daily basis also contributed to cognitive development and shaped students' learning behaviors. Over time, the routine of acquiring ten words per day trained their memory to recognize patterns, strengthen semantic associations, and enhance automatic recall. As this practice became habitual, students

reported that whenever they encountered a new word, they could immediately remember it or at least establish a mental link with familiar terms. Beyond cognitive benefits, this consistent exposure fostered a sense of enjoyment, curiosity, and even affection toward Arabic vocabulary. The process of turning vocabulary learning into a manageable daily habit gradually transformed into a source of intrinsic motivation, leading students not only to master the words but also to cultivate a deeper love for the Arabic language itself.

Students' Perceptions and Responses toward the Daily Incremental Learning Approach

The survey results showed that 93% of students in the experimental group agreed or strongly agreed that the daily target of ten words made learning more manageable. 87% reported increased confidence in speaking Arabic, and 90% stated that they were more motivated to study vocabulary compared to previous methods.

Interview data illustrated these attitudes vividly. One participant shared:

"It feels like I'm building something every day. Before, I memorized words only for the test, then I forgot them. Now, I use them every day." (S19, Male, 16 years old)

Another noted the role of peer work:

"Practicing with friends makes it fun. Sometimes we compete to see who can use the most new words in a sentence." (S4, Male, 15 years old)

Some students suggested adding multimedia materials, such as digital flashcards or images, to further aid retention.

The classroom observations revealed that the Ten Arabic Words Per Day strategy created a structured and consistent learning rhythm that the students quickly adapted to. At the beginning of each session, the teacher introduced ten new Arabic words, accompanied by their meanings, pronunciation, and usage in simple sentences. These words were then integrated into short dialogues, allowing students to practice pronunciation and contextual usage in pairs or small groups. Repetition and peer interaction were central features, enabling students to reinforce their memory through immediate use.

Student engagement increased noticeably compared to the baseline observation of conventional instruction. In conventional classes, vocabulary was typically introduced in bulk once a week, and students often relied on rote memorization without consistent review. Under the daily incremental approach, however, students demonstrated greater willingness to participate in oral drills, respond to the teacher's prompts, and use the new words in improvised conversations.

Not all students responded to the Ten Words Per Day strategy in the same way. Some

found the target challenging and admitted struggling to keep pace:

"I cannot fully manage ten words a day. Five feels more suitable, and three would be enjoyable. Being pushed to memorize ten is quite demanding, but it also motivates me not to stay at a lower level. Ten is manageable, but honestly, I often feel lazy." (S15, Male, 16 years old)

This highlights the issue of cognitive load,26 where exceeding a learner's working memory capacity may lead to resistance or reduced motivation. It suggests the need for scaffolding starting with smaller targets before gradually reaching the full ten words per day to accommodate varying learner readiness.

In contrast, other students reported that the program reinforced existing habits and made vocabulary acquisition more automatic:

"Before this program, I was already used to memorizing words daily, but it strengthened my commitment. Eventually, whenever I encountered new vocabulary whether in conversations, media, or texts I unconsciously memorized it. It felt as if the words entered my mind automatically, perhaps because I had become so accustomed to memorizing and recalling." (S8, Male, 17 years old)

This reflection illustrates the role of habit formation and implicit learning,27 where repeated practice transforms vocabulary learning into an effortless, automatic process. Over time, daily exposure not only increased conscious recall but also fostered unconscious acquisition, showing the long-term benefits of consistent incremental learning.

Qualitative interviews confirmed these observations. One participant stated:

"Before, we had too many words at once, and I often forgot them. Now, with just ten words each day, I can remember and use them easily in conversation." (S3, Female, 16 years old)

Another participant emphasized the sense of achievement:

"When I realize I have learned fifty words in a week, it motivates me to continue. It's like climbing a mountain step by step." (S7, Male, 17 years old)

Some students also highlighted the importance of the review phase:

"The short quizzes and group practice help me remember. Even after a few days, I can still recall the words because we keep using them." (S12, Male, 15 years old)

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26 O. Lovell and T. Sherrington, *Sweller's Cognitive Load Theory in Action*, In Action (Hodder Education, 2020), https://books.google.com.sg/books?id=qgOiEAAAQBAJ.

27 Phillippa Lally and Benjamin Gardner, "Promoting Habit Formation," *Health Psychology Review* 7, no. sup1 (May 2013): S137–58, https://doi.org/10.1080/17437199.2011.603640.

From the teacher's perspective, the strategy facilitated more focused lesson planning and made it easier to monitor individual progress. The method also encouraged more interaction between students, as they were required to work in pairs or small groups to practice the newly introduced vocabulary.

The interviews indicated that students perceived the Ten Arabic Words Per Day strategy as less stressful and more enjoyable compared to previous learning methods. They described the approach as "manageable," "clear," and "motivating," largely because it broke down learning into small, achievable targets. The gradual pace allowed them to integrate the words into their active vocabulary more naturally.

One student reflected:

"It feels like I'm building something every day. Before, I memorized words only for the test, then I forgot them. Now, I use them every day." (S19, Male, 16 years old)

Another mentioned the benefit of peer interaction:

"Practicing with friends makes it fun. Sometimes we compete to see who can use the most new words in a sentence." (S4, Male, 15 years old)

However, a few students suggested incorporating more multimedia support, such as images or digital flashcards, to enhance visual memory and add variety to the daily sessions.

In addition to spontaneous competitions using the newly learned vocabulary, some students also developed riddle-based games from their memorized word bank. One participant shared: "We ended up making riddles like, what is the Arabic word for 'love,' what are its synonyms and antonyms using our memorized vocabulary. It's fun, it strengthens our retention, and it makes Arabic skills both writing and speaking easier." This activity not only created an enjoyable learning atmosphere but also reinforced semantic connections between words through the exploration of synonyms and antonyms. Such an approach aligns with the semantic network theory in vocabulary acquisition, in which interconnected meanings expand students' associative abilities and accelerate the transfer from passive recognition to active use in both oral and written communication.

Overall, students expressed that the method not only improved their vocabulary recall but also increased their confidence in speaking Arabic in class. The combination of small daily goals, active practice, and review activities contributed to a more engaging and effective learning environment.

Discussion

The findings demonstrate that the Ten Arabic Words Per Day strategy aligns with the

principles of microlearning and spaced repetition, which suggest that learning in small, distributed segments promotes better retention. The consistent exposure and immediate contextual application helped students transition from passive recognition to active usage, a shift that conventional weekly vocabulary lists did not achieve.

These results are consistent with Hariroh and Andreastya (2025), who found that visual aids improved vocabulary mastery by enhancing memory retention. Although the present study did not focus on visual tools, the structured daily approach served a similar function by creating clear mental "anchors" for each set of words. Likewise, the increased engagement observed mirrors the findings of Al-Rafi'i et al. (2024), whose implementation of PBL encouraged active student participation and resulted in higher vocabulary gains compared to traditional instruction.

The peer interaction component of the daily vocabulary sessions also parallels the community-based learning reported by Adrian et al. (2024), where collaborative activities such as singing and group exercises stimulated enthusiasm and readiness for further learning. Additionally, the semantic reinforcement observed in this study resonates with Widodo et al. (2023), who showed that the Tadhad (antonym) method deepened comprehension by linking words through semantic relationships. While the present study did not use antonyms explicitly, the daily repetition and contextual usage created similar associative links in learners' mental lexicons.

Finally, the element of enjoyment and reduced stress reported by students is in line with the results of Manshur et al. (2023), who found that play and singing could foster vocabulary growth in early learners. Although the current study targeted older students, the principle of embedding learning in an enjoyable and non-threatening environment proved equally beneficial.

The findings of this study substantiate the theoretical propositions outlined by Lai et al. (2022), who emphasize that effective vocabulary acquisition is driven by underlying cognitive processes. The observed improvements in vocabulary mastery among the experimental group align with the notion that daily incremental learning optimizes these processes by offering consistent, manageable input. In line with Daidone and Darcy's (2021) assertion that the retention and retrieval of lexical items depend on the quality and quantity of their initial encoding, the Ten Arabic Words Per Day strategy ensured high-quality encoding through focused daily sessions, immediate contextual application, and peer-based reinforcement. This approach contrasts with conventional weekly lists, where the initial encoding is diluted over time, reducing both retention and retrieval efficiency.

Furthermore, the qualitative data revealed that students actively engaged with multiple semantic dimensions of newly learned words ranging from base meanings to related forms and collocations which directly supports Li and Joanisse's (2021) argument on the importance of encountering all senses of a polysemous word in distinct yet related contexts. For instance, in learning a verb such as أحب ("to love"), students not only internalized its core meaning but also extended their understanding to related forms like محب (lover) and محبوب (beloved), reinforcing semantic networks that facilitate deeper comprehension and flexible usage.

The strong correlation between active vocabulary size and overall language proficiency, as reported by Alamer (2021), also resonates with the present study's outcomes. Students in the experimental group reported increased confidence in speaking, writing, and engaging in playful lexical tasks such as riddles, indicating that the expansion of active vocabulary directly translated into improved communicative competence. These results suggest that the Ten Arabic Words Per Day strategy does more than simply increase vocabulary size it promotes an interconnected lexicon that supports broader linguistic skills.

Taken together, these findings demonstrate that the strategy is not merely a memorization technique but an instructional design informed by cognitive science principles. By leveraging frequent, distributed practice, engaging multiple senses of a word, and encouraging active use in communicative contexts, the approach fosters long-term retention and accelerates the transition from passive recognition to active proficiency. This integration of cognitive theory and practical classroom application represents a significant advancement over traditional methods, particularly in the context of Islamic boarding schools, where vocabulary instruction has often been dominated by rote memorization without sustained reinforcement.

In conclusion, the Ten Arabic Words Per Day strategy offers a practical, replicable, and learner-friendly approach to vocabulary acquisition in Islamic educational contexts. By combining manageable daily targets with active use and peer collaboration, it addresses the common challenges of low retention and disengagement found in conventional rote-based methods. Future research could explore integrating multimedia resources and expanding the method to different proficiency levels to further enhance its effectiveness.

Conclusion
This study examined the implementation of the Ten Arabic Words Per Day strategy in an Islamic educational setting, combining quantitative and qualitative data to evaluate its

effectiveness. The findings demonstrated that the strategy significantly improved students' vocabulary mastery, as evidenced by substantial gains in post-test scores and a large effect size compared to conventional instruction. Qualitative insights revealed that students perceived the method as manageable, motivating, and conducive to active usage of new words, aligning with principles of incremental learning and spaced repetition. These results reinforce the conclusions of previous studies highlighting the value of structured, interactive, and context-based approaches to vocabulary acquisition, while contributing new evidence on the benefits of daily incremental learning in Arabic language education.

Despite its promising results, the study is limited by its relatively short duration and focus on a single institution, which may restrict the generalizability of findings. Future research should extend the intervention over a longer period, explore integration with multimedia tools, and test its application across different proficiency levels and educational contexts. The implications of this research suggest that the Ten Arabic Words Per Day strategy can be adopted as a replicable, learner-centered approach in both formal and non-formal Arabic language programs, offering a practical solution to persistent challenges in vocabulary retention and usage among students in Islamic educational institutions.

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