

Games in Arabic for Early Childhood: A Literature Study

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ABSTRACT

Language is a fundamental element in communication and child development, including in learning foreign languages such as Arabic. This study aims to explore the effectiveness of using game-based methods in teaching Arabic to early childhood learners. Games were chosen for their interactive, enjoyable nature and their ability to meet the psychological developmental needs of children. This research employs a qualitative approach with a literature study method, involving the analysis of various secondary sources, with eight journals analyzed in-depth. The findings reveal that games not only enhance linguistic skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) but also support children's social, cognitive, and motor development. The types of games analyzed include traditional games like *kideng*, picture guessing games, sequential picture games, spinning wheel games, card games, songs, and snake-and-ladder games. Additionally, games motivate children to learn actively, reduce boredom, and promote social engagement. In conclusion, a game-based approach is an effective and enjoyable method for teaching Arabic while simultaneously instilling Islamic values in early childhood. These findings provide new insights for educators in designing creative and adaptive

Arabic learning tailored to children's needs.

Introduction

Language is a crucial element in human life, especially for communication, whether explicit or implicit. This principle also applies to child development. Fundamentally, every child can learn a language, although this process is influenced by various factors and types of support. Variations arise due to differences in educational goals, basic skills, personal drive, interests, and persistence of each child. Therefore, foreign language teaching, such as Arabic, should be tailored to the learning needs and nature of children (Muzayin & Sugiharyati, 2023).

Mastering Arabic, both actively and passively, requires substantial practice and depends on the desire and enthusiasm to acquire knowledge. Progress in learning Arabic can be achieved when educators apply engaging, imaginative, and effective teaching methods aligned with the intended goals. Education is a structured effort in planning learning activities that encourage active student participation, emphasizing the availability of learning materials to ensure that education transcends mere teaching and information sharing (Yakin et al., 2020).

Arabic is considered the language of Muslims because the Quran and Hadith are written in Arabic, both of which serve as sources of Islamic teachings (Lubis et al., 2024). Therefore, introducing Arabic to children from an early age is essential to deepen their understanding of Islam. However, many believe that learning Arabic poses a challenge for

younger generations due to its complex features. Hence, adopting engaging and child-centered learning strategies is crucial to facilitate this experience. One proven successful method is the use of games. Games allow children to learn in an engaging way while having fun (Ghani & Wan, 2018).

Games represent situations where individuals find enjoyment through various activities that follow specific guidelines. Conversely, when something is described as educational, it contains components aimed at teaching. Games can be considered educational if they offer benefits or useful value, operate effectively and efficiently, and foster constructive learning experiences. The purpose of educational games goes beyond mere enjoyment; they are designed to enhance language skills, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Through games, learners are equipped to develop receptive and expressive language skills, engage verbally with others, and encourage active participation in their education (Abduh & Surakarta, 2018).

In this context, this study aims to investigate how games can facilitate the teaching of Arabic to young learners, focusing on appropriate types of games and the benefits they provide.

Methods

The research methodology employed is qualitative, utilizing a library-based research strategy that incorporates theories related to the research problem. Data collection techniques include examining various texts, literature, records, and reports associated with the issue under

investigation. In crafting this article, the authors adopted a literature exploration method by gathering information derived from theoretical frameworks through the study of books and journal articles related to the influence of education through games in Arabic on the character development of early childhood learners.

Additionally, the data collection instruments for this academic work included observational studies, along with conventional tools typically used in library research. This means that the data collection methods involved gathering information from library resources. Literature study, also known as library research, entails analyzing data from various reference books and journals from previous relevant research to build a theoretical foundation for the issue being investigated (Munib & Wulandari, 2021).

In pursuing theories, researchers aim to gather extensive information from relevant literature. These sources may include books, academic journals, magazines, and research findings. Once the related literature is collected, it is systematically organized for research purposes. Therefore, the library review encompasses broad procedures, including the systematic identification of theories, discovery of library resources, and document analysis containing information aligned with the research theme (Irawan & Mutmainah, 2022). The documents analyzed in this research include eight journals, which contain similar studies to strengthen the analysis in the discussion.

Results and Discussions

Learning through play is highly enjoyable for children (Apriyani et al., 2020). However, some teachers still struggle to build a solid foundation for play that aligns with children's psychological needs, resulting in activities that focus solely on educational content without considering how to present games effectively. Well-designed games that account for children's psychology are believed to enhance their self-regulation skills. This is crucial as playtime also involves mental and social interactions that are often overlooked by educators.

Language games are described as a collection of classroom activities aimed at engaging teachers and students with language elements in a fun way. Learning a language is essential for individuals to interact accurately and appropriately with others and their environment, both orally and in writing. The goal of language learning is to gain proficiency in linguistic knowledge and skills in Arabic, including comprehension, conversation, composition, grammar, and morphology, which together develop the four main competencies: listening, reading, writing, and speaking (Rahmawati et al., 2022).

The importance of acquiring Arabic knowledge is particularly prominent, as Arabic is one of the main languages used globally. Early childhood represents a period of significant and rapid growth, often described as a remarkable developmental stage. These early years are critical compared to later stages due to the extraordinary level of cognitive development.

Based on their classification, various categories of Arabic language

games can be utilized for both children and adults. These games target the four basic language skills: listening, speaking, writing, and reading (Rofiqy, 2022).

Additionally, Educational Game Tools (EGT) can be presented in the form of cards, which are essential materials for educational activities aimed at young children for easier understanding. These cards, similar in size to identification cards, display bold Arabic letters, with the back of each card containing an Arabic word starting with the corresponding letter. For instance, the letter *Alif* is paired with the word *Abi* (father). Such EGT cards are crucial for introducing children to both the Arabic alphabet and Hijaiyah letters. These cards serve as learning tools that help children effectively understand and distinguish the pronunciation of Hijaiyah letters (Fauziddin & Fikriya, 2020).

Moreover, teaching methods for Arabic in early childhood involve direct methods such as memory techniques, cognitive approaches, and compensatory tactics; and indirect methods including metacognitive techniques, emotional strategies, and social tactics (Hidayatullah, 2023). The objective of language activities is to provide enjoyment and enhance specific language skills. However, these activities are not intended for assessing or grading students' learning outcomes. Instead, language activities are used as teaching methods to facilitate the achievement of language learning goals. According to Nasif Mustofa, the benefits of language activities in educational settings include (Syahna et al., 2023):

1. Fostering healthy competition, encouraging individuals to excel.

2. Inspiring students to observe and engage in various activities.
3. Promoting personal best performance.
4. Learning to collaborate towards shared goals or success.

Benefits of Games in Arabic Language Learning (Uliyah & Isnawati, 2019):

1. **Improving language skills.** Children can understand Arabic words more effectively through enjoyable activities. They practice speaking and listening skills in Arabic organically, helping them grasp the structure of Arabic, including letters, words, and sentences.
2. **Enhancing mental growth.** Arabic-centered games stimulate children to think creatively and analytically. They learn to identify language patterns, including grammar and pronunciation. Repeating vocabulary or phrases improves their memory skills.
3. **Encouraging social engagement.** Team games teach children how to collaborate with peers. They enhance communication skills and gain confidence while interacting in Arabic. Arabic-based games also instill Islamic values.
4. **Developing motor skills.** Engaging games like Arabic letter cards or puzzles improve hand-eye coordination. Physical activities combined with Arabic language games support gross motor skill development.
5. **Boosting learning enthusiasm.** Games make learning Arabic

enjoyable for children, reducing boredom and increasing interest in further learning. Children become more engaged when learning is active and provides hands-on experiences.

6. **Establishing a foundation for religious education.** By learning Arabic, children connect more closely with the Quran and daily prayers. They are introduced to Islamic culture in a fun way from an early age.

In addition, the following table outlines the eight journals analyzed in this study.

Researcher(s) Name	Title	Source	Purpose of the Study	Type/ Theme	Results	Significance
Mujibur rohman, Nurjannah, Ahmad Helwani Syafi'i, Agam Sulaiman, Ilham Manses, Ibnu Zakiyyah	Permainan Tradisional Kideng Sebagai Media Pembelajaran Bahasa arab.	Al-Af'idah : Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Arab dan Pengajarannya. Volume 7 Nomor 2. (September 2023)	Aims to describe and provide creative alternatives for teaching Arabic skills through game-based learning for students.	Arabic learning based on traditional <i>kideng</i> games from Lombok.	The study showed that the <i>kideng</i> game could serve as an effective teaching medium to enhance speaking skills	Offers a solution to Arabic teaching challenges using fun and interactive methods while preserving traditional games.

					(maharah kalam).	
Nasrullah, Syifaul Adhima	Pengaruh Permainan Tebak Gambar untuk Meningkatkan Pemahaman Kosakata Bahasa Arab Pada Anak Usia Dini.	Jambura Elementary Education Journal. Volume 5 Nomor 1. (Juni 2024)	Aims to evaluate the impact of picture-guessing games on Arabic vocabulary comprehension for early childhood learners, focusing on their ability to recognize and remember vocabulary.	Using interactive games (picture guessing) for Arabic vocabulary learning in early childhood.	Results showed that this game helps children recognize and remember new vocabulary easily and improves overall Arabic language skills.	Demonstrates that interactive visual-based games, like picture guessing, are effective methods for enhancing Arabic language comprehension in early childhood.
Nurul Khoirunisa Dalimu	Media Pembelajaran Berbasis	Jurnal Educatio. Volume	Aims to develop game-based	Focuses on developing	The study resulted in	Provides a more engaging

<p>nthe and Rahmai na</p>	<p>Game Gambar Berangkai dalam Pembelaja ran Maharah Istima’.</p>	<p>e 9 Nomor 3 (2023)</p>	<p>learnin g media for improv ing listenin g skills (Mahara h Istima’).</p>	<p>interac tive visual- based media for Arabic listeni ng skills.</p>	<p>valid and effectiv e game- based media for impro ving listenin g skills (Mahar ah Istima’) . It helps studen ts better unders tand Arabic vocabu lary throug h an interac tive and enjoya ble approa ch, makin g it suitabl e for Mahara</p>	<p>g and interact ive approa ch compar ed to convent ional method s, with potenti al for applicat ion across various levels of Arabic educati on.</p>
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					h Istima' learnin g.	
Ahmad Iqbal HS	Pengemba ngan Media Pembelaja ran Berbasis Permaina n Roda Putar pada Pembelaja ran Kosa Kata Bahasa Arab di Taman Kanak- kanak.	Al- athfaal: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendid kan Anak Usia Dini. Volum e 4 Nomor 2 (2021)	Aims to: 1. Develo p a spin- the- wheel game- based Androi d app for teachin g Arabic vocabul ary (<i>mufrod at</i>). 2. Assess the feasibili ty of the spin- the- wheel game as a teachin g mediu m.	Develo pment of interac tive game- based learnin g media.	The study showe d that the spin- the- wheel game- based learnin g media is highly feasibl e and effectiv e for teachin g Arabic vocabu lary. Validat ion by materi al experts reache d 88%, while media experts scored	Contrib utes to creatin g innovat ive learnin g aligned with technol ogical advanc ements, motivat ing teacher s to use interact ive media, and providi ng a foundat ion for further researc h.

					<p>it 91.66% , both categorized as highly feasible. Student trials yielded very positive responses, with interest levels of 87.46% on a small scale and 82.81% on a large scale.</p>	
Wa Muna	Kartu Permainan: Media Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab Kontekstual	Jurnal Al-Ta'dib. Volume 7 Nomor 1 (2014)	Aims to develop contextual Arabic learning media using game cards	A qualitative descriptive study focusing on the use of	The study found that game cards are effective for learning	Provides a cost-effective, flexible, and engaging alternative for

			designed to enhance students' Arabic skills in a fun and motivating way.	game cards as Arabic learning media.	g Arabic. Twelve types of game cards, such as question-and-answer cards, completion cards, vocabulary cards, mimicry cards, and word-arrangement cards, can be used to improve vocabulary, sentence structure, and skills in listening	Arabic learning. Game cards increase students' interest and motivation and help teachers deliver content creatively and efficiently.
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					g, speaki ng, readin g, and writing .	
Eka Nurchas anah dan Zukhair a	PENGEM BANGAN MEDIA PEMBEL AJARAN BAHASA ARAB UNTUK ANAK TK/RA B DI KOTA SEMARA NG	Taqdir. Volum e 6 Nomor 2 (2020)	Aims to develop themati c pop- up media named ABATA MA (Al Abwab At Tahwili yah Al Maudhi 'iyah) to enhanc e Arabic learnin g for kinderg arten student s in Semara ng. The media is designe d to increas e	Resear ch and Develo pment (R&D) with a qualita tive approa ch focusin g on creatin g and testing themat ic Arabic learnin g media for early childh ood.	The media effectiv ely introd uced Arabic throug h 3D visuali zation metho ds, activiti es such as writing , colorin g, and puzzle s. ABAT AMA was rated highly across conten t, materi al,	Design ed to facilitat e Arabic underst anding, enhanc e creativi ty, and motivat e childre n to learn Arabic throug h enjoyab le learnin g experie nces.

			students' interest, motivation, and understanding of Arabic.		presentation, and language aspects, with an average score of 37.55 (excellent category).	
Nurhapsari Pradnya Paramitaha	Lagu sebagai Media Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab.	Jurnal Komunikasi dan Pendidikan Islam. Volume 1 Nomor 1 (Juni 2018)	Aims to explore and analyze the use of songs as a medium for teaching Arabic. Songs are used to improve memory, fluency, and student	Focus on implementing songs as a teaching aid in Arabic learning. Songs support listening (<i>istima'</i>), speaking (<i>kalam</i>)	Songs effectively address student boredom in Arabic learning. They improve students' vocabulary retention and pronunciation	Songs stimulate cognitive and emotional engagement, creating a pleasant learning atmosphere, increasing student attention, and linking

			s' understanding of Arabic, particularly vocabulary (<i>mufrod at</i>) and pronunciation.	reading (<i>qira'ah</i>), and writing (<i>kitabah</i>).	through natural intonation. Activities like listening to and singing songs help students understand Arabic material more easily.	language learning to real-life experiences.
Maulida Ulfah, Durtam Imas Maesarah	Pengenalan Mufrod at Bahasa Arab melalui Permainan Ular Tangga pada Anak Usia Dini.	SELING Jurnal Program Studi PGRA. Volume 5 Nomor 2 (Juli 2019)	Aims to enhance and improve classroom learning by introducing Arabic vocabulary (<i>mufrod at</i>) to early	Classroom research focused on introducing Arabic vocabulary to children in AN-Nawa	The study showed that the modified snake-and-ladder game effectively improves vocabulary	Demonstrates that the snake-and-ladder game can enhance Arabic vocabulary recognition for early childho

			childhood learners using snake-and-ladder games as a teaching medium.	I, Cirebon.	recognition for early childhood learner s. Engaging and interactive methods stimulate children's interest and motivation.	od learners , providing a more effective learning method .
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(Modified from Ali, et al., 2021)

Discussion

Based on the findings above, Arabic language games for early childhood consist of:

1. Traditional *Kideng* Game

Traditional games can develop children's language skills from an early age and provide positive moral values for their growth (Haris and Hastuti, 2016). One such game is *Kideng*. Research conducted by Mujiburrohman et al. (2023) found that the traditional *Kideng* game can serve as a creative alternative for teaching Arabic. The

Kideng game involves three stages: the preparation stage to prepare students for learning, the core stage as the main activity where the *Kideng* game is modified for Arabic language learning, and the follow-up stage to determine further actions. This makes *Kideng* an effective medium for Arabic learning.

2. **Picture Guessing Game**

The picture guessing game is not just about playing; children can also learn through this game. It positively impacts cognitive and motor functions while promoting teamwork (Nasrullah and Adhimah, 2024). Additionally, Bahroyni et al. (2021) found that implementing picture guessing games enhances children's Arabic language skills when combined with proper planning, execution, and evaluation by teachers. According to Khotijah in Bulqis et al. (2022), picture guessing games can improve students' vocabulary by guessing accurate and appropriate pictures.

3. **Sequential Picture Game**

Sequential picture games are designed to capture students' attention and ignite their interest in learning Arabic, particularly in enhancing listening skills (*Maharah Istima'*). This game has two gameplay phases. In the first phase, the teacher distributes pictures to students while they listen and write down the vocabulary on the picture sheets. In the second phase, students match correct and incorrect Arabic vocabulary to the pictures. The sequential picture game positively influences listening skills, especially in improving

students' memory of Arabic vocabulary (Dalimunthe and Rahmaini, 2023).

4. **Spin-the-Wheel Game**

The spin-the-wheel game features a circular board with images, spun on its axis until it stops on one image (Istinawati et al., 2023). Its use in Arabic learning involves opening a link on a platform like Google, selecting colors, entering instructions, adjusting the wheel's speed, and spinning it (Kusniadin, 2023). The game enhances pronunciation accuracy (*makhraj*), vocabulary richness, articulation, intonation, and speaking ability. Its development follows the ADDIE model, which includes five stages: analysis, design, development, implementation, and evaluation (HS and Suriningsih, 2021).

5. **Card Game**

Card games are contextual media that indirectly bring students into real-life contexts in learning (Wa Muna, 2014). The cards, sized 2 cm x 15 cm, feature single words and can be used individually or in groups (Mu'awwanah et al., 2022). Using Hijaiyah alphabet cards with accompanying Arabic vocabulary fosters enthusiasm among early childhood learners, making learning more effective. Children become more engaged, and teachers can create effective learning activities with child-friendly media suitable for their developmental stages (Fauziddin & Fikriya, 2020).

6. **Songs**

Songs as a medium for Arabic language learning help students understand the material being taught (Purwanto, 2018). Singing Arabic songs aids in developing *Kalam* with natural intonation, as language acquisition (*Iktisab al-Lughah*) at their age occurs primarily through listening (*Istima'*) (Hasan, 2016). It also supports teaching recorded Arabic songs or learning materials that train various language skills, including listening (Rahmawati et al., 2022).

7. **Snake-and-Ladder Game**

The snake-and-ladder game is effective in increasing students' motivation and learning in Arabic (Shofiyani and Muti'ah, 2021). Even students with limited abilities are encouraged to attempt speaking Arabic through this interactive medium (Nuha, 2024).

Conclusion

The use of games in Arabic language teaching offers a fresh and energetic way to help children understand and master the language. This strategy incorporates fun features such as challenge, competition and collaborative learning into the educational experience, creating a fun and inspiring atmosphere for learners. In addition to entertainment, games motivate children to engage in learning with more vigour, thus reducing the feeling of monotony.

In the process of learning Arabic, the use of games can be applied in various areas such as vocabulary development, grammar comprehension, reading comprehension and verbal skills. For example, playing board games that encourage children to form sentences in

Arabic or to put words together into correct sentences can improve their grammar skills. Conversely, engaging in role-playing or imitating everyday situations in Arabic allows learners to practice their speaking and listening skills in a practical setting.

In addition, the playful approach encourages cooperation and interaction between children. Group activities, such as word challenges or collaborative storytelling games, not only encourage imaginative thinking, but also strengthen relationships between children, resulting in a rich and enjoyable educational experience.

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