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Learning Assistance Program through puzzles to Improve Students' Arabic Language Skills

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Abstract

This community service program strives to make Arabic language learning more effective and successful by utilizing Arabic sentence puzzle media. This activity employs the notion of Participatory Action Research (PAR), specifically combining research, education, and action with people who actively participate in the service activity process. This service activity involved 51 students from Thamavitya Mulniti School's Smart Arabic classes VIII and IX in Thailand. This service activity will be carried out from August to September 2024. As a result of this activity, students demonstrated excellent participation in Arabic learning, with an average evaluation score of 93.90, a median score of 95 and a frequently occurring score (mode) of 100. There were six students received a score between 80 and 85.6. eleven students who had scores ranging from 85.6 to 91.2. fourteen students received scores ranging from 91.2 to 96.8, while 23 received scores between 96.8 and 100. This is due to the fact that puzzle media requires students to learn both visually and tactically. Additionally, group learning enables students to collaborate and share knowledge with one another.

Keywords: *Language Learning, Puzzle, Arabic Language Skill*

Abstrak

Program pengabdian kepada masyarakat ini bertujuan untuk menjadikan pembelajaran bahasa Arab yang efektif dan berhasil dengan menggunakan bantuan media puzzle kalimat bahasa Arab. Kegiatan ini menggunakan konsep Participatory Action Research (PAR) yaitu sebuah Penelitian Tindakan Partisipatif dengan menggabungkan penelitian, pendidikan, dan aksi dengan subjek yang berpartisipasi aktif selama proses kegiatan pengabdian. Subjek dalam kegiatan pengabdian ini adalah 51 siswa kelas VIII dan IX kelas Smart Arabic di Thamavitya Mulniti School, Thailand. Kegiatan pengabdian ini dilakukan pada bulan Agustus hingga bulan September 2024. Hasil dari kegiatan ini, para siswa mampu mengikuti pembelajaran bahasa Arab dengan sangat baik dengan hasil evaluasi nilai rata-rata sebesar 93,90 dengan nilai tengah 95 dan nilai yang sering muncul (modus) sebesar 100. Siswa yang mendapatkan nilai 80 sampai 85,6 sejumlah 6 orang, siswa yang mendapatkan nilai 85,6 sampai 91,2 sebanyak 11 siswa. 14 orang siswa mendapatkan nilai 91,2 sampai 96,8 dan 23 siswa mendapatkan nilai 96,8 sampai 100. Hal ini dikarenakan media puzzle memfasilitasi siswa bukan hanya belajar melalui visual namun juga taktis. Selain itu, pembelajaran

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berkelompok juga memungkinkan siswa untuk berkolaborasi dan berbagi pengetahuan satu sama lain.

Kata Kunci: *Pembelajaran Bahasa, Puzzle, Keterampilan Bahasa Arab*

INTRODUCTION

The primary objective of education is to enable students to acquire knowledge, skills, and attitudes via a variety of teaching approaches. Nonetheless, learning Arabic is sometimes seen as a difficult and uninteresting process (Munawarah & Ilmiani, 2024). Many students find it challenging to comprehend Arabic narrative and language. Inadequate material selection, sequencing, and presentation techniques may be the cause of students' difficulties comprehending Arabic. Students become reluctant or uninterested in learning Arabic when the subject is presented in a tedious manner. Students' interest in learning Arabic is also influenced by low motivation elements (Nur, Nursyamsiah, & Maulani, 2023). Likewise with the situation of Smart Arabic students at Thamavitya Mulniti School, in Yala Thailand.

Based on observations of students in class VIII and IX Smart Arabic on Monday, August 26 2024, students experienced difficulty in understanding explanations and writing in Arabic due to the lack of vocabulary. This was also confirmed by an interview with the school principal, H. Razi Bensulong, on Tuesday, August 27 2024, who stated that students in grades VIII and IX of Madrasah Tsanawiyah Thamavitya Mulniti School still had problems understanding Arabic reading. Apart from that, students also sometimes feel bored and less motivated to learn Arabic. Against this background, more engaging and dynamic learning methods are required to pique students' interest in learning (Briliandy & Inayati, 2024), as well as new approaches that mix learning features with entertaining activities. One strategy that can be used is to create a fun game-based learning support program (Azwar et al, 2023), which can inspire students while also effectively improving their Arabic language skills.

These days, puzzles can be utilized as a teaching tool in addition to being a game. Puzzles are a kind of game where players construct an image out of fragments of language

or pictures. The objectives of the game are to solve issues, help pupils grasp topics better, improve motor and cognitive skills, and allow players to collaborate with others. (2019, Ananda). According to Ayu & Delrefi (2021), puzzles involve assembling letters, numbers, and picture pieces in a specific sequence to create a game similar to construction games. Romadhoni (2020) found that playing puzzle games while studying Arabic can enhance students' focus and psychomotor abilities while also adding enjoyment to the language. This is thought to be the case because puzzles have the power to pique students' attention and successfully motivate them to study in accordance with their needs, interests, and aptitudes. According to studies by Badruttamam, Kholidah, and Khofifah (2021), puzzles can promote active learning, increase vocabulary knowledge in Arabic, and enhance speaking abilities with regard to pronunciation. Furthermore, using puzzles can help students become more proficient readers of Arabic, according to research by Rinandi & Nurhidayati (2022).

According to the findings of the preceding studies, it can be inferred that puzzle games have the potential to improve students' motor abilities, facilitate their understanding of the content being taught, expand their vocabulary, and foster friendships. As a result, this program of community service activities employs puzzle media in the form of broken Arabic phrases that students must correctly arrange in order to create a whole narrative. It is envisaged that this medium would help students get over their challenges with Arabic comprehension and increase the quality of learning outcomes.

IMPLEMENTATION METHOD

This community service activity uses the concept of Participatory Action Research (PAR), which is a research approach that has been used since 1940 by combining research, education and action (Rahmat & Mirnawati, 2020). According to Haryono et al. (2024), PAR is a research methodology that entails the community or group being studied actively participating in the study process. Research subjects actively engage in the study from the beginning to the end in this service activity. There are four steps to this community service strategy that incorporate the Participatory Action Research concept: 1) problem identification; 2) preparation; 3) implementation; and 4) evaluation and

reflection. This service activity was carried out to help strengthen the Arabic language skills of class VIII and IX pupils at Thamavitya Mulniti School in Yala province, Thailand, by providing a learning medium in the form of sentence puzzles.

The initial stage is identification by conducting initial observations or surveys of the objects of service activities. Observation results identify problems, deficiencies and advantages of available resources, such as student abilities and potential, school facilities and others.

The following phase is preparation for the activity, which involves talking with the school and the service team about how the activity will be carried out, including who will participate, when, and what the theme or topic of the lesson plan will be. Activities are then arranged and scheduled. There were 51 female students from Madrasah Tsanawiyah Thamavitya Mulniti School in Thailand who participated in this program. They were in classes VIII and IX. Puzzle media will be used to support learning exercises. The daily activities of the students are the theme being taught (يوم في حياة الطالب). Friends work together to carry out this learning process (peer collaboration). According to Wiliam and Leahy's (2015) book, working together among students can result in better learning than working solo or competing with their friends. This can also lead to pupils serving as a learning resource for one another.

The third step involves carrying out activities such as learning Arabic. The implementation period for the process of making recommendations and offering assistance in using puzzle media for learning Arabic at Thamavitya Mulniti School in Thailand will run from August to September 2024. First, we separated the Smart Arabic class pupils, a total of 51 persons, into four groups. Collaborate with each group member, totaling 12-13 pupils. Following that, pupils were given empty cardboard and an envelope containing a puzzle of phrase parts to organize and paste onto the cardboard. The pupils will write a tale named "يوم في حياة الطالب".

After the students open the envelope containing the sentence puzzle, the teacher asks the students about some of the vocabulary in the puzzle and writes the meaning of

the words on the whiteboard. The words in the narrative that students will eventually compile make up the vocabulary. The teacher then told the narrative aloud in Indonesian and Malay. As they listened, the students worked in groups to collect and translate the story's contents into Arabic by finding the correct jigsaw pieces and gluing them on the supplied cardboard. Following the completion of the sentence puzzle and its transformation into a story, a representative from each group reads aloud the story's contents in Arabic. According to Smith (2020), reading aloud can create more precise pronunciation, boost student confidence, and develop good intonation.

The final stage is evaluation and reflection. In this phase, evaluation is carried out by observing the participants' learning process while the activity is in progress. Learning outcomes are also evaluated by conducting questionnaires and interviews with students regarding mentoring activities that have been completed regarding the use of puzzle media in learning Arabic. After that, the research team will write a report on the results of further service activities. As for the evaluation process to test students' Arabic language skills, students are given several questions containing Arabic vocabulary which must be translated and also make complete sentences (الجملة المفيدة). Apart from that, students were also given a questionnaire containing several questions as a reflection of the benefits of learning Arabic with the help of puzzle media.



Figure 1. Process and the implementation of community service programme

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This community service was conducted out from August to September 2024 at Thamavitya Mulniti School in Yala, Thailand. Thamavitya Mulniti School differentiates its middle and high school students based on their preferences, offering four vocational classes: Smart Arabic, Smart English, Smart Mathematic, and Smart Art. Smart Arabic is a group of students who want to learn more about Arabic; Smart English is a group of students who want to learn more about English; Smart Mathematics is a group of students who like counting and want to learn more about mathematics; and Smart Art is a class for students who enjoy art, such as painting, playing musical instruments, sculpting, and so on. This service project involved assisting students in grades VIII and IX of the Smart Arabic program with Arabic learning through puzzles.

Learning begins by dividing 51 students into 4 working groups with 12-13 students in each group. After that, students were given empty cardboard and an envelope containing a puzzle in the form of sentence pieces to be arranged and pasted on the cardboard. The story that the students will compose is entitled "يوم في حياة الطالب ". After the students open the envelope containing the sentence puzzle, the teacher asks the students about some of the vocabulary in the puzzle and writes the meaning of the words on the whiteboard. The vocabulary is the words in the story which will later be compiled by students. After that, the teacher read the story using Indonesian and Malay, while listening to the story, students in groups compiled and translated the contents of the story into Arabic by looking for the appropriate puzzle pieces and attaching them to the cardboard provided. After the sentence puzzle has been completely arranged and has become a story, a representative from each group reads the contents of the story in Arabic in a loud voice (reading aloud).

The photo below depicts the process of learning Arabic. Students are collaborating with their groupmates to piece together a jigsaw of relevant Arabic language. Working on this puzzle necessitates focus, precision, critical thinking, and group collaboration. When learning takes place, students collaborate to find the proper solution. Variations in learning like these motivate pupils to participate in lessons. This is evident in the lively learning environment, which includes conversations and students who actively ask

questions and express their perspectives to their peers and to us as teachers. This is in line with the findings of Badruttamam, Kholidah, and Khofifah (2021), who found that puzzles can help promote active learning. Not only that, but kids are incredibly organized in following each learning procedure and concentrated when putting together Arabic sentence puzzles.

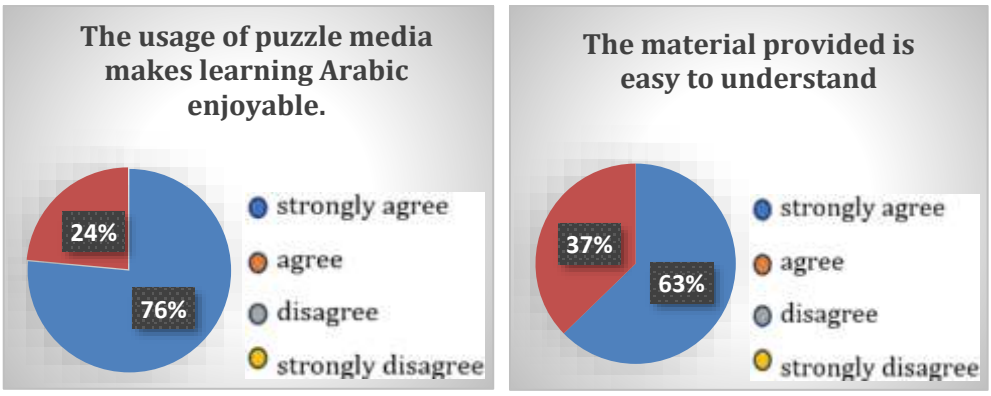


Figure 2. Learning Process

Through the completion of this task, fellow students can share ideas in order to determine the right response. Students who were not as excited about learning Arabic at first are now involved in solving problems and piecing together sentences to form a coherent narrative. According to studies by Wiliam and Leahy (2015), children can learn more when they collaborate with one another rather than when they work alone or compete with friends.

After completing the challenge, representatives from each group read aloud the Arabic story written by their group members. Reading aloud helps children improve their pronunciation, gain self-confidence, and develop good intonation (Smith, 2020). All groups were successful in developing proper and relevant Arabic stories. After learning is completed, learning outcomes are assessed by administering examinations and surveys to students. In the test material, students are given multiple questions including Arabic vocabulary that must be translated and made into complete sentences (الجملة المفيدة). Aside from that, pupils were given a questionnaire with numerous questions about learning Arabic using puzzle media.

According to the results of evaluation questionnaires and interviews with students in class VIII and IX of the Smart Arabic class at Thamavitya Mulniti School, all students agreed that the use of puzzle media in learning Arabic has several benefits, including: 1) Improve vocabulary: Puzzles help students retain and understand new terminology in a fun and interactive way. These findings are consistent with studies by Badruttamam, Kholidah, and Khofifah (2021), which suggests that puzzles are effective for enhancing mastery of Arabic language; 2) Practicing reading skills, this finding is similar to research by Rinandi and Nurhidayati (2022), which has proved that the usage of puzzles can improve students' Arabic reading skills; 3) Completing puzzles demands analysis and problem-solving, which can develop students' critical thinking skills; 4. Puzzles make studying more fascinating and challenging, enhancing students' willingness to learn Arabic; 5) Puzzles are utilized in group activities to increase engagement and collaboration among pupils; 6) The use of puzzles provides a refreshing alternative to typical learning approaches; 7) Improve Memory: Solving puzzles can help students remember material better by using visual and tactical associations. The evaluation's findings are consistent with research by Romadhoni (2020), which claims that playing puzzle games while learning Arabic can help students focus better, develop their psychomotor abilities, and have more fun with the language.



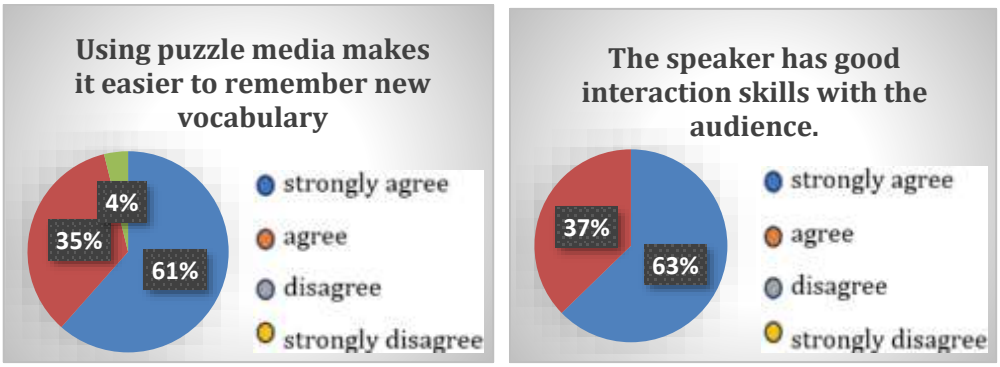


Figure 3. Results of the Learning Evaluation Questionnaire with the Use of Puzzle Media

According to test results, pupils in Smart Arabic Thamavitya Mulniti School's classes VIII and IX received an average score of 93.90, with a middle score of 95 and a frequently occurring score (mode) of 100. Six students received a score between 80 and 85.6, while eleven students received a score between 85.6 and 91.2. Scores ranged from 91.2 to 96.8 for 14 pupils and 96.8 to 100 for 23 students. Based on the students' ratings, it is evident that using puzzle media in conjunction with a group approach can effectively and very well facilitate Arabic language learning.

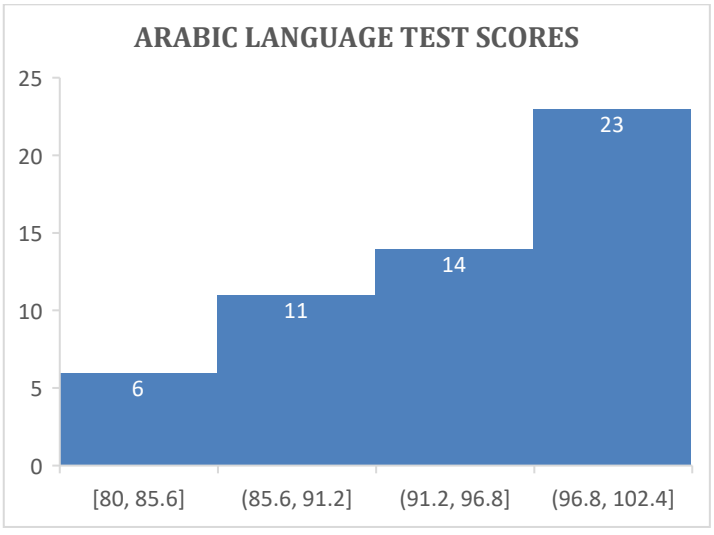


Figure 4. Arabic Language Test Score Results

CONCLUSION

The research on the use of puzzle media with collaborative learning methods for Arabic language learning at Thamavitya Mulniti School can be concluded in the very good category, with an average student score of 93.90, a middle score of 95, and a frequently occurring score (mode) of 100. Six students received scores ranging from 80 to 85.6, eleven received scores between 85.6 and 91.2, fourteen received scores between 91.2 and 96.8, and twenty-three received scores between 96.8 and 100. This is influenced by a variety of factors, including puzzle media, which allows kids to learn both visually and tactically. Additionally, group learning encourages students to learn from one another and collaborate. This demonstrates the importance of tactics, methods, and media in the learning process in order to promote joyful learning with positive outcomes. We hope that this service activity will benefit all parties, including instructors and kids. Aside from that, we hope to conduct additional research that expands on this work, and we encourage reader feedback and recommendations.

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