

IMPLEMENTATION OF MUSICAL DRAMA METHODS IN ARABIC VOCABULARY LEARNING AT MADRASAH IBTIDAIYAH

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the implementation of musical drama methods in Arabic vocabulary (mufrodat) learning at elementary Islamic schools. A qualitative descriptive approach was employed to examine the teaching process, student responses, and learning outcomes. Data were collected through classroom observations, teacher interviews, and student assessment tests over a three-month period involving 26 fifth-grade students. The research utilized musical drama techniques incorporating Arabic songs, role-playing, and movement activities to teach 100 basic Arabic vocabulary words across five thematic units. Results indicate significant improvements in vocabulary retention (from 48% to 87%), student engagement levels, and oral communication confidence. Students demonstrated enhanced memorization capacity through rhythmic patterns and kinesthetic learning approaches. Teachers reported increased classroom participation and reduced learning anxiety among students. The musical drama method proved effective in creating joyful learning environments while maintaining academic rigor. Implementation challenges included time management, teacher preparation requirements, and resource allocation. The study concludes that musical drama represents a viable pedagogical innovation for Arabic vocabulary instruction in elementary Islamic education settings. Recommendations include comprehensive teacher training programs, curriculum integration strategies, and institutional support systems to facilitate widespread implementation.

Keywords: Musical Drama, Arabic Vocabulary, Mufrodat Learning, Elementary Islamic Education, Innovative Pedagogy

PROFESIONALISME GURU SEKOLAH DASAR ISLAM DALAM ERA DIGITAL: STRATEGI PEMBELAJARAN BAHASA ARAB BERBASIS TEKNOLOGI DAN NILAI-NILAI ISLAMI

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengkaji implementasi metode drama musikal dalam pembelajaran kosakata bahasa Arab (mufrodat) di sekolah dasar Islam. Pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif digunakan untuk meneliti proses pengajaran, respons siswa, dan hasil pembelajaran. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi kelas, wawancara guru, dan tes penilaian siswa selama periode tiga bulan yang melibatkan 26 siswa kelas lima. Penelitian ini menggunakan teknik drama musikal yang menggabungkan lagu-lagu Arab, bermain peran, dan aktivitas gerakan untuk mengajarkan 100 kosakata dasar bahasa Arab dalam lima

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unit tematik. Hasil menunjukkan peningkatan signifikan dalam retensi kosakata (dari 48% menjadi 87%), tingkat keterlibatan siswa, dan kepercayaan diri komunikasi lisan. Siswa menunjukkan peningkatan kapasitas hafalan melalui pola ritmis dan pendekatan pembelajaran kinestetik. Guru melaporkan peningkatan partisipasi kelas dan berkurangnya kecemasan belajar di antara siswa. Metode drama musikal terbukti efektif dalam menciptakan lingkungan belajar yang menyenangkan sambil mempertahankan ketat akademik. Tantangan implementasi meliputi manajemen waktu, persyaratan persiapan guru, dan alokasi sumber daya. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa drama musikal merupakan inovasi pedagogis yang layak untuk pengajaran kosakata bahasa Arab dalam pengaturan pendidikan Islam tingkat dasar. Rekomendasi meliputi program pelatihan guru yang komprehensif, strategi integrasi kurikulum, dan sistem dukungan institusional untuk memfasilitasi implementasi yang luas.

Kata kunci: Drama Musikal, Kosakata Bahasa Arab, Pembelajaran Mufrodat, Pendidikan Islam Dasar, Pedagogi Inovatif

A. INTRODUCTION

Arabic language education in Indonesian elementary Islamic schools faces persistent and multifaceted challenges related to student motivation, retention rates, and pedagogical effectiveness across diverse learning environments. Traditional vocabulary instruction methods predominantly rely on memorization techniques, rote drilling, and translation exercises that may not align with contemporary understanding of effective language acquisition processes, particularly those informed by cognitive and socio-cultural learning theories. Young learners in elementary settings require engaging, developmentally appropriate methodologies that accommodate their natural learning preferences, cognitive development patterns, and inherent capacity for creative expression through multimodal learning experiences (Albarqi, 2025a).

The growing body of international research in second language acquisition consistently demonstrates the effectiveness of arts-integrated approaches in enhancing vocabulary learning outcomes across various linguistic and cultural contexts. Musical and dramatic elements have gained recognition as powerful tools for creating memorable learning experiences that facilitate long-term retention and practical application of target vocabulary. Studies from diverse educational contexts, ranging from European language classrooms to Asian EFL environments, show that combining music, movement, and dramatic expression engages multiple learning modalities simultaneously, leading to improved academic achievement, enhanced student satisfaction, and increased intrinsic motivation for language learning (Thompson et al., 2025a).

Research evidence supports the notion that musical training and exposure enhance auditory and cognitive abilities in learners, which contribute significantly to the phonological and reading aspects of second language acquisition. Furthermore, drama activities facilitate vocabulary acquisition effectively and accurately in various contexts by helping learners engage in learning new vocabulary in non-constructed learning environments. These findings align with theories of embodied cognition and multimodal learning, suggesting that physical movement, rhythm, and theatrical expression create neural pathways that enhance language processing and retention mechanisms (Wu, 2022a).

The global paradigm shift toward communicative language teaching emphasizes the fundamental importance of meaningful, interactive learning experiences that prioritize functional language use over formal accuracy and grammatical precision. This pedagogical transformation requires innovative approaches that create authentic communication contexts while maintaining systematic focus on essential vocabulary development, cultural competency, and linguistic confidence. Musical drama methods offer potential solutions by integrating language learning with creative expression in ways that feel natural and enjoyable for young learners, incorporating systematic teaching methods such as role-playing, script-writing, and text interpretation. (del Barrio & Arús, 2024a)

In the specific Indonesian context, Madrasah Ibtidaiyah institutions serve as primary venues for comprehensive Islamic education where Arabic language instruction holds particular religious, cultural, and academic significance within the broader educational framework. However, many elementary students struggle significantly with Arabic vocabulary acquisition due to limited exposure to the target language outside classroom settings, insufficient authentic communication opportunities, and instructional approaches that may not accommodate diverse learning styles, cultural backgrounds, and individual cognitive preferences (Rahmi et al., 2025). The challenge is further compounded by traditional teaching methods that emphasize passive reception of information rather than active engagement with linguistic content, creative expression, and meaningful communication practice.

Previous research initiatives in Indonesia have explored various innovative approaches to Arabic language teaching, including technology integration, digital learning platforms, game-based pedagogical strategies, multimedia instruction, and storytelling methods with varying degrees of success. Research demonstrates that drama-based approaches in developing speaking skills among Arabic-speaking students show promising results, with studies indicating significant improvements in oral expression and overall achievement (Sharaf, 2023). However, limited comprehensive studies have specifically examined the systematic implementation of musical drama techniques in *mufrodat* (vocabulary) instruction at the elementary level within Indonesian Islamic educational contexts. This research gap represents a significant limitation in understanding how creative pedagogical approaches can be effectively adapted, culturally contextualized, and sustainably implemented for Indonesian Islamic educational environments.

Contemporary educational theory suggests that effective vocabulary instruction should integrate cognitive, affective, and kinesthetic learning domains while respecting cultural values and religious contexts (Fedora & Hasan, 2023). Music and movement pedagogy in basic education demonstrates significant potential for cross-curricular learning, with research indicating that rhythmic methods and dynamic approaches contribute meaningfully to understanding and expression. The intersection of Islamic pedagogical traditions with innovative teaching methodologies presents unique opportunities for educational enhancement while maintaining cultural authenticity and religious appropriateness.

The comprehensive research objectives include systematically analyzing the implementation process of musical drama methods in Arabic vocabulary instruction within Indonesian Madrasah Ibtidaiyah settings, examining detailed student engagement patterns and measurable learning outcomes during structured musical drama activities, evaluating vocabulary retention rates and practical application capabilities in various communicative contexts, and identifying specific implementation challenges alongside sustainable adoption opportunities for widespread educational integration. Additionally, this study seeks to understand the cultural and religious considerations necessary for successful implementation, teacher preparation requirements, and institutional support mechanisms needed for program sustainability.

This study contributes significantly to the growing body of research on innovative Arabic language pedagogy and provides practical, evidence-based insights for educators seeking to enhance vocabulary instruction effectiveness in elementary Islamic education settings. The research addresses critical gaps in understanding how creative pedagogical approaches can be successfully integrated into traditional Islamic educational frameworks while respecting cultural values, religious principles, and educational objectives. Furthermore, the findings offer valuable guidance for curriculum developers, teacher trainers, and educational administrators working to improve Arabic language learning outcomes in Indonesian Islamic schools and similar contexts globally.

B. METHODS

This qualitative descriptive study employed a case study approach to investigate the implementation of musical drama methods in Arabic vocabulary learning at the elementary level (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The research was conducted at MI in Semarang, selected purposively based on its commitment to pedagogical innovation, established Arabic language program, and willingness to participate in educational research initiatives. The study involved 26 fifth-grade students aged 10-11 years who were enrolled in regular Arabic language classes. The participants represented diverse socioeconomic backgrounds and varying levels of prior Arabic language exposure, providing a heterogeneous sample typical of Indonesian Madrasah Ibtidaiyah contexts. All students had completed at least two years of formal Arabic language instruction using traditional methodologies prior to the intervention (Rossman & Rallis, 2017).

Data collection procedures included systematic classroom observations, semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders, and comprehensive vocabulary assessment protocols. Classroom observations were conducted twice weekly over a fourteen-week period, documenting teaching strategies, student interactions, learning activities, and environmental factors affecting implementation. The primary teacher informant, designated as Mrs. F, participated in pre-implementation, mid-implementation, and post-implementation interviews. Additional interviews were conducted with the school principal (Mr. H), Arabic language department coordinator (Mrs. D), and a sample of five students selected to represent various achievement levels and learning preferences (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The musical drama intervention incorporated four main components designed to engage multiple learning modalities. Arabic songs with embedded vocabulary themes provided auditory and rhythmic reinforcement of target words. Role-playing scenarios using target vocabulary created meaningful communication contexts for practical application. Kinesthetic activities combining movement with vocabulary practice engaged bodily-kinesthetic intelligence. Storytelling integration connected vocabulary items to narrative contexts that enhanced meaning and memorability. The curriculum focused on 100 essential Arabic vocabulary words organized across five thematic units: family relationships, school environment, animals and nature, food and daily activities, and emotions and descriptions. Each thematic unit was implemented over 2-3 weeks using a structured lesson format (Neuman, 2020).

Data analysis utilized thematic analysis techniques to identify patterns and themes in observational notes and interview transcripts. Vocabulary assessment data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to track learning progress, retention rates, and performance variations across thematic categories (Miles et al., 2020). Ethical considerations included obtaining informed consent from school administration, teachers, and parents of participating students.

C. RESULTS

1. Vocabulary Acquisition and Retention Outcomes

Quantitative assessment results demonstrated remarkable improvements in vocabulary learning outcomes. Pre-intervention assessments showed students could correctly identify and use an average of 48 Arabic words from the 100-word target vocabulary set, representing a baseline retention rate of 48%. Post-intervention assessments revealed that students achieved mastery of 87 words on average, representing an 87% retention rate and indicating an 81% improvement in vocabulary acquisition effectiveness.

Detailed analysis across thematic vocabulary categories revealed differential learning patterns. Students achieved exceptional performance in concrete vocabulary categories including animals and nature (94% retention), food and daily activities (91% retention), and family relationships (89% retention). School environment vocabulary showed strong performance at 86% retention. The most challenging category was emotions and descriptions, though this still demonstrated substantial improvement with 78% retention compared to 41% baseline performance.

Weekly progress monitoring revealed consistent vocabulary acquisition patterns throughout the intervention period. Students showed initial adaptation during weeks 1-2, followed by accelerated learning during weeks 3-5 when musical drama activities became more integrated. Peak performance occurred during weeks 7-9, with sustained high achievement through the intervention conclusion. Retention testing conducted two weeks post-intervention maintained 82% accuracy, indicating durable learning effects that persisted beyond immediate instruction.

2. Student Engagement and Participation Patterns

Observational data revealed exceptionally high levels of student engagement during musical drama activities. Attendance rates remained consistently above 97% throughout the intervention period, with several students arriving early to class and requesting additional practice opportunities. Behavioral indicators of engagement included voluntary participation in singing activities (100% of students), active involvement in role-playing exercises (94% participation rate), and sustained attention during 50-minute lesson periods.

Detailed observation notes documented specific engagement behaviors including spontaneous Arabic expressions during break times, peer teaching of songs to absent classmates, and student-initiated requests for additional vocabulary themes. A significant indicator of engagement was students' tendency to continue singing Arabic songs after class periods ended, with teachers reporting hearing Arabic melodies in hallways and during recess activities.

Students demonstrated increased willingness to communicate in Arabic during both structured activities and informal interactions. The frequency of voluntary Arabic expressions during non-Arabic subjects increased by approximately 300% compared to baseline observations. Several students began incorporating Arabic vocabulary into playground conversations and demonstrated pride in teaching Arabic songs to family members at home.

3. Teacher Perspectives and Implementation Experiences

Teacher interview data provided comprehensive insights into implementation experiences and perceived effectiveness of musical drama methods across multiple dimensions of pedagogical practice. The qualitative findings revealed significant transformations in both instructional approaches and classroom dynamics, offering valuable perspectives on the practical application of innovative Arabic language teaching methodologies in traditional Indonesian Islamic educational settings.

Mrs. F, the primary Arabic teacher with fifteen years of teaching experience, shared extensive observations about transformational changes in student behavior, learning patterns, and classroom engagement levels during the six-month implementation period:

"The most striking change is students' enthusiasm. Previously, they often complained when we had Arabic lessons, now they actually ask 'Ma'am, when will we sing Arabic songs again?' They have become much braver in attempting to speak Arabic, whereas before they were afraid of making mistakes. This shift in attitude represents a fundamental change in how they perceive the language learning process."

Mrs. F further elaborated on specific pedagogical improvements she observed, particularly regarding vocabulary retention and student participation patterns:

"What surprises me most is their ability to remember vocabulary. When we use songs, they can memorize dozens of words simultaneously. Even children who usually struggle with learning are now actively participating. Some have told me 'Ma'am, learning Arabic now feels like playing.' The integration of music and movement seems to activate different learning mechanisms that traditional methods couldn't access."

She provided detailed insights into the cognitive and affective changes she witnessed:

"I notice that students are making unexpected connections between new vocabulary and previously learned words. The musical patterns seem to create mental frameworks that help them organize and retrieve linguistic information more effectively. Additionally, their pronunciation has

improved significantly because they're mimicking the rhythm and melody, which naturally guides them toward more accurate sound production."

Regarding implementation challenges and resource requirements, Mrs. F acknowledged significant preparation demands while emphasizing the pedagogical value:

"The preparation is indeed more complex and time-consuming. I need to find appropriate songs, create meaningful movements, prepare simple costumes for drama activities, and design interactive scenarios that align with curriculum objectives. However, the results are proportional to the effort invested. Students have become more enthusiastic about learning, and their achievement levels have improved across multiple language skills."

Mrs. F also discussed the professional development aspects of implementing musical drama methods:

"This approach has challenged me to develop new teaching competencies. I've had to learn about music education principles, understand child development through movement, and integrate theatrical elements into language instruction. It's been professionally enriching, though initially intimidating. The training workshops provided by the research team were essential for building confidence and practical skills."

4. Successful Implementation Strategies and Techniques

Observational data identified highly effective musical drama strategies that contributed to successful learning outcomes. Repetitive melodic patterns with simple, memorable tunes proved particularly effective for vocabulary reinforcement. Students demonstrated ability to recall vocabulary items weeks after initial introduction through songs, with retention rates highest for vocabulary taught using familiar melody structures.

Visual gestures and physical movements accompanying sung vocabulary enhanced memory retention significantly. Kinesthetic learners, who comprised approximately 35% of the class, showed exceptional performance when vocabulary instruction incorporated coordinated movements. The combination of auditory (melody), visual (gestures), and kinesthetic (movement) elements created multi-sensory learning experiences that accommodated diverse learning preferences.

Group performance activities encouraged peer learning and collaborative vocabulary practice. Students naturally formed supportive learning partnerships, with more advanced learners helping struggling classmates through shared singing and dramatic activities. These peer interactions extended vocabulary practice beyond formal instruction time and created positive social dynamics that enhanced overall classroom climate.

Storytelling integration proved especially effective for abstract vocabulary items that initially showed lower retention rates. When emotions and descriptive vocabulary were embedded within narrative contexts featuring familiar characters and relatable situations, retention rates improved substantially. Students demonstrated ability to transfer vocabulary knowledge from story contexts to original communication situations.

Competition-based activities incorporating dramatic elements generated high enthusiasm while maintaining focus on vocabulary learning objectives. Team-based vocabulary games where students created original songs and performances using target vocabulary resulted in creative applications that demonstrated deep understanding and retention.

5. Assessment and Progress Monitoring

Continuous assessment strategies revealed consistent improvement patterns throughout the intervention period. Weekly vocabulary quizzes showed steady progress with notable acceleration during periods when new musical drama techniques were introduced. Students demonstrated particular strength in recognition tasks (average 89% accuracy) compared to production tasks (average 84% accuracy), suggesting that receptive vocabulary knowledge developed more rapidly than productive application.

Peer assessment activities where students taught vocabulary songs to younger classes demonstrated both retention and communication competence development. Students successfully transmitted vocabulary knowledge to second and third-grade students, indicating

mastery levels sufficient for teaching others. These cross-age interactions also reinforced learning for the fifth-grade participants while building confidence and leadership skills.

Self-assessment data collected through simple rating scales and drawing activities revealed high levels of satisfaction with musical drama approaches. When asked to compare Arabic learning experiences before and after the intervention, 92% of students indicated strong preference for musical drama methods. Students consistently rated musical drama lessons as more enjoyable, easier to understand, and more memorable than traditional instruction.

6. Implementation Challenges and Adaptive Solutions

Despite overall success, several implementation challenges emerged requiring creative problem-solving and adaptive responses from teachers and administrators. Time management represented the most significant ongoing challenge, with musical drama lessons frequently exceeding allocated 45-minute periods due to student enthusiasm and activity complexity. Teachers developed modified scheduling approaches including extended periods for musical drama lessons and integration of brief vocabulary songs during transition times.

Resource limitations initially constrained implementation effectiveness, particularly regarding musical instruments, sound amplification, and costume materials for dramatic activities. Creative solutions included using smartphone applications for musical accompaniment, student-created percussion instruments from recycled materials, and simple costume elements made from available classroom supplies. These adaptations demonstrated that effective implementation did not require extensive material resources.

Teacher preparation demands proved more intensive than initially anticipated. Mrs. F reported requiring approximately 2-3 hours of preparation time per musical drama lesson compared to 30-45 minutes for traditional lessons. Preparation activities included selecting appropriate melodies, creating choreographed movements, developing dramatic scenarios, and preparing assessment materials. However, teachers noted that preparation became more efficient with experience and that materials could be reused across teaching cycles.

Classroom management during musical drama activities required modified approaches to maintain learning focus while accommodating increased student energy and enthusiasm. Teachers developed strategies including clear behavioral expectations for musical activities, designated performance spaces within classrooms, and structured transitions between individual and group activities.

D. DISCUSSION

The comprehensive findings from this study demonstrate that musical drama methods offer transformative potential for Arabic vocabulary instruction in elementary Islamic educational settings. The 87% vocabulary retention rate substantially exceeds typical outcomes associated with traditional memorization approaches, providing strong empirical evidence for the effectiveness of multi-sensory learning experiences in vocabulary acquisition. These quantitative improvements, coupled with qualitative evidence of enhanced engagement and reduced learning anxiety, suggest fundamental shifts in how young learners approach Arabic language acquisition.

1. Theoretical Foundations and Learning Theory Applications

The success of musical drama methods at MI A provides robust empirical support for multiple intelligence theory applications in Arabic language education contexts. The simultaneous engagement of musical, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, and linguistic intelligences created rich learning environments that accommodated diverse learning preferences while maintaining clear focus on vocabulary acquisition objectives. Students constructed vocabulary knowledge through active participation rather than passive reception, leading to deeper understanding and improved retention that persisted beyond immediate instructional periods (Hasan & Maemonah, 2023).

The differential effectiveness across vocabulary categories offers important theoretical insights into memory processing and linguistic categorization in second language acquisition. The higher success rates for concrete vocabulary items (animals 94%, food 91%) compared to abstract concepts (emotions 78%) align with dual coding theory and cognitive load theory principles. Concrete vocabulary items benefit from both verbal and visual-spatial processing pathways, while abstract concepts rely more heavily on verbal processing alone. This pattern suggests that musical drama methods may be most valuable as foundational strategies for building basic vocabulary knowledge before progressing to more complex linguistic concepts (Fedora & Hasan, 2023).

Mrs. F's observation about reduced speaking anxiety provides evidence for affective filter hypothesis applications in elementary Arabic education. Her comment that students are "no longer afraid to speak Arabic" indicates that musical drama methods successfully lowered affective barriers that often impede second language acquisition. The playful, non-threatening nature of musical and dramatic activities appears to create psychologically safe learning environments where students feel comfortable taking linguistic risks and experimenting with pronunciation.

2. Pedagogical Innovation and Cultural Integration

The successful implementation of musical drama methods within an Islamic educational context addresses important questions about cultural appropriateness and religious compatibility of arts-integrated approaches. Initial concerns about musical activities in religious educational settings were mitigated through careful selection of appropriate melodies and integration with Islamic values and Arabic cultural content. The positive response from religious educators, parents, and administrators suggests that musical drama can be effectively adapted to align with Islamic educational principles while maintaining pedagogical effectiveness (Wu, 2022b).

The principal's observation about increased parental interest and community engagement indicates broader acceptance and support for innovative approaches beyond the immediate school context. Parents' reports of children singing Arabic songs at home and their requests for similar methods in other subjects suggest recognition of educational value that extends beyond Arabic language instruction. This community buy-in represents a crucial factor for sustainable implementation and potential scaling of musical drama approaches across Islamic educational institutions (Ferdin Hasan et al., 2024).

3. Implementation Complexity and Professional Development Implications

Teacher interview data reveals significant complexity in implementing musical drama methods effectively, with implications for professional development and institutional support systems. Mrs. F's acknowledgment that preparation requires 2-3 hours per lesson compared to 30-45 minutes for traditional approaches highlights the intensive planning and creative energy required for successful implementation. This finding has important implications for teacher workload, compensation, and professional development programming (Arda Tuncdemir, 2025).

The coordinator's observation about increased interest from other teachers suggests potential for institutional culture transformation through innovative pedagogical approaches. However, this also raises questions about scaling challenges and the need for comprehensive training programs to support widespread adoption. Effective musical drama implementation requires teachers to develop competencies in musical arrangement, dramatic facilitation, and multi-modal lesson planning that extend well beyond traditional language teaching skills (Bora, 2022).

4. Student Development and Engagement Patterns

The exceptionally high engagement levels observed during musical drama activities reflect optimal alignment between pedagogical approach and elementary students' developmental characteristics. The 100% participation rate in singing activities and 94%

participation in role-playing exercises demonstrate that musical drama methods successfully tap into children's natural inclinations toward music, movement, and imaginative play. The sustained attention during 50-minute lessons, which exceeds typical attention spans for this age group, suggests that engaging multiple senses and learning modalities helps maintain focus and cognitive engagement (del Barrio & Arús, 2024b).

Student feedback emphasizing the enjoyable and play-like qualities of musical drama learning supports research on intrinsic motivation and flow theory in educational contexts. When students perceive learning as inherently rewarding and engaging, they demonstrate increased persistence, effort, and achievement. The observation that students continue singing Arabic songs outside class periods indicates that learning has extended beyond formal instructional time into voluntary, self-directed practice (Kumar et al., 2022).

5. Comparative Analysis with Traditional Methodologies

The contrast between pre-intervention and post-intervention student behaviors provides compelling evidence for the superiority of musical drama approaches over traditional vocabulary instruction methods. Mrs. F's description of students as previously reluctant and anxious about Arabic lessons, compared to their current enthusiasm and voluntary participation, represents fundamental shifts in learner attitudes and motivation. The transformation from passive recipients to active participants who "compete to answer" and "ask about Arabic words during other lessons" demonstrates enhanced learner agency and intrinsic motivation (Li et al., 2022).

The substantial reduction in speaking anxiety represents a particularly significant outcome given the central importance of oral communication in Arabic language proficiency development. Traditional methods that emphasize accuracy over communication often create performance anxiety that inhibits speaking practice and limits language development. Musical drama methods appear to reverse this pattern by creating contexts where communication emerges naturally from engaging activities rather than formal assessment situations (Luo, 2022).

6. Cross-Cultural and International Perspectives

Comparison with international research on music-enhanced language learning reveals consistent patterns across diverse cultural and linguistic contexts, suggesting that core pedagogical principles transfer effectively across cultural boundaries. Studies from European, North American, and Asian educational settings report similar benefits including improved retention, increased motivation, and enhanced pronunciation accuracy. The Indonesian Islamic educational context adds unique considerations related to religious values and cultural appropriateness, but fundamental learning mechanisms appear universally applicable (Albarqi, 2025b).

The success of musical drama methods with Arabic vocabulary instruction provides insights relevant to heritage language education globally. Arabic serves dual roles as both religious language and academic subject for Indonesian Muslim students, creating multiple motivational contexts that may enhance receptivity to innovative teaching approaches. This dual significance may explain the exceptional engagement levels observed and suggests potential applications for other heritage language education contexts (Thompson et al., 2025b).

7. Sustainability and Scaling Considerations

Implementation challenges identified in this study provide important insights for sustainable adoption of musical drama methods across broader educational contexts. The intensive preparation requirements highlighted by teachers represent significant barriers to widespread implementation without adequate professional development and institutional support systems. Time management constraints and resource limitations further complicate scaling efforts and suggest need for systematic approaches to teacher training and curriculum integration (Schenker, 2020).

However, the creative solutions developed by teachers during implementation demonstrate adaptability and resourcefulness that support sustainability prospects. The use of smartphone applications, student-created instruments, and simplified costume approaches indicates that effective musical drama implementation does not require extensive technological or material resources. This finding has positive implications for adoption in resource-limited educational contexts common in developing countries (Kanellopoulou et al., 2019).

8. Limitations and Future Research Directions

The single-site case study design limits generalizability to other institutional contexts and student populations, as MI A may possess unique characteristics related to student demographics, teacher qualifications, or institutional culture that contributed to positive outcomes. The fourteen-week intervention period, while sufficient to demonstrate immediate effects and short-term retention, provides limited evidence of long-term vocabulary retention or sustained implementation beyond the research period.

Additionally, the focus on vocabulary learning addresses only one component of comprehensive Arabic language proficiency. Musical drama methods' effectiveness for grammar instruction, reading comprehension, writing skills, or listening comprehension remains unexplored. The potential for transfer effects to other language skills represents an important area for future investigation that could enhance understanding of musical drama's broader applications in Arabic language education.

The absence of a control group receiving traditional instruction limits conclusions about relative effectiveness compared to conventional approaches. While pre-post comparisons demonstrate substantial improvement, attribution to musical drama methods specifically requires controlled comparative research designs that isolate intervention effects from other potential contributing factors.

E. CONCLUSIONS

This study demonstrates that musical drama methods represent a highly effective and culturally appropriate approach for Arabic vocabulary instruction in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah settings. The substantial improvements in vocabulary retention (from 48% to 87%), dramatic increases in student engagement and participation, and positive shifts in attitudes toward Arabic language learning provide compelling evidence for the pedagogical value of integrating musical and dramatic elements into vocabulary curriculum. The alignment between musical drama approaches and elementary students' developmental needs, combined with successful adaptation to Islamic educational values, suggests particular appropriateness for Indonesian Madrasah Ibtidaiyah contexts. The enthusiasm demonstrated by students, positive feedback from teachers and administrators, and community acceptance indicate strong potential for sustainable adoption and institutional integration.

Key findings reveal that successful implementation requires comprehensive teacher preparation, adequate time allocation, institutional support for innovative pedagogical approaches, and creative problem-solving to address resource limitations. The willingness of teachers to invest additional preparation time, coupled with their reports of enhanced job satisfaction and professional growth, suggests intrinsic motivation for continued implementation beyond the research period. Based on comprehensive analysis of implementation experiences and outcomes, several practical recommendations emerge for educators and administrators interested in adopting musical drama methods for Arabic vocabulary instruction. Teacher training programs should focus specifically on musical drama techniques integrated with Arabic language pedagogy, including melody selection, movement coordination, dramatic facilitation, and multi-modal assessment strategies. These programs should provide hands-on experience with musical drama activities and opportunities for peer collaboration and resource sharing.

Institutional support systems should include flexible scheduling arrangements that accommodate extended lesson periods for musical drama activities, resource allocation for basic musical and dramatic materials, administrative encouragement for pedagogical innovation and experimentation, and recognition systems that acknowledge teacher creativity and professional development efforts. Schools should also consider developing resource libraries containing songs, scripts, activity guides, and assessment materials suitable for different vocabulary themes and proficiency levels. Curriculum integration strategies should incorporate musical drama components into formal Arabic language frameworks while maintaining alignment with educational standards and learning objectives. Sequential implementation beginning with concrete vocabulary categories before progressing to abstract concepts, regular assessment and documentation of student progress and engagement, and coordination with other subject areas to reinforce vocabulary learning across disciplines represent important considerations for effective integration.

Future research should address several important questions that emerged from this study's findings and limitations. Longitudinal studies examining retention effects and skill transfer over extended periods (6-12 months) would provide valuable insights into durability and long-term educational value. Comparative studies investigating musical drama effectiveness across different age groups, proficiency levels, and institutional contexts would enhance understanding of optimal applications and adaptation requirements. Mixed-methods research exploring combinations of musical drama with other innovative teaching approaches, such as technology integration or game-based learning, could identify synergistic effects and enhanced pedagogical strategies. Additionally, research examining implementation factors in diverse institutional contexts, including urban versus rural settings, different socioeconomic levels, and varying resource availability, would enhance understanding of scalability and adaptation requirements.

Investigation of musical drama applications to other Arabic language skills, including grammar instruction, reading comprehension, and writing development, represents an important area for expanding understanding of this pedagogical approach's broader potential. Research on teacher professional development models and training effectiveness would also contribute valuable insights for sustainable implementation programming. Educational policy recommendations emphasize the need for systemic support for innovative teaching methods in Islamic education contexts. Professional development funding should prioritize training programs focused on arts-integrated approaches and creative pedagogy. Curriculum flexibility policies should allow for pedagogical experimentation and adaptation while maintaining educational standards and religious values. Recognition and incentive systems should acknowledge teacher innovation and student achievement in creative learning contexts.

Administrative recommendations include establishing peer collaboration networks for sharing successful practices and addressing implementation challenges, developing partnerships with teacher education institutions to integrate musical drama methods into pre-service training programs, and creating evaluation frameworks that assess both academic achievement and student engagement in innovative learning environments. The success of musical drama methods at MI A provides a foundation for broader implementation initiatives that could enhance Arabic language education quality across Indonesian Islamic educational institutions. With appropriate support systems, teacher training, and institutional commitment, musical drama approaches offer significant potential for transforming Arabic vocabulary instruction and improving learning outcomes for elementary students in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah settings.

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