

Integration of Semantic Approaches in Arabic Mufradat Learning at Pesantren Mamba'ul Ulum Turen Malang

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Abstract

This study explores the integration of semantic approaches in teaching Arabic vocabulary (mufradat) at Pondok Pesantren Mamba'ul Ulum Turen Malang, aiming to enhance students' understanding of word meanings within contextual and cultural frameworks. Employing a qualitative phenomenological method, data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observations, and documentation involving students and teachers. Findings reveal that semantic approaches improve students' comprehension by linking words to real-life contexts and cultural values, fostering a deeper and more meaningful acquisition beyond rote memorization. Despite challenges such as ambiguous word meanings, limited learning resources, and varying teacher competencies, the approach effectively enriches lexical and grammatical knowledge and strengthens communication skills in religious and social settings. Unique teaching practices incorporating authentic religious texts and collaborative semantic analysis further support this integration. Moreover, cultural meanings embedded in vocabulary connect language learning to the students' social and religious identity, highlighting the importance of culturally responsive pedagogy. This research concludes that semantic-based teaching not only enhances language competence but also nurtures critical thinking and spiritual development, providing a comprehensive model for Arabic language education in pesantren contexts.

Keywords: Arabic Language, Semantic Approach, Vocabulary Learning.



INTRODUCTION

Learning Arabic mufradat (vocabulary) in Islamic boarding schools is the main foundation in mastering language skills, including to understand religious texts. Mastery of Arabic is a fundamental aspect that determines the success of learning Arabic as a whole. So far, the dominant mufradat learning method in many Islamic boarding schools still prioritizes a mechanical method of memorization without providing a deep understanding of the meaning of words. This condition causes limitations in the communicative application of mufradat and understanding the context of its use appropriately.

The semantic approach is a linguistic study that focuses on the meaning of words, the relationship of meaning between words, and the context of their use in sentences and discourse. In learning Arabic mufradat, the integration of semantic approaches has the potential to increase students' understanding of the meaning of each word more comprehensively, so that they not only memorize words but also understand their use in the context of real sentences. This approach can help strengthen communication skills and understanding of religious texts that use Arabic more effectively (Zaid et al., 2025).

The study of semantics highlights not only the denotative meaning of a word, but also the connotative meanings, synonyms, antonyms, polysememes, and homonyms that often appear in Arabic. A comprehensive understanding of these aspects is very helpful for students in developing their linguistic insights so that they can adjust the use of mufradat in different contexts. The study of theories of meaning in Arabic is an important foundation for authentic and in-depth learning of Arabic (Halim et al., 2024).

Several previous studies have stated that the application of semantics in Indonesian learning in elementary school improves students' understanding of word meanings and language skills, including critical thinking skills. The main challenges are the lack of teacher understanding, limited teaching materials, and learning time, which need to be addressed through the development of contextual teaching materials and teacher training. Effective semantic integration requires the support of curriculum, schools, and governments to create meaningful learning (Salsabila et al., 2024). Likewise, research confirms that the Inclusive Semantics approach helps students analyze the implicit meanings in language art materials to hone high-level thinking skills. This method is believed to be effective in guiding students to interpret texts in depth, in line with the demands of learning. Its implementation is expected to improve the quality of more meaningful and holistic learning (Bujang & Subet, 2022). These results illustrate that the semantic approach can be a solution to overcome mufradat learning that seems monotonous and less effective.

In the context of the Mamba'ul Ulum Turen Islamic boarding school in Malang, the application of the semantic approach is very relevant and strategic because it can overcome the indicators of weak understanding of the meaning of mufradat which is an obstacle in learning. Islamic boarding schools as tradition-based and spiritual educational institutions require a learning method that not only emphasizes the memorization aspect of words, but also an approach that is able to build students' contextual understanding of the Arabic vocabulary used in the yellow book and other religious texts.

The Mamba'ul Ulum Turen Islamic boarding school also has distinctive characteristics in the teaching and learning process that combines local religious and cultural activities. Therefore, mufradat learning by

systematically integrating a semantic approach that also pays attention to cultural and social context is very important to improve students' understanding of Arabic as a whole. This will make it easier for students to communicate and read Arabic texts accurately and meaningfully.

The implementation of the semantic approach in Islamic boarding schools still has challenges, especially the limitations of relevant learning resources and the competence of teachers in teaching this approach. In connection with the challenges faced, teacher training and the development of semantics-based teaching materials that are in accordance with the needs of the Mamba'ul Ulum Turen Malang Islamic boarding school are needed so that the implementation of this approach can run optimally.

This research aims to explore the subjective experience of students in understanding the meaning of Arabic mufradat through a semantic approach, identify the unique practices of teachers in integrating semantic analysis (such as synonym/antonymic relations) into mufradat learning in the pesantren environment, uncover the cultural meanings inherent in certain Arabic vocabulary (e.g.: fiqh/sufism terms) according to the perception of students and teachers at the Mamba'ul Ulum Turen Islamic boarding school Malang, Malang. As an effort to increase the effectiveness of students' learning by understanding the meaning of words contextually. The results of this research are expected to be a reference for Arabic language education institutions in other Islamic boarding schools in developing more meaningful and applicable mufradat learning methods.

METHOD

The research method used in this study is qualitative with a phenomenological approach. The phenomenological approach was chosen

because of its nature that allows researchers to explore the experiences, perceptions, and subjective meanings possessed by research participants related to the integration of semantic approaches in Arabic mufradat learning. This approach is suitable for understanding in depth how students and educators at the Mamba'ul Ulum Turen Islamic Boarding School in Malang experience and interpret the mufradat learning process with this approach.

The data collection process is carried out through several techniques, including in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation. In-depth interviews were used to obtain direct information from students and teachers regarding their views, experiences, and challenges in applying semantic approaches. Participatory observation allows researchers to witness firsthand the mufradat learning activities that take place in the classroom, thereby obtaining accurate contextual data. Meanwhile, documentation in the form of notes, photos, and teaching materials used is also a source of complementary data in analyzing the learning process and results.

This research was carried out at the Turen Islamic Boarding School Malang as a representative location with special characteristics in traditional Arabic language learning that wants to be integrated with modern semantic approaches. The research is focused on mufradat learning activities that use this method by involving a number of students and teachers as the main participants. The data collection period lasted for one month to ensure that the results of observation and interviews included the overall learning dynamics.

Data analysis is carried out qualitatively with the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn. The data that has been collected is filtered and processed to find the main patterns and themes that emerge related to participants' experiences and perceptions regarding the use

of semantic approaches in mufradat learning. The phenomenological approach allows the researcher to provide an in-depth interpretation based on the subjective meaning of the participants, so that the results of the research are able to understand the nature of the learning phenomenon comprehensively and meaningfully according to the context of the pesantren.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Santri's Experience in Understanding Mufradat through a Semantic Approach

The subjective experience of students in understanding the meaning of Arabic mufradat through a semantic approach at the Mamba'ul Ulum Turen Islamic Boarding School in Malang has increased. The students said that an approach that emphasizes the meaning of words in the context of sentences and the real world helps them internalize mufradat more easily and more meaningfully. They also state that mufradat learning is not just mechanical memorization, but a process of understanding that leads to the ability to use these words effectively in daily communication.

This experience is in line with the results of other phenomenological research that emphasizes the importance of meaning-based learning in improving the quality of Arabic language mastery in the pesantren environment (Linur, 2022). In the semantic approach, mufradat learning not only focuses on the recognition of word forms, but also how the word interacts in the context of sentences and real communication situations, making it easier for students to apply mufradat in daily language activities. This helps to increase the motivation and memory of students so that learning is more meaningful and memorable.

The students revealed that the understanding of mufradat in relation to the context and meaning of the word builds a more relevant learning experience and motivates them to continue learning. This is in accordance with semantic theory that underlines the importance of the relationship between meaning and linguistic social context in the language learning process (Halim et al., 2024). Through this approach, students are able to relate new mufradat to their real experiences so that it makes it easier to strengthen their memory and understanding holistically.

The increase experienced by students during learning still leaves several obstacles faced by students and teachers in the application of semantic approaches. Some students still experience difficulties when facing mufradat that has a double meaning, polysemine, or complex contextual. In addition, observations show that there are still limitations in semantics-based learning resources and teacher competencies who are not fully ready to implement this strategy consistently. This emphasizes the need to improve training for teachers and the development of teaching materials that support the optimal application of semantic approaches.

The discussion of these findings shows that the semantic approach can improve the quality of mufradat learning by making the meaning of words the central point. This approach not only strengthens the weaknesses of old memorization methods, but also enriches students' understanding of the broader dimension of Arabic, including lexical and grammatical meanings in the context of sentences. This approach also improves the ability of students to use mufradat in the context of correct and meaningful communication, in accordance with the purpose of learning Arabic as a language of communication and religious studies (Natsir, 2017).

The success of this approach depends on the readiness and quality of learning resources and the competence of teachers in implementing them. Suboptimal implementation can cause difficulties, especially if teachers have not fully understood semantic principles or have mastered relevant teaching techniques. Therefore, teacher capacity development through special training on semantics-based mufradat learning methods is a strategic step to maximize learning outcomes.

The findings of this study show that the semantic approach also helps students form operational and contextual concepts of meaning, which are in line with modern linguistic theories regarding semantics and pragmatics in Arabic. This gives the impression that mufradat learning is not only a memorization, but a process of meaning that involves cognitive and socio-cultural elements at the same time. This approach facilitates the development of students' Arabic language competencies that are more adaptive and functional according to the needs of the context.

The subjective experience of the students shows that the semantic approach has a significant positive impact on the understanding of Arabic mufradat at the Mamba'ul Ulum Turen Islamic boarding school in Malang. This approach addresses most of the weaknesses of traditional memorization methods and results in more meaningful and applicable learning. To support this, the provision of supporting teaching materials, teacher training, and the improvement of semantics-based learning resources are needed so that this approach can be implemented sustainably and effectively in the pesantren environment.

Unique Practices of Teachers Integrating Semantic Approaches in Mufradat Learning

In the era of Arabic language education that continues to grow, innovation in mufradat teaching methods is very important to improve the quality of learning. The Mamba'ul Ulum Turen Islamic Boarding School in Malang has shown concrete steps in integrating semantic analysis into mufradat learning. This approach not only focuses on memorizing words mechanically, but also instills an understanding of the meaning of words in the context of sentences, students' life experiences, and Islamic values, so that learning becomes more meaningful and contextual.

The unique practice carried out by the teachers at the Mamba'ul Ulum Islamic Boarding School Turen Malang in integrating semantic analysis into mufradat learning is reflected in various innovations and distinctive strategies. One of the findings of the study shows that teachers not only teach mufradat through memorization, but also relate each vocabulary to the context of the sentence, the students' life experiences, and Islamic values. Teachers often use religious texts, such as Qur'anic verses, hadiths, daily prayers, and scholarly stories as sources of mufradat, so that students directly learn from authentic material that is rich in meaning. During the learning process, teachers actively insert example sentences with moral and spiritual values, and guide students to understand variations in the meaning of words through dialogue, drama, and linguistic practices that are relevant to the lives of students. Teachers also use the contextual teaching and learning (CTL) method by relating mufradat to real daily experiences, such as buying and selling conversations to instill honesty and trust, or writing assignments with Islamic themes that train expression and understanding of values.

This strategy is in line with the model of linguistic integration, teaching methodology, and technology that emphasizes the use of meaning analysis, group communication practices, and value-based assessments in

Arabic language learning in Islamic boarding schools (Hermawan, 2025). The practice of semantic integration is able to improve the quality of mufradat learning because students better understand the meaning of words both lexically and grammatically and are able to use mufradat appropriately and meaningfully in religious and social communication in the pesantren environment.

The teachers also applied semantic analysis by dissecting the structure of words in Arabic, such as the root of the word, derivatives, and the change of meaning from one form to another. This is in line with a study that explains that each mufradat learning can begin with an explanation of the origin of words, basic meanings, and variations in meaning that arise according to changes in harakat, plural forms, or changes in the position of words in sentences. The teacher guides the students to recognize grammatical meanings, such as the difference between isim, fi'il, and letters, as well as the use of synonyms and antonyms in conversation. This method aims to ensure that students are not trapped in a single meaning, but are able to understand the dynamics and flexibility of meaning in Arabic as analyzed in modern Arabic linguistics (Nurmuzib et al., 2024).

Teachers also apply collaborative strategies by involving students in discussion groups to explore semantic analysis together. This group discussion focused on finding various meanings of words, solving problems with the use of mufradat in communication, and preparing sentence examples by varying the use of words based on religious and social contexts. Such a thing is relevant to a study that emphasizes that group practice can help students build analytical and critical skills, as well as strengthen their understanding of mufradat through interaction and experiential experiences between fellow students (Hermawan, 2025).

This unique practice proves that the integration of semantic approaches in learning mufradat at the Mamba'ul Ulum Turen Islamic Boarding School in Malang not only improves the lexical and grammatical understanding of students, but also builds social, cultural, and spiritual insights that complement the success of learning Arabic as a means of communication, religious studies, and character development of students in the pesantren environment.

Some of the unique practices carried out by the teachers have been proven to expand students' understanding of the meaning of mufradat both lexically and grammatically and help them use mufradat appropriately in religious and social communication. A collaborative approach through group discussions is one of the strategies that encourages learning success by improving students' analytical and critical skills. Through this method, students not only gain knowledge of the language, but also build social and spiritual insights, strengthen the character and continuity of Arabic language learning in Islamic boarding schools.

The integration of semantic approaches in mufradat learning at the Mamba'ul Ulum Turen Islamic Boarding School in Malang is a comprehensive learning model. This model harmonizes linguistic aspects, cultural values, and character education, so that it has a positive impact not only on the Arabic language competence of students but also on the formation of their personality as individuals based on Islamic values. This innovation can be an inspiring example for similar educational institutions in developing more effective and meaningful learning methods.

Cultural Meanings Inherent in Arabic Vocabulary

Cultural meaning inherent in Arabic vocabulary is an important variable in learning mufradat at the Mamba'ul Ulum Islamic Boarding School Turen Malang. The teachers not only convey the literal meaning of the word, but also instill cultural values and religious teachings that shape the students' thinking and perspective on a concept. This approach enriches mufradat with the socio-cultural context of the Arab society and Islamic values, so that the mufradat studied is not only linguistic, but also applicable and lives in the daily life of the Islamic boarding school.

In learning Arabic mufradat at the Mamba'ul Ulum Turen Islamic Boarding School in Malang, the cultural meaning inherent in vocabulary is an important element that teachers pay attention to. This cultural meaning not only refers to the literal meaning of a word, but also the cultural values and religious teachings contained in it, which shape the perspective and thinking of students towards a concept or phenomenon. This approach enriches the meaning of mufradat with the context of the social and cultural life of the Arab community as well as the Islamic values that are embedded, so that the mufradat learned by students has a complete and applicable meaning in the daily life of the pesantren.

Students are trained to understand mufradat in relation to distinctive Islamic culture and traditions, such as words related to worship, social ethics, and religious norms. For example, the word "taqwa" is not only interpreted as spiritual awareness, but also reflects the value of life that must be applied in social interaction, obedience to Allah, and daily ethics. Thus, mufradat learning is inseparable from the cultural context that enriches understanding and helps students make Arabic a living language that is firmly rooted in the culture of the pesantren.

The cultural meaning of mufradat is also associated with the local experience and context of the students, so that Arabic words are associated with relevant local culture and are also associated with Arabic culture. This is in line with a study that explains that understanding Arabic culture has an important role in increasing teacher motivation when teaching Arabic and integrating culturally responsive learning approaches. By utilizing elements of the student's culture, experience, and perspective, Arabic teaching can be carried out more effectively and meaningfully (ISA et al., 2025). This strategy is in accordance with the concept of language learning that emphasizes the cultural aspect as an inseparable part of language, as reviewed by several studies on the teaching of Arabic in Islamic boarding schools.

The role of cultural meaning in learning mufradat strengthens the function of Arabic not only as a means of communication, but also as a means of understanding religious identity and values. This process is further strengthened by methods that link mufradat in the context of the life of students in Islamic boarding schools, which are oriented towards character formation. Through understanding this cultural meaning, students are able to apply mufradat in real life while understanding the moral and spiritual messages inherent in the vocabulary, enriching the quality of learning Arabic.

Some of these things are still accompanied by challenges related to understanding the cultural meaning of mufradat which is sometimes very contextual and requires interpretive sensitivity by students. Teachers need to reinforce explanations accompanied by examples of the use of mufradat in a vibrant cultural context that is relevant to students' observations and experiences. This approach improves students' ability to understand Arabic

culture more deeply and apply it appropriately and effectively in daily communication and religious learning.

The integration of cultural meaning in learning mufradat at the Mamba'ul Ulum Turen Islamic Boarding School in Malang shows that mastery of Arabic vocabulary is more meaningful when it is associated with culture and inherent values. This semantic approach that emphasizes cultural aspects makes mufradat learning not only a linguistic mastery, but also a strengthening of the religious and social identity of students. This strategy is very important in the context of Islamic boarding schools that demand that Arabic is not just a formality, but an integral part of the life and faith of the students.

Learning mufradat by integrating cultural meanings strengthens the function of the Arabic language not only as a means of communication, but also as a means of understanding identity and deep religious values. The learning model that relates mufradat to the context of the life of students in pesantren is oriented towards character formation, so that through this cultural meaning students are able to apply mufradat in real life while understanding the moral and spiritual messages inherent in the vocabulary, which ultimately enriches the quality of Arabic language learning in the pesantren environment.

The use of a semantic approach that pays attention to the cultural meaning of mufradat shows that mastery of Arabic vocabulary becomes more meaningful and integral to the formation of religious and social identity of students. This kind of learning strategy is very important in Islamic boarding schools, which require Arabic not only as a learning formality, but also as part of the daily lives and faith of students, making mufradat learning a holistic and contextual process.

CONCLUSION

From these various descriptions, conclusions can be drawn as follows, namely: **first:** The experience of students in understanding Arabic mufradat through a semantic approach at the Mamba'ul Ulum Turen Islamic Boarding School in Malang shows an improvement, where learning that emphasizes the meaning of words in the context of sentences and real life helps students internalize mufradat in a more meaningful and applicable way than just mechanical memorization. This approach strengthens the understanding of lexical and grammatical meanings and improves students' communication skills according to religious and social contexts, although there are still obstacles related to double meanings, limited learning resources, and teacher readiness. The success of this method is highly dependent on the development of supporting teaching materials and teacher training in an ongoing manner, so that the semantic approach not only facilitates vocabulary mastery, but also develops adaptive and contextual Arabic language competencies according to the needs of the pesantren.

Second: The integration of semantic approaches in mufradat learning at the Mamba'ul Ulum Turen Islamic Boarding School in Malang is applied through unique and contextual teaching practices, which not only rely on memorization but emphasize the understanding of the meaning of words in the context of sentences, student experiences, and Islamic values. Teachers use authentic sources such as Qur'anic verses and hadith as well as contextual learning methods such as dialogue and group discussions to enrich the learning experience and improve students' analytical skills. This approach strengthens the mastery of mufradat lexically and grammatically as well as builds social, cultural, and spiritual insights that are essential for the

formation of students' character and religious identity, making this model an effective example in the development of Arabic language learning in Islamic boarding schools.

Third: The cultural meaning inherent in Arabic vocabulary is an inseparable part of the learning of mufradat at the Mamba'ul Ulum Turen Islamic Boarding School in Malang, because it not only involves understanding the literal meaning but also includes cultural values and religious teachings that shape the perspective and attitude of students towards a concept. This approach makes mufradat learning more meaningful and relevant to the social and religious life of students, so that Arabic is not only an academic material, but also an integral part of the religious identity and culture of the Islamic boarding school. Thus, the mastery of mufradat associated with cultural meaning enriches the learning process and helps students internalize vocabulary more deeply and applicatively in daily life.

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