

Grammar Cube Strategy: The Newest Alternative Media to Learn Arabic Grammar for Beginner in Indonesia

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How to cite this paper: Uril Bahruddin, Annuar Gunawan, Langgeng Budianto. (2020). Grammar Cube Strategy: The Newest Alternative Media to Learn Arabic Grammar for Beginner in Indonesia. *The Educational Review, USA*, 4(4), 93-100. DOI: 10.26855/er.2020.04.001

Received: March 20, 2020

Accepted: April 25, 2020

Published: May 26, 2020

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Abstract

Basic Arabic grammar is divided into two categories: jumlah Ismiah and jumlah Fi'liyah which are the most important thing to be mastered by students. However, students are not accustomed using media when learning process that makes students feel bored in learning Arabic. So, the researcher offered grammar cube in learning Arabic as an alternative media to teach students. This study was experimental research which aimed to find out the effect of using grammar cube in learning Arabic to master students' jumlah Ismiah and jumlah Fi'liyah at Islamic Junior High School Darul Huda Sipungguk Kampar Regency, Indonesia. This experimental research starts from design the step of learning, implementation, observation, and test. Based on the data analysis, it can be concluded that the use of grammar cube in learning Arabic effected on mastering students' jumlah Ismiah and jumlah Fi'liyah at Islamic Junior High School Darul Huda Sipungguk Kampar Regency, Indonesia. The result showed the score of $T_o = 2.83$ is higher than T_t on standard $1\% = 2.76$ and $5\% = 2.04$. It means H_o is rejected and H_a is accepted. So, there was a significant effect of using grammar cube on students' jumlah Ismiah and jumlah Fi'liyah. By conducting this research, the researcher hopes Arabic teachers can teach grammar by using this media in order to increase students' interest in learning Arabic.

Keywords

Arabic grammar, grammar cube strategy, jumlah ismiah, jumlah fi'liyah, media

1. Introduction

The teaching and learning of Arabic language at *pesantren* (Islamic boarding school) generally aim to promote the understanding of *kitabkuning* (literally means yellow book) containing the teaching of Islam. In other words, the teaching and learning of Arabic language are conducted for the purpose of Islamic studies. Hence, the teaching and learning of Arabic language start with memorization of *nahw* (syntax) and *sarf* (morphology), followed by understanding of religious texts from *kitabkuningsuch* as *usul al-fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), *tafsir* (exegesis), *hadith*, *sira* (biography), *aqidah* (Islamic creeds), etc.

Grammar comes after language. Grammatical rules are born due to errors in language use (Mustofa & Hamid, 2016, pp. 71-72). Basic Arabic grammar consists of two categories that should be mastered by students, namely

jumlahismiyyah (nominal sentence) and *jumlahfi'liyyah* (verbal sentence) (Yunus, 1978, p. 134).

The teaching and learning of Arabic grammar at *Madrassa* (school) are intended to prevent errors in speech and writing and to accustom correct language use (Hanomi, 2009, p. 44). Additionally, it is intended to enable understanding of word position, which will lead to better understanding of word meaning. It also aims to promote communication skills, including grammar skills and adjustment of language forms to different inputs (Zaenuddin, 2012, p. 42).

Based on the result of the previous study that has conducted towards 8th grade students in Junior Islamic Boarding School Darul Huda, Sipungguk, Kampar Regency, Indonesia, there are problems in learning Arabic grammar. This phenomenon can be seen by looking at following clues: students look lack of enthusiasm in learning activities, students cannot differentiate between *jumlahismiyah* and *jumlahfi'liyah*, students cannot give examples of *jumlahismiyah* and *jumlahfi'liyah*, students cannot resolve and complete the exercise related to *jumlahismiyah* and *jumlahfi'liyah*, and students cannot explain the part of speech (*i'rab*) in *jumlahismiyah* and *jumlahfi'liyah*.

Teachers do not use any learning and teaching media in class activity when teaching Arabic and its grammar. Teachers only implement lecturing, question, and answer (Q&A), and discussion of the methods.

To meet the objectives of the teaching and learning of Arabic grammar abovementioned, some efforts should be made by Madrasah Tsanawiyah Darul Huda Sipungguk. Therefore, the researchers suggested a strategy using grammar cube media in the teaching and learning of Arabic grammar at the said school. This media can serve as an alternative media for achieving the objectives. This grammar cube includes words that will make up a sentence if arranged according to correct grammatical rules. This learning media will aid teachers to better teach students *jumlahismiyyah* and *jumlahfi'liyyah* (Rosyidi, 2009, p. 52).

According to OemarHamalik, learning media can motivate and attract students to learn. Media has an important role in the achievement of learning outcomes intended in the curriculum as it aids teachers with explaining difficult materials, making them more comprehensible to all students.

Teachers need learning media for teaching Arabic grammar. Learning media facilitate comfortable and fun teaching and learning and allow students to participate in the classroom, both individually and in groups. Arabic language teaching benefits from learning media as learning media facilitate mastery of language features such as sound, vocabulary, and grammar as well as language skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills (Khalilullah, 2015, p. 12).

The difficulties commonly encountered by beginners in learning a foreign language is distinguishing two languages in their sounds, grammars, and scripts (Al-Hadidi, n.d., p. 4).

The objective of this research was to figure out whether the grammar cube media is effective for the teaching and learning of Arabic language and to examine whether this grammar cube media can increase students' interest in learning and is suitable to be used in the Arabic grammar teaching.

According to the above mentioned, the questions posed in this research were: "How is the effectiveness of grammar cube media for improving beginners' understanding of the materials *jumlahismiyyah* and *jumlahfi'liyyah*?" and "Is this media able to improve students' interest in learning Arabic grammar?"

1.1 Significance of the Study

Previous research on grammar learning media was written by M. K. Asrori (2016) for his master's thesis at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang East Java, entitled "Developing an Android-Based Learning Media for the Teaching of Grammar at the Department of Arabic Education". This research was intended to produce an Android-based mobile learning media for students of Department of Arabic Language and to figure out the quality of the mobile learning media produced whether it is appropriate to be used in the grammar teaching and learning or not. The problem is that it is difficult to learn Arabic grammar. Some students were lazy to bring their books, and there were insufficient media for

teaching and learning grammar. The results of this research were as follows: 1) steps in design: potentials and problems, data collection, product design, design validation, design revision, product try-out, usage try-out, product revision, and mass production; 2) with a score of 41 or a “good” degree obtained from a lecturer expert in the materials and a score of 50 or a “very good” degree obtained from a lecturer expert in media design, this Android-based learning media is appropriate to use; and 3) according to the analysis of the test results, the product was declared effective as its Tcount value was higher than the Ttable value. Therefore, this Android-based media is effective for Arabic grammar learning.

There has been hardly any previous study focusing on Arabic grammar learning media. This is due to the fact that there is little media for grammar learning. However, there is a sarjana’s thesis by Ardiyanti (2016) of UIN Sultan Syarif Kasim Pekanbaru examining the effectiveness of pocket board for the mastery of Arabic grammar. Siti Ardiyanti identified that students had little interest in learning Arabic grammar and the teacher taught without any appropriate learning media. She concluded that the pocket board media was effective for Arabic grammar learning at MTs Al-Muttaqin Pekanbaru.

The steps to teaching using grammar cube media are as follows: (1) the teacher mentioned the learning objectives and advantages in the daily life; (2) the teacher provided the students with motivation to learn Arabic language; (3) the teacher put the cube on a tall table with its word order; (4) the teacher read out the words written on the cube sides twice or three times, and the students listened to him/her attentively; (5) the teacher explained the materials *jumlah ismiyyah* and *jumlah fi’liyah* using the grammar cube media; (6) the teacher turned the first cube to *mubtada’*. If the students were to learn *fi’il*, the teacher turned the second cube. Then he or she turned the second cube if the students were to learn *maf’ulbih*; (7) the teacher found news sentence examples from the *qiro’ah* material contained in the textbook; (8) the teacher explained about the *i’rab* of *jumlah ismiyyah* and *jumlah fi’liyah*; (9) the teacher drew a conclusion of the learning materials with the students.

2. Literature Review

Learning is a daily reality that takes place at school. Learning is present with its complexity, which can be seen in two perspectives—the perspective of the student and the perspective of the teacher. In students’ perspective, learning reflects a process as they undergo a process in their mental development (Dimiyati & Mudjiono, 2009, pp. 17-18).

In the learning process, there are two paramount, interlinked elements, namely learning methods and learning media. Proper selection of methods will influence the selection of media although in some cases, media selection will depend on the learning objectives to be achieved and students’ learning behaviors (Arsyad, 2015, p. 15).

Ahmad Salim in *Muzakkarat ad-dauroh at-tarbiyah* (Salim, 1987, p. 1) mentioned four key elements of the learning process, namely teacher, student, material, and learning media. Attention should be paid to these elements to achieve the desired learning objectives.

The elements abovementioned should also be taken into account in the Arabic language learning. Arabic language learning is arduous for beginners as it comes with varied problems. For example, Arabic language learning will involve complex phonology, morphology (*tashrif*), syntax (*nahw*), and vocabulary as well as rules in writing (Hermawan, 2011, p. 100).

At the moment, the use of learning media in *nahw* or Arabic grammar learning at schools is lacking. This certainly makes the learning elements incomplete. In fact, one of the advantages of learning media is that it can increase students’ interest in learning (Hamalik, 1994, p. 18).

The use of learning media in language learning is based on the notion that students’ knowledge, skills, and behaviors are established through direct observation, experience, and hearing (Hermawan, 2011, pp. 224-225).

The grammar learning method currently employed requires students to memorize the rules although they do not fully understand the rules. As a result, the students fail to apply the rules they have memorized in the real life. Bearing that in mind, some attempts have been made to find the solutions to this problem, including finding the best and easiest method

to transfer grammar knowledge to students and using appropriate learning media to facilitate grammar learning and to increase students' interest in learning (Punawan, 2010, p. 51).

In Arabic grammar learning, learning media is necessary. Presently, grammar learning is mainly conducted using traditional learning methods, and learning media use tends to be neglected.

The basic Arabic grammar that beginners should understand is the materials about *jumlah ismiyyah* and *jumlah fi'liyyah*. These two materials are very important and serve as a stepping stone for students to understand Arabic sentences and to learn the Arabic language even deeper.

Jumlahismiyyah is a sentence that begins with a noun as the sentence subject, followed by a word that functions as an explanation of the sentence subject (Abbas, 2001, p. 446). *Jumlahismiyyah* consists of *mubtada'* (subject) and *khobar* (predicate) (Centre, 2008, p. 11). *Jumlahfi'liyyah* is a sentence that begins with a verb and consists of *fi'il* (verb), *fa'il* (the subject of a verb), and *maf'ulum bih* (object of a verb) or *na'ibul fa'il* (the subject of a passive verb) (Nikmah, 2006, p. 169).

There are some media that can be used in the Arabic grammar learning, namely grammar cube, pocket board, and rope board (Rosyidi, 2009, p. 57). The researchers deemed the grammar cube as a suitable alternative learning media, especially for the materials *jumlah ismiyyah* and *jumlah fi'liyyah*.

A strategy in the educational field is defined as art and knowledge for empowering different components of teaching. Meanwhile, in its relation with language, it refers to the way a learner takes to improve the efficiency of language learning, language competence, and self-confidence, which covers mental activity, action, behaviors and varied techniques (I. Asrori, 2011, pp. 22-23).

Grammar cube media is a cube that is made of cardboard or plywood and contains the elements of a sentence taught by the teacher. On every side of the cube is a word. This cube functions as a media for the learning of word order. For example, on the first cube is a word that has the position of a *mubtada'*, while on the second cube is a *fi'il*, on the third cube is a *maf'ulbih*, and on the fourth cube is a *hal*. The words are written on some pieces of paper, which are then pasted on the cube. These cubes are suitable for the learning of word position (Rosyidi, 2009, pp. 58-59).

Research on Arabic grammar learning in an article written by Ahmad Sehri bin Punawan entitled "The Method of Teaching Arabic Grammar" was intended to describe methods that can be used in Arabic grammar learning. The research's problems were the pros and cons of effective methods for Arabic grammar learning according to a number of linguists. This research concluded that there are some methods that can be used in grammar teaching, each of which has supporters and opponents, and one method does not necessarily outperform the other. Therefore, intensive research in the field by specialists is necessary for finding suitable methods for grammar teaching. For the students to easily understand *nahw* and to resolve their difficulties, suitable teaching methods should be employed. Teachers should not be fixated on only one method. Instead, they should incorporate all methods that are suitable for the need, situation, and condition of students (Punawan, 2010, p. 59).

Another article on Arabic grammar learning entitled "Arabic Grammar Learning and its implication towards reading and understanding Arabic literatures at Tarbiyatul Muftadi-ien boarding school, Cirebon Indonesia" was written by Rodliyah Zaenuddin. This research was aimed to figure out the ability to read and comprehend Arabic text without *tashkil* (supplementary diacritics) of *santris* (students) of Majelis Tarbiyatul Muftadi-ein boarding school, Gempol Cirebon, Indonesia. The problem was that the Majelis Tarbiyatul Muftadi-ein boarding school, Gempol Cirebon, Indonesiapaid heavy attention to the Arabic language. Thus, the researcher intended to figure out the extent to which this affected *santris'* ability to read. The results showed that not all *santris* of class *alfiyah tsaniyah* were able to affix the correct *tashkil* to the corresponding word according to the type of word in the context (the application of *tashrif*). In addition, not all of them were able to affix final *harakat* (vowel mark) in accordance with the word position (*i'rab*) in the sentence correctly (the application of *nahw*). Of all the respondents, no one could make zero error in the *tashkil* affixion. This was especially the case when they explained *fahm al-maqrû* by translating a text. They could only

translate some lines, and they were not translated accurately. Some of them did not even make any translation (Zaenuddin, 2012, pp. 95-96).

Thus, it could be concluded that grammar cube media can be used in Arabic grammar learning. It is expected to be an alternative to the existing Arabic grammar learning media and to help increase students' interest in learning.

2.1. Research Questions

According to the precede description, it is important to conduct a research on the effectiveness of Grammar Cube Strategy media as a strategy in teaching *jumlah ismiyah* and *jumlah fi'liyah* in Arabic grammar learning. Thus the research question can be specified into:

- a) How is the effectiveness of Grammar Cube Strategy media in Arabic learning in order to understand about *jumlah ismiyah* and *jumlah fi'liyah* for a beginner?
- b) How do the media increase students' enthusiasm in learning Arabic grammar?

3. Method

3.1. Research Design

This research uses "Pretest-Posttest Control Group Design" as a research design. This research is conducted in 8th-grade classrooms in Junior Islamic Boarding School Darul Huda, Sipungguk, Kampar Regency, Indonesia. The population of this study is all students of 8th grade of Junior Islamic Boarding School Darul Huda, Sipungguk, Kampar Regency, Indonesia. A sample of this study is the 8th graders of second semester, two classes in total.

3.2. Participant

In accordance with the research problem, this research is conducted using quantitative approach and experiment method based on the case study that has been done in Junior Islamic Boarding School Darul Huda, Sipungguk, Kampar Regency, Indonesia. Experiment research is a research method that is used to identify the effect of one variable towards another in the restrained condition (Sugiyono, 2009, p. 125).

3.3. Data collection

As for the techniques used in collecting data in this research is by observation, test, and documentation as follow: (1) Observation. Observation is conducted by teachers with the instrument that has made before. Here, the technique of observation uses teacher and peer observation sheet. It is used to observe class activity that is expected to emerge in Arabic grammar learning; (2) Test. In this research, aspect to be identified is students' competency in comprehending the material about *jumlah ismiyah* and *jumlah fi'liyah* by using Grammar Cube strategy. To measure students' competency, this research used the test in form of essay that is given to both sample classes before and after applying the strategy to see the difference of results of the learning process. Before the test, the questions should be examined and evaluated first of their validity, reliability, question distinction, and the level of difficulties (Arikunto, 2002, p. 76); (3) Documentation. Documentation is used to obtain data directly from the location the research is conducted, which is relevant to the topic to be researched. Documentation can be obtained from school society, school archive, and also data in form of tables from the administration officials. Data consists of five aspects: data about school history, the curriculum used, infrastructure, students' condition, and teachers and staffs' condition.

4. Results

In this research, the researcher explains the result of test or pretest result students of experiment class and control class. In this pretest, the average of experiment students' mark is 73, and control class students' is 75. While in the posttest, the average mark of experiment students is 80, and control class is 76. Then it was mentioned that the mark

between pretest and posttest of experiment class is different. The highest difference is 18 and the lowest one is -3. Students' mark is also different in control class between the pretest and posttest. The highest difference is 18 and the lowest is -15.

From this description, it can be seen that there is a significant improvement in experiment class which used Grammar Cube strategy. However, there is no significant improvement in control class which used conventional strategy in learning.

Then this research used some formulas to analyze the data. The steps are as follows:

- a) There mentioned pretest data analysis table to get X' , $(X')^2$ and Y' , $(Y')^2$. Then looked for the mean of X and the mean of Y with the formula $SD_{x/y} = \sqrt{(\sum x'^2/y'^2)/N}$ and gained the result of SDx is 4.42, and SDy is 4.89. Then looked for T_o with this following formula:

$$t_o = \frac{M_x - M_y}{\sqrt{\left(\frac{SD_x}{\sqrt{N-1}}\right)^2 + \left(\frac{SD_y}{\sqrt{N-1}}\right)^2}}$$

Gained from that formula -1.16 as a result, with the Degree of Free (DF) = $(N_1+N_2)-2 = (15+16)-2 = 29$, with 5 % = 2.04 and 1% = 2.76. And from that result, there is no significant difference between experiment class and control class.

- b) There mentioned posttest data analysis table to get X' , $(X')^2$ and Y' , $(Y')^2$. Then looked for the mean of X and the mean of Y with the formula $SD_{x/y} = \sqrt{(\sum x'^2/y'^2)/N}$ and gained the result of SDx is 4.42, and SDy is 4.89. Then looked for T_o with this following formula:

$$t_o = \frac{M_x - M_y}{\sqrt{\left(\frac{SD_x}{\sqrt{N-1}}\right)^2 + \left(\frac{SD_y}{\sqrt{N-1}}\right)^2}}$$

Gained from that formula 2.32 as a result, with the Degree of Free (DF) = $(N_1+N_2)-2 = (15+16)-2 = 29$ with 5 % = 2.04 and 1% = 2.76. And from that result, there is no significant difference between experiment class and control class.

- c) There mentioned the data analysis table of difference between pretest and posttest in experiment class and control class to get X' , $(X')^2$ and Y' , $(Y')^2$. Then looked for the mean of X and the mean of Y with the formula $SD_{x/y} = \sqrt{(\sum x'^2/y'^2)/N}$, and the result of SDx is 6.19 and SDy is 5.19. Then looked for T_o with this following formula:

$$t_o = \frac{M_x - M_y}{\sqrt{\left(\frac{SD_x}{\sqrt{N-1}}\right)^2 + \left(\frac{SD_y}{\sqrt{N-1}}\right)^2}}$$

From that formula, the result is 2.82 with the Degree of Free (DF) = $(N_1+N_2)-2 = (15+16)-2 = 29$ with 5 % = 2.04 and 1% = 2.76. From that result, there can be seen a significant difference between experiment class and control class. It means that H_a is approved, and H_o is unapproved because T_{hitung} is bigger than T_{table} ($2.76 \leq 2.83 \geq 2.04$). In another word, using Grammar Cube strategy is effective for students to comprehend and masterverbal sentences and nominal sentences.

In the introduction, the researcher brought up two studies that are relevant to this research. There were some similarities in different aspects of the two studies and this research, which supported this research. In terms of title, the three studies discussed Arabic grammar learning media. In terms of objectives, the three studies aimed to improve students' interest in learning Arabic language and to facilitate students' Arabic grammar learning. However, in terms of research design, there was a difference. The first study was research and development study, while the second study was quantitative research. In terms of media, there was a difference between the two studies too. In terms of media, the first study was technology-based media, while this research, as well as the second study, used manually made media. Nevertheless, all of the aforementioned studies supported this research.

From the result of the examined hypothesis that has gained after analysis, it shows that there is the difference between students who use Grammar Cube strategy with students who use conventional learning techniques. That difference shows that Grammar Cube strategy is positively affected students' comprehension about *jumlahismiyah* and *jumlahfi'liyah*. The mean difference between experiment and control class is that experiment class that uses "Grammar Cube Strategy" is 80, and control class which uses conventional learning strategy is 76 shows that the experiment class means is higher than the mean of the control class. The To result is also shows that To is higher than T Table which is $1\% \leq \text{Thitung} \leq 5\%$ or $2.76 \leq 2.83 \leq 2.04$.

It can be concluded that the implementation of Grammar Cube strategy has a positive significant effect towards students' comprehension of *jumlahismiyah* and *jumlahfi'liyah*. From the statistic result above, it gained comparison between experiment class and control class result. Students from experiment class seemed to have a better understanding of the material and enthusiastically involved in the learning activity. It is shown when the students participate actively, involved in giving examples, and the test that shows that most students got good grades.

With this positive effect of implementing Grammar Cube strategy, it is exactly proved that this strategy can improve students' understanding and comprehension of *jumlahismiyah* and *jumlahfi'liyah*.

The following are the factors influencing the results above:

- a) Students were more active in the learning as the learning was student-centered;
- b) Learning media made students love the Arabic language as they had been learning without any learning media before;
- c) The grammar cube media was easy to use in the classroom;
- d) Media demonstrated abstract concepts in a concrete manner to the students;
- e) Media overcame differences in the students' characteristics due to different experiences and environments.

Meanwhile, in the control class, there were only students who had little understanding of the materials and who looked less motivated in the learning. This showed that the students had not understood the materials well. During the learning, they did not exist as the learning was not interesting and it was teacher-centered. The teacher only explained the materials without involving the students in the teaching and learning process.

According to the results of the data analysis above, it can be concluded that the grammar cube media is effective for the learning Arabic, especially learning of *jumlah ismiyyah* and *jumlah fi'liyyah* for beginnings. Grammar cube can be used as an alternative media for grammar learning to improve students' interest in learning. This was shown by the increased test results of the students who were taught using the media.

The researchers recommended that teachers should use the Arabic grammar cube media as an alternative media for the learning of grammar to achieve the learning objectives and to motivate students in the teaching and learning process in the classroom.

4.1. Limitation of the Study

This research has its limitation in accordance with participants and the research question. In this research, the researchers use two classes as one control class and one experiment class. Whereas the research question is not try to elaborate factors that impact the effectiveness of grammar cube.

5. Suggestions for Further Research

To get a better research in the future, the researchers suggest the next researchers to explore more deeply about learning of Arabic units, not only a sentence but also the other unit of Arabic language, like letter, word, etc., implement in more than two classes, and involve more students to be participants.

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