

Research Article

The Implementation of Problem-Based Learning Strategy (PBLs) in Arabic Language Learning in Grade VIII at MTs Negeri 4 East Tanjung Jabung

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Abstract. This study aims to describe the implementation of the Problem-Based Learning Strategy (PBLs) in Arabic language learning for eighth-grade students at MTs Negeri 4 East Tanjung Jabung, as well as identify supporting factors, inhibiting factors, and efforts to overcome those obstacles. This research employed a descriptive qualitative approach using observation, interviews, and documentation techniques. The research subjects included the principal, Arabic language teacher, and eighth-grade students. The findings revealed that PBLs was implemented through stages of problem presentation, information identification, group discussion, presentation, and evaluation. This strategy improved students' active participation, critical thinking skills, communication abilities, and understanding of Arabic learning materials. Supporting factors included teacher professionalism, adequate facilities and infrastructure, and support from the school environment. Inhibiting factors included students' low reading interest, limited instructional time, and differences in students' characteristics and abilities. Efforts to overcome these obstacles involved providing motivation, forming heterogeneous groups, effective time management, and utilizing simple and engaging learning media. Therefore, PBLs is considered effective in Arabic language learning because it enhances both the learning process and student learning outcomes.

Keywords: Arabic Learning; Critical Thinking; Learning Strategy; Problem-Based Learning; Student Engagement.

1. Introduction

Education is a crucial process in shaping human resources with intellectual, spiritual, and social capabilities. Education aims not only to transfer knowledge but also to develop students' character, critical thinking, and skills in addressing various life challenges (Alim, 2011). In the context of school learning, teachers play a crucial role in determining the success of the learning process through the strategies they employ (Darling & Baratz, 2009).

Effective learning is learning that encourages students to think actively, discuss, ask questions, and solve problems. However, the reality on the ground shows that many learning processes remain focused on rote memorization (Purwanto, 2019). Students are only required to memorize material without being given the opportunity to understand it and connect it to real life. This situation results in students being less capable of critical thinking and less skilled at solving problems (Susanto, 2020).

This issue is also found in Arabic language instruction. The Arabic language subject is often perceived as difficult by students because instruction tends to focus on memorizing vocabulary and grammatical rules. As a result, students become less active and less motivated in their learning. Therefore, teaching strategies are needed that can increase students' active engagement in the learning process.

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One learning strategy that can be used is the Problem-Based Learning Strategy (PBL). This strategy emphasizes students' ability to solve problems through critical thinking, group collaboration, discussion, and independent information seeking. In PBL, students not only receive material from the teacher but are also trained to find solutions to problems related to real life (Rusmono, 2012). Problem-Based Learning has several advantages, including improving critical thinking skills, communication skills, group collaboration, and students' ability to connect theory with practice. Through this strategy, students are expected to be able to understand the subject matter more deeply and apply it in their daily lives (Hakim, 2015).

Based on the results of initial observations and interviews with Arabic teachers at MTs Negeri 4 East Tanjung Jabung, it was found that teachers have implemented Problem-Based Learning Strategies in the Arabic language learning process. These strategies were implemented to increase student engagement and develop critical thinking skills in understanding Arabic language material. Students showed a fairly high level of enthusiasm when participating in problem-based learning. However, several obstacles were still encountered during implementation, such as low student interest in reading, limited class time, and some students who still lacked confidence in expressing their opinions.

Based on this description, this study aims to describe the application of Problem-Based Learning Strategies in Arabic language instruction in Grade VIII at MTs Negeri 4 East Tanjung Jabung and to identify the supporting and inhibiting factors in its implementation.

2. Literature Review

Problem-Based Learning (PBL) is a learning strategy that uses problems as the starting point in the learning process. This strategy emphasizes students' active involvement in finding solutions to problems through critical thinking, discussion, group collaboration, and inquiry (Amir, 2016). In its implementation, the teacher acts as a facilitator who guides students throughout the learning process. PBL stems from the constructivist approach, which views knowledge as more meaningful when it is constructed by students themselves through direct learning experiences. Therefore, this strategy is considered capable of enhancing students' critical thinking, creativity, communication, and problem-solving skills (Sardiman, 2011). Research by Mahliatussikah (2022) indicates that the implementation of PBL can improve students' critical thinking skills and Arabic composition skills. The results of this study show that students become more active in developing ideas and completing Arabic language learning tasks. This aligns with the research by Husin et al (2024), which found that the Problem-Based Learning strategy can enhance students' understanding of Arabic language material. The study explains that students find it easier to understand the material because learning takes place actively through discussion and problem-solving, so that students do not merely passively receive the material from the teacher.

In Arabic language instruction, the application of PBL is considered relevant because language learning requires not only a mastery of theory but also the ability to use the language in real-life situations (Amir, 2016). Arabic language learning in Madrasah Tsanawiyah covers four language skills (maharah), namely listening (*istima'*), speaking (*kalam*), reading (*qira'ah*), and writing (*kitabah*). However, in reality, Arabic language learning is often still dominated by lecture and memorization methods, resulting in students being less active and having difficulty understanding the material (Majid & Andayani, 2004). The use of innovative learning strategies such as PBL is expected to create a more active, communicative, and contextual learning atmosphere so that students are able to understand Arabic language material better.

PBL in Arabic language learning can be implemented by presenting problems related to students' daily lives, such as simple conversations, text comprehension, sentence translation, and the resolution of other language-related issues. Thus, students not only memorize vocabulary and language rules but also learn to actively use Arabic in specific contexts (Sanjaya, 2019). Through discussion and group work, students are trained to express their opinions, collaborate, and find solutions to the problems presented. These conditions can enhance students' motivation and participation in Arabic language learning (Faturrohman, 2007).

Research conducted by Nasution (2025) on cooperative learning-based Arabic language learning strategies indicates that students' active engagement in the learning process can improve their vocabulary mastery and learning motivation. This study confirms that learning involving direct activities and experiences is more effective than teacher-centered learning. These findings support the use of PBL in Arabic language learning because this strategy similarly emphasizes student activities and participation.

Research by Al-Itmam (2025) shows that the implementation of Arabic language learning strategies in junior high schools also indicates that the success of Arabic language learning is greatly influenced by teachers' creativity in selecting learning strategies that align with students' characteristics. Teachers are expected to create engaging and interactive lessons so that students do not become bored during the learning process. One strategy that can be used to achieve this goal is the Problem-Based Learning Strategy, as this approach provides students with the opportunity to learn actively and independently.

Based on these previous studies, it can be understood that the Problem-Based Learning Strategy has a positive influence on Arabic language learning, particularly in enhancing student engagement, comprehension, critical thinking skills, and language proficiency. The similarity between previous studies and this research lies in the focus on Arabic language learning strategies and the enhancement of student engagement in the learning process. The differences lie in the research location, research subjects, and the focus of the study, which specifically discusses the application of the Problem-Based Learning Strategy in Arabic language learning in the eighth grade at MTs Negeri 4 East Tanjung Jabung. This study is expected to provide an overview of the implementation of PBL and its impact on the Arabic language learning process at the madrasah.

3. Method

This study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive research design. The qualitative approach was chosen because this study aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon based on the perspectives and experiences of the research subjects. The study was conducted at MTs Negeri 4 East Tanjung Jabung, which is geographically located in Pandan Jaya Village, Geragai Subdistrict, East Tanjung Jabung Regency, Jambi Province. The study was conducted over a period of approximately four months. The research location was selected because the madrasah had implemented Problem-Based Learning Strategies in Arabic language instruction.

The research subjects consisted of the madrasah principal, Arabic language teachers, and eighth-grade students. The data sources in this study included primary and secondary data. Primary data was obtained directly through observation and interviews with informants, while secondary data was obtained through school documentation and archives. Data collection techniques were carried out through observation to directly observe the Arabic language learning process that applies the Problem-Based Learning Strategy (PBL), in-depth interviews, and documentation to obtain data in the form of photos of learning activities, learning tools, and other supporting documents.

4. Results and Discussion

Based on the results of observations, interviews, and documentation conducted over a period of approximately four months, it was found that the implementation of the Problem-Based Learning Strategy (PBL) in Arabic language instruction in the 8th-grade class at MTs Negeri 4 East Tanjung Jabung was carried out in a planned and systematic manner. The Arabic language teacher implemented the stages of problem-based learning through problem presentation, information identification, discussion and presentation, and learning evaluation.

Implementation of Problem-Based Learning Strategy (PBL) in the early stages of Learning

Teachers present contextual problems that are relevant to students' lives. These problems are drawn from the school environment, students' daily activities, or social phenomena relevant to Arabic language material. Teachers strive to present problems that spark students' curiosity, encouraging them to seek solutions independently or in groups. The presentation of problems in Arabic language learning serves not only to spark discussion but also as a means of introducing vocabulary and language structures used in daily life. Thus, students not only understand the theory but are also able to connect the material to the realities they experience.

Information Identification and Problem Analysis Stage

After the problem is presented, students are guided to identify information related to the problem. In this stage, students look for references in textbooks, class notes, and the teacher's explanations. Students are also trained to analyze the problem and formulate simple arguments regarding the proposed solution. Research findings indicate that information identification activities can enhance students' critical thinking skills. Students do not merely

passively receive the material but actively examine the information and connect it to the context of Arabic language learning.

Discussion and Presentation Phase

The next stage consists of group discussions and the presentation of discussion outcomes in front of the class. The discussions are active and dynamic. Students exchange opinions, offer feedback, and attempt to defend their arguments. This activity demonstrates that PBL is capable of fostering a communicative and collaborative learning environment. Some students noted that learning through PBL is more enjoyable because they can discuss with peers and assist one another in resolving learning challenges. Additionally, the presentation activity also helps build students' confidence and speaking skills (maharah kalam), whether using simple Arabic or Indonesian as a support language. The teacher also reinforces students' answers and corrects any mistakes that arise during the presentation process. This demonstrates that the learning process is not only focused on the final outcome but also on developing students' thinking, communication, and collaboration skills.

Evaluation Phase

The evaluation phase is conducted through oral tests, written tests, and assessments of student activities throughout the learning process. Assessment is not only focused on mastery of the material but also includes critical thinking skills, participation in discussions, the courage to express opinions, and the ability to collaborate. Through this evaluation, teachers can determine students' level of understanding of the material studied as well as the effectiveness of PBL implementation in Arabic language learning.

Based on the results of observations, interviews, and documentation conducted over a period of at least several months, there are several factors that support and hinder the implementation of PBL, including:

Supporting Factors: Based on the research findings, there are several factors that support the successful implementation of PBL in Arabic language instruction, namely: a.) Teacher Professionalism: Teachers play a crucial role in the success of PBL. Arabic language teachers are able to develop lesson plans, design learning scenarios, facilitate discussions, and actively guide students throughout the learning process. Teacher professionalism is the primary factor in creating effective and focused learning, b.) Facilities and Infrastructure Adequate madrasah facilities also support the implementation of PBL. The availability of projectors, computers, speakers, and comfortable classrooms helps teachers conduct problem-based learning in a more engaging and interactive manner, c.) Availability of Contextual Problems The school environment and students' daily lives provide many real-world problems that can serve as material for learning discussions. These contextual problems help students understand Arabic language material more easily and meaningfully.

The factors hindering the implementation of SPMB include: a.) Lack of Teacher Preparation: SPMB requires thorough lesson planning. If teachers fail to prepare teaching materials such as lesson plans and learning scenarios, the learning process will not be as effective as it could be, b.) Student Characteristics: Not all students have the same level of engagement and self-confidence. Some students remain passive, are shy about speaking, and only participate when called on by the teacher. Additionally, low reading interest limits students' ability to access references when analyzing problems, c.) Time Constraints: Implementing PBL takes relatively more time than conventional learning because it involves discussion, problem analysis, and presenting discussion outcomes. This often poses a challenge in classroom implementation, d.) Lack of Relevant Events: PBL heavily relies on the availability of real-world problems in the surrounding environment. When there are no events or occurrences relevant to the learning material, teachers face difficulties in presenting suitable problems for discussion.

The results of the study indicate that the implementation of problem-based learning (PBL) in Arabic language instruction is effective in enhancing students' active engagement in the learning process. This finding aligns with Rusman's (2013) theory, which states that problem-based learning can optimize students' thinking skills through systematic group work. Through the presentation of contextual problems, students are encouraged to think critically, analyze information, and seek solutions to the problems they face. This indicates that Arabic language learning is no longer merely about memorization but has evolved into a form of learning that demands higher-order thinking skills.

Discussion and presentation activities also have a positive impact on students' language skills, particularly maharah kalam (speaking skills). Students become more confident in

expressing their opinions and are able to collaborate with their group members. This demonstrates that PBL is capable of creating communicative, active, and enjoyable learning experiences. The findings of this study are also consistent with Dinandar's (2014) research, which states that problem-based learning has a significant effect on students' critical thinking skills. Additionally, Sukriyatun's (2023) research indicates that PBL can enhance learning motivation and make students more active in the learning process.

However, the success of PBL is greatly influenced by teacher readiness, student characteristics, and the availability of learning resources and time. Therefore, teachers need to plan lessons thoroughly, enhance their creativity in classroom management, and provide motivation and guidance to students so that the learning process can proceed optimally. Overall, the implementation of Problem-Based Learning (PBL) in Arabic language instruction at MTs Negeri 4 East Tanjung Jabung has proven effective in improving the quality of the learning process, student engagement, critical thinking skills, and Arabic language proficiency among students.

5. Conclusions

Based on the results of a study on the implementation of Problem-Based Learning (PBL) in Arabic language instruction in the 8th grade at MTs Negeri 4 East Tanjung Jabung, it can be concluded that PBL has been systematically implemented through the stages of problem presentation, information identification, discussion and presentation, and learning evaluation. The implementation of this strategy was able to create an active, communicative, and student-centered learning atmosphere, thereby increasing student engagement in the learning process.

The implementation of PBL has been proven to have a positive impact on students' critical thinking skills, confidence in expressing opinions, group collaboration, and Arabic language skills, particularly in maharah kalam (speaking skills). Through problem-based learning, students not only understand the material theoretically but are also able to connect their learning to real-life problems in their daily lives.

The success of implementing PBL is supported by several factors, including teachers' professionalism in designing and managing instruction, the availability of adequate facilities and infrastructure, and the presence of contextual issues in the surrounding environment that can serve as topics for classroom discussion. However, the implementation of PBL still faces several challenges, such as a lack of teacher preparation, low student interest in reading, diverse student characteristics, limited learning time, and a scarcity of relevant real-world events that can serve as sources for learning problems.

To overcome these challenges, teachers employ various strategies, such as forming heterogeneous groups, providing individual motivation and guidance, assigning pre-learning reading tasks, managing time effectively, and utilizing media and the surrounding environment as learning resources. Thus, it can be concluded that Problem-Based Learning (PBL) is effective when applied in Arabic language instruction because it enhances the quality of the learning process and optimally develops students' critical thinking skills.

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