

**TEACHERS' STRATEGIES IN FOSTERING STUDENTS' INTEREST IN LEARNING
ARABIC LANGUAGE AT SMP MUHAMMADIYAH PLUS SALATIGA**

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the strategies used by teachers to foster students' interest in learning Arabic at SMP Muhammadiyah Plus Salatiga. The research employs a qualitative descriptive method with data collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. Three different learning strategies were implemented based on grade levels: roleplay activities in Grade VII, the talking stick method in Grade VIII, and the use of Kahoot as an evaluation tool in Grade IX. The findings reveal that each learning strategy effectively increases students' engagement and interest in learning Arabic. Roleplay helps students develop confidence and improve speaking skills by actively participating in simulated conversations. The talking stick method promotes focus and participation by encouraging spontaneous responses during class discussions. Meanwhile, Kahoot provides a modern and interactive evaluation platform that motivates students through its competitive and game-based format. Overall, this study highlights the importance of using varied and interactive teaching strategies to enhance students' motivation and learning outcomes in Arabic language classes. The results also emphasize the teacher's role as a facilitator in creating a conducive and enjoyable learning environment.

Keywords: Strategy; Learning Interest; Role-playing; Talking stick; Kahoot.

INTRODUCTION

Arabic is one of the important subjects in Islamic-based schools because it has a central position in understanding the teachings of Islam. Fathoni (2023) explained that learning Arabic not only aims to develop the ability to communicate orally and in writing, but also to foster awareness of the importance of Arabic as the key to understanding the sources of Islamic teachings, namely the Qur'an and Hadith. Therefore, Arabic learning must be designed creatively and innovatively in order to be able to foster students' motivation to learn. The more creative and innovative a teacher is in delivering lessons, the easier it is for students to accept and understand the material. The success of the learning process is highly dependent on the teacher's ability to manage learning and foster students' interest in learning. Teaching and learning activities are carried out by existing components, including educators, students, learning media, teaching methods, facilities and infrastructure and others. Teachers are the main actors in teaching and learning activities. Teachers' teaching abilities affect students' interest in learning. Teachers who are creative in choosing models, methods, and lesson plans and presenting topics in an effective and efficient way have a great influence on students' interest in learning. If teachers use a monotonous approach to teaching, students will become bored and not interested in learning (Sitorus et al., 2023).

Learning strategies function as guidelines used by teachers to create an active, creative, and fun learning atmosphere so that learning goals can be achieved optimally, choosing the right strategy allows students to learn according to their characteristics and abilities so that they are able to achieve optimal learning achievements (Asmara & Ali Mustofa, 2024). Thus, the strategies used by teachers play a big role in creating meaningful learning and fostering students' interest in learning. Interest is a very important initial stage for a student in achieving learning goals. Interest can also be defined as a person's intrinsic desire for reinforcement in learning as a driver. This activity is a stage of learning experience that is carried out with one's awareness and interest. It is possible that interest is the process of focusing on something because of the interest or interest it has (Dari et al., 2023).

Arabic language learning in junior high school is important in Islamic education and the globalization of education in Indonesia. Arabic is not only a tool to understand the sources of religious teachings, but also has academic and global value in the world of education. However, learning Arabic is not yet fully in demand by all students. Many feel that Arabic is a difficult and boring subject, which lowers their motivation and learning outcomes. Therefore, the role of teachers as designers and implementers of learning strategies is very strategic in building students' interest in learning. A teacher must create a teaching and learning atmosphere that is fun, interesting and innovative and does not cause boredom. On the other hand, students must also play an active role while participating in the Arabic teaching and learning process (Wardani & Kandeana, 2023). Teachers' creativity in designing and implementing learning strategies is the main factor in increasing interest in learning Arabic in schools. Teachers are required to not only master the subject matter, but also be able to create an interesting learning atmosphere and in accordance with the needs of students. Thus, the implementation of the right strategy is expected to change students' perception of the Arabic language from a difficult lesson to a fun and meaningful lesson.

At SMP Muhammadiyah Plus Salatiga, Arabic teachers responded to this challenge by implementing various innovative learning strategies that were tailored to the characteristics of the students. Roleplay activities in class VII help students speak in Arabic, class VIII uses the talking stick method to increase active participation in discussions, and class IX utilizes the Kahoot application as a game-based evaluation tool. This method aims to create a fun, interactive learning atmosphere.

Roleplay activities in grade VII provide direct learning experiences to students in the context of the language they are learning, namely practical Arabic. Students learn to understand real-life situations in which language is actively used through simple dialogue or drama. This strategy is considered to increase student confidence and reduce shyness. In addition, group activities carried out in roleplay also strengthen cooperation and positive interaction between students (Hermawan et al., 2025).

Meanwhile, the use of the talking stick method in grade VIII aims to increase the equal distribution of participation in learning. In this technique, the teacher provides a special stick that will move between students during the lesson. Students holding sticks are required to express their opinions or answer questions. This is effective in fostering a sense of responsibility and courage because each student has the opportunity to have a turn to speak in Arabic. In contrast to grades VII and VIII, grade IX teachers chose Kahoot to encourage digital interaction and healthy competition

in learning evaluation. The use of game-based media makes the learning atmosphere more dynamic and challenging. Through interactive quizzes, students are encouraged to better understand and remember Arabic material. This technology-based learning is also the answer to the learning challenges of the digital era that require students to be more active and critical. According to (Ghofur et al., 2023) states that learning using Kahoot can increase students' motivation and understanding.

This, different and creative learning strategies are needed in order to foster students' interest in learning. This approach is important so that learning Arabic is not only a formal task, but also a meaningful experience that encourages students to love the subject even more. This research is here to identify, analyze, and evaluate how these strategies work in the classroom, as well as to find out the extent to which they affect students' interest and motivation to learn.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive method. The goal is to describe in depth the teacher's strategy in fostering students' interest in learning, along with the student's response to the strategy. The subjects of the study were Arabic teachers and students of grades VII, VIII, and IX of SMP Muhammadiyah Plus Salatiga. Data was collected through direct observation in the classroom, semi-structured interviews with teachers and students, and documentation in the form of photos of activities. The analysis technique used is Miles and Huberman data analysis, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn. The validity of the data is strengthened by triangulation of sources and techniques.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of an interview with Mrs. Khofifah, an Arabic teacher at Muhammadiyah Plus Salatiga Junior High School, as well as observations and interviews with students starting from grades VII, VIII, and IX, it was found that teachers applied three strategies in learning Arabic, namely Role Play, Talking Stick, and Kahoot. These strategies not only increase student engagement, but also grow their interest in learning Arabic. This entire strategy is designed to encourage students' interest in learning and improve their ability to understand and use Arabic effectively.

The teacher's strategies applied do not only focus on giving mufrodat and exercises from books, but are developed through several interactive methods. In daily learning, teachers use Role Play strategies to train students in dialogue, Talking Stick to motivate students' courage and participation in answering questions, and Kahoot as a game-based evaluation medium to make students more motivated and excited to learn.

The Application of Arabic Language Teachers' Strategies in Fostering Students' Interest in Arabic Language Learning at SMP MUHAMMADIYAH PLUS SALATIGA

1. Roleplay Learning in Grade VII

Role play is an active learning method in which students are given the opportunity to play a specific character in a pre-designed situation, so that they can understand concepts, values, or skills through hands-on experience. In role play, students engage in social simulations that allow them to interact, communicate, make decisions, and solve problems in a more meaningful way than passive learning. This method is effective because it provides an experiential learning experience, encourages the courage to speak, increases empathy, and strengthens the understanding of concepts through real-world practice (Listyarini & Pertiwi, 2018). This method is used to train students to have direct dialogue, so that they can practice speaking skills and understand the context of language use in real life. According to Robbani & Sunnah, it shows that role play is very effective in increasing *maharah kalam* (the ability to speak). They explained that role-playing provides a space for students to practice dialogue that resembles real-life situations so that they are more confident in using Arabic orally (Robbani, 2025).

Roleplay learning is carried out by teachers by inviting students to dialogue in Arabic using contextual themes such as school activities, shopping at the market, introducing themselves, and so on. The teacher gives an example of a dialogue, then students are asked to practice a specific role in the simulation. This process makes students better understand vocabulary and sentence structure in a real context, as well as train their courage to speak in front of the class. Hermawan (2025) proves that roleplay increases student interest and participation and this method is suitable for improving speaking competence. In addition, research conducted by

Ahmad Bustomi et al. found that role-play-based learning combined with "4C" (Critical thinking, Creative thinking, Collaboration, Communication) skills can create an active and communicative learning atmosphere (Ahmad et al., 2024).

Learning Arabic with the roleplay method in grade VII showed a positive response from students. The results of the interviews showed that students were more interested in learning that involved drama or role-playing than the usual lecture method. Observations over three meetings showed that students were more active in learning when they acted as figures in Arabic conversations. At first, some students look awkward and not used to verbally expressing themselves in Arabic, but after being given examples, guidance, and group exercises, they begin to show improvements in pronunciation and sentence structure. This activity also helps to increase students' courage in speaking (kalam) because roleplay provides a fun and less formal conversation simulation atmosphere. This method is effective for fostering an interest in learning, especially for students with kinesthetic and interpersonal learning tendencies. The teacher said that it is easier for students to remember vocabulary and sentence structure if they practice them directly through role-playing activities.

2. Learning Talking Stick in Class VIII

Talking Stick is a cooperative learning method in which students hold a stick that serves as a "turn of speech". Students holding sticks get the opportunity to answer questions, express opinions, or explain learning materials. This technique is designed so that each student has the opportunity to speak in turn, thus encouraging active participation, creativity, and the courage of students in conveying ideas. According to Udin and Laili (2022) in the journal Pendas, the cooperative Talking Stick model significantly improves students' critical thinking skills. The cane technique gives students the opportunity to think and answer actively when it's their turn to speak. Meanwhile, according to Arif Budi Astomo, it is stated that the Talking Stick technique increases students' active participation and confidence in reading activities so as to make learning interactive (Astomo et al., 2024).

The talking stick method is used to increase the equity and activeness of students even in large groups. The teacher gives a question in the form of a question or command sentence in Arabic to the whole class, and the student holding the stick is asked to answer or respond to the question. This activity not only improves students' focus and concentration, but also trains memory and the courage to speak. This is in line with the opinion of students when interviewed that they feel more motivated to learn when there are dynamic and challenging learning opportunities. Talking stick is an alternative teaching method to support students in developing their speaking skills. Holding a talking stick empowers deep communication between individuals and provides opportunities to speak in class (Hartina, 2020).

In grade VIII, talking sticks are used as a creative learning strategy to test students' understanding. Once the baton is given to the student, each student must answer questions related to the material they have studied. The results of observations show that this technique helps students become more focused and attentive during learning. They looked enthusiastic while waiting for their turn and tried to understand the material so as not to answer the wrong answer. In addition to increasing student engagement, talking sticks make the classroom atmosphere more lively and interactive. Based on the results of the interviews, students felt challenged but still felt happy because this method was packaged in the form of games. The teacher also stated that this strategy is effective in training students' readiness and speed of thinking in answering Arabic questions.

a. Talking Stick Model Steps

- 1) The teacher prepares a stick.
- 2) The teacher delivers the main material, then gives students the opportunity to read and learn the material.
- 3) After the students finish reading the material/textbook and studying it, then the students close the book and prepare themselves to answer questions from the teacher

b. Advantages and Disadvantages of Talking Stick Models

Each learning model has its own advantages and disadvantages, as well as the talking stick learning model. Here are the advantages and disadvantages of the talking stick learning model:

- 1) Excess
 - a) Testing students' readiness in learning.
 - b) Train students to understand the material quickly.
 - c) Make students study more actively (study first before the lesson starts).
 - d) Make students dare to express their opinions.
- 2) Deficiency
 - a) It can make students feel tense.
 - b) Students may feel intimidated by the questions given.
 - c) Students can become unprepared to answer questions.

3. Kahoot Learning in Class IX

Kahoot is a *game-based learning platform* that allows teachers to create interactive quizzes, surveys, and discussions to increase student engagement and motivation to learn. This app is designed to make learning fun through competitions, points, and limited processing time so that students can learn actively and collaboratively. Kahoot is a learning medium that carries out the function of attention, because it attracts attention, concentrates attention to concentrate on learning activities (Saputro et al., 2024). This media is considered to be able to overcome learning obstacles. The integration of familiar animations with Kahoot interactive quizzes has been shown to increase students' attention, engagement, learning motivation, and understanding of the material (Maulana et al., 2025). A similar study by Komalasari et al., (2023), states that kahoot is a game-based learning medium that is able to increase student engagement and focus because it provides an interactive learning experience. Thus, Kahoot can be understood as an interactive digital medium designed to increase students' motivation, interest, and understanding through game-based learning. Some of the advantages of Kahoot media for the learning process include questions that are presented in a limited time, which allows students to think quickly and precisely. Additionally, it allows educators to create quizzes, discussions, and questions by incorporating elements such as text, videos, and images (Ningrum, 2018).

The implementation of Kahoot in grade IX began with activities designed to attract students' attention. The teacher creates a quiz according to the material being studied, then students join using their respective devices through the game code. In the process, the teacher plays the role of a facilitator who directs the course of the quiz, while students actively read questions, discuss, and answer questions competitively, as seen from the enthusiasm of students to answer questions quickly and precisely. From the observation results, students showed an improvement in test results compared to previous evaluations carried out conventionally. The use of Kahoot provides a modern learning experience and is in accordance with the characteristics of 21st century learning. This method helps increase students' motivation to learn because they feel like they are playing while learning. In addition, teachers are easy to monitor learning outcomes and provide feedback directly. Setyowati et al., (2025) stated that Kahoot is effective in improving learning outcomes because students are more focused, active, and motivated to answer questions quickly and accurately. In addition, learning outcomes can be monitored directly by teachers through automatic grade recapitulation, making it easier to provide feedback. The use of Kahoot can increase student motivation, participation, and understanding because learning feels more fun, competitive, and less monotonous. Students also get immediate feedback on their answers, while teachers are helped by the system automatically storing and managing grades. Despite the limitations of technological facilities, the research concluded that Kahoot is an effective, flexible, and able to improve Arabic learning outcomes (Ma'arif et al., 2024).

In an effort to improve the quality of learning in grade IX, the use of varied methods is very important to maintain students' focus and motivation. One of the innovations that can be applied is the use of Kahoot as an interactive learning tool. Kahoot has been proven to be able to increase student participation and activeness during the learning process because it provides a more interesting atmosphere and avoids boredom or monotony (Rahmawan & Supryanto, 2025).

CONCLUSIONS

This research shows that the application of various creative and interactive learning strategies can foster students' interest in learning Arabic in Muhammadiyah Plus Salatiga Junior High School. In grade VII, the use of the roleplay method succeeded in increasing student involvement and making them more confident in communicating using Arabic. In grade VIII, the use of talking sticks provides a dynamic and fun learning atmosphere, while testing students' understanding directly. Meanwhile, in class IX, Kahoot media is able to create a more modern, fast, and competitive learning evaluation atmosphere so as to encourage students to be more active and enthusiastic. Overall, the results of this study indicate that learning Arabic will be more effective if it is delivered through a varied approach, adjusting the characteristics of each class level, and utilizing technology and educational games. The role of teachers as facilitators is very important in creating an interactive and fun learning atmosphere so that students feel comfortable, motivated, and excited to continue learning.

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