

## Investigating Challenges in Arabic Vocabulary Mastery Among Students at MTs Nahdlatul Ulama Maesan Bondowoso

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### Abstract:

This research is inspired by the importance of Arabic vocabulary mastery as the foundation of Arabic language proficiency. Initial observations in class 8 of MTs Nahdlatul Ulama Maesan Bondowoso showed that most students still have difficulties in mastering and using Arabic vocabulary in daily learning. This impacts their low ability in Arabic language skills such as reading, writing, and speaking. This study aims to analyze the level of Arabic vocabulary mastery among students of class 8 MTs Nahdlatul Ulama Maesan Bondowoso and identify factors that influence their vocabulary mastery. The research method used is descriptive qualitative with data collection techniques through vocabulary mastery tests, learning observations, interviews with teachers and students, and documentation. The results showed that the level of Arabic vocabulary mastery among students in class 8 is still relatively low, with an average score of 65.5 out of a maximum score of 100. The influencing factors include lack of learning motivation, insufficient practice in using vocabulary during learning, and limited learning media supporting Arabic vocabulary mastery.

**Keywords:** *Difficulty Analysis, Mastery of Mufrodats, Arabic*

### Introduction

Arabic is an international language which has an important role in the realm of Islamic education. In Indonesia, Arabic is not only taught in Islamic boarding schools but also in formal religious schools such as Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs)<sup>1</sup>. Learning Arabic includes several aspects of language skills, namely listening skills (*maharah al-istima'*), speaking skills (*maharah al-kalam*), reading skills (*maharah al-qiro'ah*), and writing skills (*maharah al-kitabah*).<sup>2</sup> To master these four skills, vocabulary mastery (mufrodats) is an essential and basic component.<sup>3</sup>

According to Tarigan (2009: 2) "in essence language learning is learning to communicate". Therefore, mastery of the four language skills taught in Arabic subjects should be more directed at

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<sup>1</sup> Sely Agustianingsih, Kasmudi, and M Zaky Sya'bani, 'Analisis Penguasaan Kosakata Bahasa Arab Siswa Kelas VII B Akhwat MTs Jabal An-Nur Al-Islami', *Al-Mitasli, Jurnal Penelitian Dan Pendidikan Bahasa Arab*, 3.1 (2023), pp. 41–52.

<sup>2</sup> Acep Hermawan, *Metodologi Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab*, (Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya, 2018), 129.

<sup>3</sup> Sarah Audry Lubis, *Analisis Metode Pembelajaran bahasa arab dalam penguasaan kosakata bahasa Arab di MTs AL ITTIHADYAH*

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increasing students' ability to communicate in Arabic, both orally and in writing<sup>4</sup>. Mustofa emphasized that learning vocabulary (*mufrodat*) is a fundamental aspect in Arabic language education because a person's ability to compose sentences and communicate in that language is determined by his knowledge of vocabulary (*mufrodat*)<sup>5</sup>.

Mufrodat is an important element in Arabic language education. Without good and correct mastery of *mufrodat*, students will find it difficult to learn Arabic<sup>6</sup>. The ability to memorize and process vocabulary makes a person proficient in learning the desired foreign language<sup>7</sup>. Adequate mastery of *mufrodat*, a person will be able to communicate well, convey ideas and feelings to other people or interlocutors, using the language they have learned<sup>8</sup>.

Based on initial observations at MTsN 9 Jember, especially class 8, various problems were identified in the vocabulary learning process (*mufrodat*). Students experience difficulty in memorizing and remembering new vocabulary (*mufrodat*), pronouncing words correctly, and using vocabulary (*mufrodat*) in the context of sentences. This results in low students' daily Arabic language test scores, where 65% of students do not meet the Minimum Completeness Criteria (KKM) set by the school. Rosyidi said that difficulties in mastering vocabulary (*mufrodat*) could be caused by various factors, both internal and external<sup>9</sup>. Internal factors include students' motivation, interests and cognitive abilities, while external factors include learning methods, the media used and the learning environment.

Wahab added that teaching vocabulary (*mufrodat*) at MTs level requires an approach that is appropriate to student characteristics. At this age, students need interesting and contextual learning methods so they can better understand and remember the vocabulary (*mufrodat*)<sup>10</sup>. Research conducted by Nuha shows that the challenges of mastering vocabulary (*mufrodat*) by MTs students can be overcome through implementing appropriate teaching strategies and using innovative media.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Inayah, Nurul. Peningkatan Penguasaan Kosakata (Mufrodat) Untuk Memahami Wacana Bahasa Arab Melalui Media Kartu Bergambar (Bithoqotu Ash-Shuroh) Pada Siswa Kelas Xi Sma Negeri 2 Gowa. Diss. Universitas Negeri Makassar, 2019.

<sup>5</sup> Syaiful Mustofa, Strategi Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab Inovatif, (Malang: UIN Maliki Press, 2021), 59.

<sup>6</sup> Murniati Murniati and Marliati Marliati, 'Analisis Kemampuan Pengucapan Mufrodat ( Kosakata ) Bahasa Arab Kelas Viii Mts Al Ikhlas Donggo', *AL-AF'IDAH: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Arab Dan Pengajarannya*, 6.1 (2022), pp. 83–96, doi:10.52266/al-afidah.v6i1.891.

<sup>7</sup> Ali Imron and Dewi Farda Fajriyah, 'Penggunaan Metode Bernyanyi Dalam Menghafal Mufrodat (Kosakata) Bahasa Arab Di MI', *Dawuh Guru: Jurnal Pendidikan MI/SD*, 1.1 (2021), pp. 41–56, doi:10.35878/guru.v1i1.255.

<sup>8</sup> Joko Andi Koiruman and others, 'Identifikasi Kesulitan Pembelajaran Mufrodat Pada Santri', *Journal of Education and Instruction (JOEAI)*, 7.1 (2024), pp. 48–56, doi:10.31539/joeai.v7i1.9477.

<sup>9</sup> Abdul Wahab Rosyidi. Media Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab. (Malang: UIN Maliki Press, 2019), 75.

<sup>10</sup> Muhib Abdul Wahab, Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab di Era Digital. (Jakarta: UIN Jakarta Press, 2020), 98.

<sup>11</sup> Ulin Nuha, Problematika Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab dan Solusinya. (Yogyakarta: Idea Press, 2022), 45.

This is in line with Zulhannan's opinion which emphasizes the importance of identifying *mufrodat* learning problems comprehensively to find effective solutions.<sup>12</sup>

Based on these problems, the researcher was interested in conducting research entitled "Investigating Challenges in Arabic Vocabulary Mastery Among Grade VIII Students at MTs Nahdlatul Ulama Maesan Bondowoso" to find out in depth the difficulties faced by students and the factors that influence them. It is hoped that the results of this research can contribute to the development of more effective vocabulary learning teaching strategies (*mufrodat*).

Previous research serves to show whether this research is feasible to carry out. So that things that have been researched can be compared in order to advance current knowledge and things that have never been done before can be known so that updates can be made in the research. Therefore, researchers tried to conduct research related to this matter. Here are some related studies:

Research conducted by Ahmad Fauzi (2019) with the title "Mufrodat Learning Strategy and its Implementation in Arabic Language Learning at MTs Nurussalam Ciamis" shows that the use of various methods in learning vocabulary, such as direct methods, picture cards, and language games, can help students master Arabic vocabulary better. With the right learning strategy, students can more easily remember the vocabulary taught.<sup>13</sup>

Research conducted by Siti Khodijah (2020) with the title "Analysis of Difficulties in Mastering Mufrodat in Learning Arabic for Class VIII Students at MTs Al-Hidayah Bandung" revealed that students experienced major difficulties in mastering Arabic vocabulary, such as difficulties in pronunciation and writing letters. Arabic, and remember the meaning of words. Some of the contributing factors include lack of practice, low motivation to learn, and students' different educational backgrounds.<sup>14</sup>

Research conducted by Muhammad Rizqi (2021) with the title "Effectiveness of Digital Learning Media in Improving Students' Mastery of Vocabulary at MTs Daarul Ulum Jakarta" shows that the use of digital learning media, such as cellphone applications and interactive videos, can significantly increase students' vocabulary mastery. This is proven by the increase in the average student score from 65 to 82 after using this media.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Zulhannan, Teknik Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab Interaktif. (Jakarta: Rajawali Press, 2021), 112.

<sup>13</sup> Ahmad Fauzi. (2019). Strategi Pembelajaran Mufrodat dan Implementasinya dalam Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab di MTs Nurussalam Ciamis. *Al-Ta'dib: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 11(1), 73-88.

<sup>14</sup> Siti Khodijah. (2020). Analisis Kesulitan Penguasaan Mufrodat dalam Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab Siswa Kelas VIII MTs Al-Hidayah Bandung. *Al-Lisan: Jurnal Bahasa Arab*, 6(2), 201-218.

<sup>15</sup> Muhammad Rizqi. (2021). Efektivitas Media Pembelajaran Digital dalam Meningkatkan Penguasaan Mufrodat Siswa MTs Daarul Ulum Jakarta. *Jurnal Teknologi Pendidikan*, 9(1), 12-28.

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Research conducted by Nur Hasanah (2018) with the title "The Relationship between Mastery of Mufrodat and the Arabic Speaking Ability of MTs Pembangunan UIN Jakarta Students" found that there was a strong relationship between vocabulary mastery and Arabic speaking ability. The results of the research show a correlation coefficient value of 0.78, which means that the better the students' vocabulary mastery, the better their ability to speak Arabic.<sup>16</sup>

Research conducted by Zainal Abidin (2022) with the title "Implementation of the Drill Method in Mufrodat Learning for Class VIII Students at MTs Al-Irsyad Surakarta" shows that regular use of the drill method can improve students' vocabulary mastery. As a result, 85% of students succeeded in mastering vocabulary well after applying this method.<sup>17</sup>

### Methods

In this research, researchers used a descriptive analysis approach which aims to describe the factors that influence the difficulty of mastering vocabulary (*mufrodat*) in learning Arabic. The method used in this research is descriptive analysis, which is included in the qualitative research category. Qualitative research refers to a type of research that uses letters or words to collect and analyze the information received. This research was carried out at the MTs Nahdlatul Ulama Maesan Bondowoso, which is located on Jalan Panjaitan No. 02, Wonorejo, East Java. Research stages include design, research, implementation, data analysis, and preparation of research reports. The object of this research involves students from class VIII. To collect data, the author used interview, observation and documentation techniques. Data collection is a strategic step in research, because the main goal is to obtain the necessary data. The author conducted qualitative research through interviews to obtain the required information. In addition, the author made direct observations on students during the learning process to obtain information regarding difficulties in mastering vocabulary (*mufrodat*).

In this research, data sources consist of two types, namely primary data sources and secondary data sources. Primary data sources were obtained from class VIII students who were directly involved during learning. Meanwhile, secondary data sources are documentation in the form of photos and videos taken during the research. The data analysis technique used refers to the data analysis method developed by Miles and Huberman. The data analysis stages consist of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. Data reduction is carried out to summarize and

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<sup>16</sup> Nur Hasanah. (2018). Hubungan Penguasaan Mufrodat dengan Kemampuan Berbicara Bahasa Arab Siswa MTs Pembangunan UIN Jakarta. *Arabiyat: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Arab dan Kebahasaaraban*, 5(1), 38-55.

<sup>17</sup> Zainal Abidin. (2022). Implementasi Metode Drill dalam Pembelajaran Mufrodat pada Siswa Kelas VIII MTs Al-Irsyad Surakarta. *Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Arab*, 8(2), 145-160.

select relevant information and focus on important things that are appropriate to the research topic. Next, data presentation is carried out to present data that has been processed so that it is easy to understand and analyze. The final step is drawing conclusions. After the data is processed and presented, the researcher analyzes the data to look for the meaning contained in the data that has been obtained during the research. The goal of this stage is to produce valid and verifiable conclusions.

## Results and Discussion

Based on the results of research conducted in class 8 of MTs Nahdlatul Ulama Maesan Bondowoso, it was found that students faced several difficulties in mastering Arabic vocabulary (*mufrodat*). Observations and interviews conducted with 25 students showed that the majority of students still had difficulty memorizing and using Arabic vocabulary correctly in daily communication.

The main difficulty faced by students is in terms of pronunciation of Arabic vocabulary. Many students have difficulty distinguishing between letters that have similar sounds such as ح (ha) and ه (ha), or ع ('ain) and ء (hamzah). This is because some phonemes in Arabic are not found in Indonesian, so students need more time to get used to the correct pronunciation.<sup>18</sup> The second aspect that is a challenge for students is mastering the meaning of vocabulary. Mastering the meaning of vocabulary in learning Arabic is common, especially in schools that are not based on Islamic boarding schools or public schools<sup>19</sup>. Observation results show that only 40% of students are able to interpret Arabic vocabulary into Indonesian correctly. This difficulty especially occurs with words that have many equivalent meanings or abstract words that are rarely used in everyday conversation.

Researchers also revealed that students had difficulty implementing changes in word forms (*tasrif*). The ability to change basic words into various forms such as *fi'il madhi*, *fi'il mudhari'*, and *masdar* is still low<sup>20</sup>. From the results of observations, only 35% of students were able to change word forms correctly, while the rest still experienced confusion in applying the rules for changing words.

Motivational factors also play an important role in difficulties in mastering vocabulary. The term motivation in a linguistic sense is the same as the word 'intention' in Arabic. As mentioned,

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<sup>18</sup> Darsita Suparno, 'Refleksi Variasi Fonologis Pada Fonem', 5.2 (2018), pp. 214–32.

<sup>19</sup> Fatimah, V. N. (2018). Analisis Kesulitan Belajar Bahasa Arab Siswa Kelas Ix Madrasah Tsanawiyah Negeri 2 Sleman Yogyakarta.

<sup>20</sup> Dhafa Al Rochim, Ilham Gumelar, and Universitas Darussalam Gontor, 'TALKING STICK DALAM PEMBELAJARAN SHOROF', 2021, pp. 400–409.

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intention is the motivation that drives someone to carry out a practice/activity. Interviews with students revealed that most of them considered Arabic to be a difficult subject and less applicable in everyday life. This causes a lack of interest and motivation in learning new vocabulary, which ultimately results in a low level of vocabulary mastery.

The learning methods applied by teachers also influence students' levels of difficulty. Observations show that learning is still dominated by conventional methods such as memorizing and taking notes, while the use of interactive learning media and varied learning techniques is still limited. This causes the learning process to become less interesting and less effective in improving students' vocabulary mastery.

The learning environment is also a factor that influences the difficulty of mastering vocabulary<sup>21</sup>. The lack of explanation or exposure to Arabic outside of class hours means that students rarely practice the vocabulary they have learned. The absence of an Arabic language environment (*bi'ah 'arabiyyah*) in schools makes it difficult for students to retain the vocabulary they have learned in their long-term memory.

Finally, the results of the analysis show that students' educational background also contributes to difficulties in mastering vocabulary<sup>22</sup>. Students from public elementary schools tend to experience greater difficulties compared to students from madrasah ibtidaiyah or Islamic boarding schools<sup>23</sup>. This is due to differences in the intensity of Arabic language learning previously received, where students from Islamic educational backgrounds have a stronger foundation in Arabic.

Based on the presentation of the results of interviews and observations, the researcher put forward efforts to overcome learning difficulties in memorizing *mufrodāt*. The first is the efforts that must be made by teachers, namely providing remedial teaching, providing learning motivation to students, and trying to create more interesting learning methods to make it easier for students in the learning process, especially to master Arabic language skills. And the second is the efforts of students, namely getting used to focusing more on reading Arabic texts and *mufrodāt* and their translations, often studying in groups with friends who understand more about Arabic, having the courage to ask teachers or friends about Arabic material that they still have. felt difficult to understand, and developed an interest or interest in learning Arabic.

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<sup>21</sup> Suib, M. (2022). Esensi dan sebab kesulitan berbahasa Arab serta penanganannya dalam dunia pendidikan. *JURNAL TALIMUNA*, 1(1), 84-91.

<sup>22</sup> Jurnal Penelitian Bahasa and Yuniarti Amalia Wahdah, 'Faktor-Faktor Kesulitan Siswa dalam Membaca Teks Bahasa Arab Abstract : Arab , Baik Dalam Melafalkannya Maupun Dalam Menafsirkan Atau Memahami Isi Dari Teks', 1.1 (2018), pp. 30-46.

<sup>23</sup> Thoha, M. (2012). Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab Dengan Pendekatan Manajemen Berbasis Sekolah. *OKARA: Jurnal Bahasa dan Sastra*, 6(1).

## Conclusion

Based on the results of research data analysis using data collection techniques in the form of observation, interviews and documentation methods for class VIII students at MTs Nahdlatul Ulama Maesan Bondowoso, especially in Arabic subjects regarding learning difficulties in memorizing mufrodat. So based on this research the researcher drew the following conclusions:

Based on the analysis of Arabic vocabulary mastery (mufrodat) in class 8 students at MTs Nahdlatul Ulama Maesan Bondowoso, it can be concluded that vocabulary mastery is very important in learning Arabic, because it influences students' overall ability to speak Arabic. This research shows that students' level of vocabulary mastery is influenced by various factors. These factors are students' low motivation and interest in learning Arabic, learning methods that are still conventional and less varied, minimal exposure to Arabic in the school environment, differences in students' educational backgrounds. Differences in educational background show a significant influence, where students from public elementary schools tend to experience greater difficulties than students from madrasah ibtidayah or Islamic boarding schools in mastering Arabic vocabulary.

Thus, teachers need to pay attention to these factors to develop more effective learning strategies to increase students' mastery of Arabic vocabulary, which includes developing more interactive learning methods, creating a supportive Arabic language environment, and increasing students' learning motivation to overcome difficulties.

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