

# Optimizing Students' Interest in Learning and Mastery of Arabic Vocabulary Through the Use of Interactive Games Gimkit

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## Abstract

This study investigates the effectiveness of Gimkit, an innovative gamified learning platform, in enhancing students' interest and vocabulary mastery in Arabic at MTs Sadamiyyah Jepara. The purpose of this study is to see the impact of Gimkit on students' interest and mastery of vocabulary in Arabic at MTs Sadamiyyah Jepara. The research employs a classroom action research (CAR) approach, conducted in two cycles, with data gathered through observation, questionnaires, interviews, and vocabulary tests. Findings indicate that Gimkit significantly boosted student engagement, motivation, and vocabulary retention by transforming traditional Arabic learning into an interactive and enjoyable experience. The platform's unique features, such as real-time quizzes, competitive games, and reward systems, created a dynamic learning environment that addressed common challenges, including low motivation and difficulty in memorizing vocabulary. Adjustments made during the intervention, such as customizing vocabulary sets and incorporating collaborative activities, further optimized student performance. This study underscores the potential of gamification as a transformative tool in Arabic language education, offering practical insights into how technology can foster greater participation, improve linguistic competence, and promote positive learning attitudes in Islamic educational settings.

**Keywords:** *arabic language learning, classroom action research, gimkit, interactive learning, motivation, vocabulary mastery*

## Introduction

The learning of the Arabic language in Indonesia holds significant importance, particularly within the framework of Islamic education. As the language of the Qur'an, Arabic serves as a vital conduit for understanding Islamic teachings, thus embedding a spiritual dimension in its study. However, the challenges associated with learning Arabic in Indonesia are considerable. A primary obstacle is the prevalent low interest among students, often stemming from the perception of Arabic as a complex language, characterized by intricate grammar and extensive vocabulary requirements. This perception, if unaddressed, can severely impede students' proficiency in Arabic (Husein et al., 2023; Muassomah et al., 2023; Munip, 2020).

Interest in learning is a crucial determinant of educational success. Educational psychology posits that a student's interest directly influences their engagement in the learning process, which in turn affects academic performance (Ahmid, 2020; Hasanah et al., 2023). In the context of Arabic language acquisition, diminished interest can hinder the development of essential language skills, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing. This issue is compounded by traditional teaching methods that

often rely on rote memorization and lectures, which fail to engage students effectively (Hastang & R., 2023; Rahmawati & Febriani, 2021). Mastery of Arabic vocabulary is also very important because it can help students to understand, write and communicate in Arabic well (Jasni et al., 2020). In fact, most students are still unable to master many vocabularies (Riwanda et al., 2021). The factor of low student interest causes problems in learning Arabic, including students finding it difficult to understand and memorise vocabulary. Consequently, there is a pressing need for innovative pedagogical approaches that can enhance student interest and facilitate the mastery of Arabic (Sulaeman, 2023).

According to Slameto (2018) interest in learning is a fixed tendency to pay attention, remember the activities that a person is interested in, pay attention continuously accompanied by pleasure. Based on this definition, it can be concluded that the indicators of interest in learning, namely: feelings of pleasure, interest, attention and involvement of students. There are many types of factors that can affect learning interest, but they can be grouped into two, namely internal factors and external factors. Internal factors come from students such as physical condition, psychological condition, and motivation. The family environment, school environment, community environment are included in external factors that can affect learning interest (Slameto, 2018). In the context of learning, one of the factors that can affect learning interest is learning media. The use of interesting learning media can increase students' enthusiasm and interest in learning Arabic (Fakhrudin et al., 2021).

One promising strategy gaining traction is gamification, which integrates game-like elements into the educational process. Research indicates that gamification can significantly boost student motivation across various learning environments (Ahmid, 2020; Mazlan et al., 2021). In Arabic language education, gamification presents a unique opportunity to engage students, particularly in vocabulary acquisition. Platforms such as Gimkit, which allow educators to create interactive quizzes infused with competitive elements, have shown effectiveness in enhancing student engagement and vocabulary mastery (Dörnyei, 2019). The interactive features of Gimkit, including points, challenges, and leaderboards, foster a dynamic learning atmosphere that encourages participation and provides immediate feedback, enabling students to learn from their mistakes (Rahmap et al., 2024). Empirical studies have corroborated the efficacy of gamification in improving vocabulary retention and learning motivation among students. For instance, Saari and Varjonen (2021) demonstrated that gamified learning environments facilitate a deeper understanding of second language vocabulary (Dörnyei, 2019). Although research specifically focusing on the application of gamification in Arabic language learning within Indonesian contexts remains limited, preliminary studies suggest positive outcomes (Astuti et al., 2021; Sodiq & Alindah, 2024).

Based on that background, this study aims to bridge this gap by examining the impact of Gimkit on student interest and vocabulary mastery in Arabic at MTs Sadamiyyah Jepara, a well-regarded pesantren-based institution known for its language competition achievements. The findings are anticipated to offer valuable insights for educators and curriculum developers seeking to integrate gamification into Arabic language instruction, thereby enhancing the overall quality of language education in Indonesia.

## Method

This study employs a qualitative approach with an intervention-based case study design to investigate the impact of Gimkit, a gamification-based learning platform, on students' interest in learning and mastery of Arabic vocabulary. Conducted at MTs Sadamiyyah Jepara, the research involves eighth-grade students and Arabic teachers as participants. The systematic design of data collection and analysis ensures the validity and reliability of the research findings, aligning with contemporary educational research methodologies that emphasize rigorous data handling and ethical considerations (Almelhes, 2024; Ismail et al., 2023). The research framework is grounded in Kurt Lewin's classroom action research model (CAR), which comprises four stages: planning, action, observation, and reflection (Rustiyarso, 2020). This model is particularly suitable for exploring the application of Gimkit in Arabic language learning, as it allows for iterative cycles of intervention and assessment (Hersi, 2024; Mohd Ismath et al., 2022). The intervention is structured into two cycles, each consisting of three learning sessions, focusing on enhancing students' interest and vocabulary mastery. This design facilitates a comprehensive analysis of Gimkit's effects on the learning experiences of students within the madrasah context (Riwanda et al., 2021). A purposive sampling technique was employed to select 32 eighth-grade students, ensuring a diverse representation of Arabic language skills. Additionally, two Arabic teachers with direct experience in integrating Gimkit into their teaching were included as participants, providing valuable insights into the pedagogical implications of gamification in language education (Hamzah et al., 2022; Zhang & Hasim, 2023).

The intervention process is divided into three main stages: preparation, implementation, and evaluation. During the preparation phase, teachers receive training on using Gimkit, and diagnostic tests are administered to assess students' initial interest and vocabulary proficiency. The implementation phase involves integrating Gimkit into three weekly sessions covering vocabulary, grammar, and reading comprehension, with activities tailored to align with the curriculum. Teachers act as facilitators, monitoring and supporting student engagement throughout the learning process (Hidayah et al., 2021; T. Alshammari, 2020). The evaluation phase includes a post-intervention test to measure changes in students' learning interest and vocabulary mastery, supplemented by qualitative data from interviews, observations, and focus group discussions to gain deeper insights into the participants' experiences (Almelhes, 2024; Ismail et al., 2023).

Data collection employs both quantitative and qualitative methods. Pre- and post-intervention tests quantitatively assess students' vocabulary mastery, while classroom observations document student interactions and engagement dynamics. Focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews provide qualitative insights into the perceptions of both students and teachers regarding the effectiveness of Gimkit in enhancing the learning experience. Additionally, a student feedback survey captures their views on the gamified learning process (Hersi, 2024; Zhang & Hasim, 2023). Data analysis employs a mixed-methods approach. Quantitative data is analyzed descriptively to identify trends in vocabulary mastery improvement, while qualitative data from interviews, observations, discussions, and surveys are thematically analyzed using NVivo software. This analysis aims to uncover key themes related to learning interest, vocabulary mastery, and classroom dynamics, contributing to a holistic understanding of the intervention's impact (Almelhes, 2024; Hidayah et al., 2021). Ethical considerations are paramount in this research, with approvals obtained from

the school and consent from students' parents. Participants are informed about the research objectives, procedures, and their right to withdraw at any time. Confidentiality of participant data is strictly maintained, ensuring that all information is utilized solely for research purposes (Almelhes, 2024; Hamzah et al., 2022).

## Results

### Increased Interest in Learning Arabic

This study successfully showed that the use of Gimkit had a significant positive impact on the increase in students' interest in learning at MTs Sadamiyyah Jepara. Before the implementation of Gimkit, Arabic language learning took place with conventional methods such as lectures and memorization. Pre-cycle observations showed that 65% of students seemed bored, sleepy, and lacked focus. In fact, some students were seen daydreaming or talking to friends during the lesson. However, after the implementation of Gimkit, no students were found bored or sleepy. On the contrary, all students were actively involved in the Gimkit quiz, showing high enthusiasm.

Interviews with 10 students revealed that they found learning Arabic more enjoyable with Gimkit. Students stated that the elements of games and competitions in Gimkit made them more excited to learn Arabic, especially in memorizing new vocabulary. One student said, "I am more motivated to learn because I want to win in competitions." The question repetition feature on Gimkit also helps students remember vocabulary more easily.

The results of the questionnaire distributed to 32 students reinforce this finding. Most students find that Gimkit make learning more engaging, increase their motivation, and make vocabulary mastery easier. The following table summarizes the results of the questionnaire:

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Learning with Gimkit is more fun	87% (28 students)	11% (3 students)	2% (1 student)	0%
Gimkit helps me memorize Arabic vocabulary faster	82% (26 students)	16% (5 students)	2% (1 student)	0%
I am more motivated to learn Arabic with Gimkit	90% (29 students)	7% (2 students)	3% (1 student)	0%
I would like Gimkit to be reused in future learning	92% (30 students)	5% (1 student)	3% (1 student)	0%

The teacher's reflection journal also noted that students were more active in group discussions, more enthusiastic about competition, and able to memorize vocabulary more effectively. Teachers noted that the learning atmosphere became more lively, and students looked more confident in participating. Overall, the use of Gimkit not only creates an engaging learning environment, but also encourages students to be more active and enthusiastic about learning. Gamification elements such as interactive quizzes and leaderboards help increase students' interest in learning, not only in the classroom but also in activities outside the classroom. This improvement shows that Gimkit can be an effective tool to support Arabic learning in schools.

### Improving Mastery of Arabic Vocabulary

The use of Gimkit learning media has a significant positive impact on the mastery of Arabic vocabulary of students at MTs Sadamiyyah Jepara. Based on the interviews, students revealed that the vocabulary guessing quiz presented in Gimkit made it easier for them to memorize new vocabulary. Although the quizzes are often repeated, the varied game modes keep students enthusiastic. Quiz repetition also strengthens students' memorization, making it easier for them to understand the learning material.

Before using Gimkit, students found it difficult to understand and memorize vocabulary. However, after using Gimkit, they feel more motivated and the learning process becomes fun. In addition, gimmicky features such as leaderboards and point collection encourage students to compete positively.

The vocabulary mastery test conducted over three cycles showed a significant improvement. The following is a table of student vocabulary proficiency test results:

Value Interval	Classification	Pre Cycle	Cycle I	Cycle II
55 – 64	Very Less	4	1	0
65 – 74	Less	5	2	0
75 – 84	Enough	9	9	4
85 – 94	Good	7	7	4
95 – 100	Excellent	3	9	20
<b>Average</b>		<b>76,6</b>	<b>84,6</b>	<b>92,7</b>

The test results showed the average increase in vocabulary mastery scores as follows:

1. Pre-Cycle: The average student score is 76.6
2. Cycle I: The average score increased to 84.6
3. Cycle II: The average score reached 92.7

### Changes in Classroom Dynamics

The implementation of Gimkit has succeeded in changing the classroom dynamics to be more interactive and inclusive. Teachers report that students now work together more often during learning sessions. Observations show that students who previously tended to work alone began to show a desire to discuss and share ideas with their peers. In group discussion sessions, students help each other and share strategies for answering questions correctly. They also provide mutual support when a group member makes a mistake, creating a more cooperative learning atmosphere. One student revealed, "I feel more confident because my friends always help me if I have difficulties. We learn together, not just compete."

The classroom dynamics are also becoming more lively, with students interacting more, both with friends and with teachers. They more often ask questions or ask for further explanations about material that is considered difficult, something that was previously rare. This activity shows that Gimkit not only works to increase interest in learning, but also encourages students to be more actively involved in the learning process, turning them into more proactive participants in the class.

In addition, observation data shows that the classroom atmosphere has become more inclusive. Students who had previously rarely participated or were marginalized began to show courage to participate in class discussions and activities. Teachers note that the use of Gimkit provides an equal opportunity for every student to contribute, regardless

of their ability level. This shows that this platform is able to provide a sense of justice and opportunity for all students, creating a more open and equal learning space.

This positive change is also reflected in the teacher's reflection journal. Teachers note that with the use of Gimkit, they find it easier to engage all students in learning activities. The diversity of student participation, both active and previously passive, shows that Gimkit has succeeded in creating a supportive and fun atmosphere. Teachers also observed that the classroom atmosphere became more positive, where students felt valued and encouraged to continue learning.

Overall, the use of Gimkit has succeeded in creating a more interactive, inclusive, and fun classroom dynamic. The platform not only increases students' interest in learning, but also changes the way they collaborate, discuss, and participate in learning. The results of the teacher's observation and reflection show that Gimkit is able to create a more positive learning environment, where every student feels valued, motivated, and has the same opportunity to grow.

### **Challenges in Implementation**

While the implementation of Gimkit has yielded positive results, several challenges emerged during its application. One of the primary issues was limited access to technology. Approximately 40% of students lacked personal devices, requiring them to share with classmates. This situation often caused delays in completing tasks, as some students had to wait their turn to use a device. Additionally, unstable internet connectivity posed another significant challenge. Teachers reported that learning sessions were occasionally disrupted due to difficulties accessing Gimkit. One teacher remarked, "When the internet connection is slow, the learning process becomes less effective because students lose focus." Another challenge faced by teachers was designing quizzes in Gimkit that aligned with the curriculum. This task required extra time to ensure the questions matched students' proficiency levels and supported learning objectives. Teachers also noted the need for additional training to fully utilize Gimkit's features.

Interviews with teachers also revealed that not all students felt comfortable with the technology-based approach. Some preferred traditional teaching methods that were more familiar to them. This highlights the importance of incorporating diverse teaching strategies to accommodate all learners. On the other hand, the use of Gimkit has brought positive changes to classroom dynamics. Teachers observed that students collaborated more frequently during lessons. Previously independent learners began engaging in discussions and sharing ideas with peers. During group discussions, students exchanged strategies for answering questions, offered support, and provided feedback when their peers made mistakes. This created a cooperative learning environment where students felt more at ease working together. One student shared, "I feel more confident because my friends are always there to help when I struggle. We learn together, not just compete."

Teachers also noted increased student interaction in the classroom. Students asked more questions and sought clarification on challenging material—behavior that was rarely observed before. This indicates that Gimkit not only enhances students' interest in learning but also encourages them to take a more active role in the learning process. Additionally, the classroom atmosphere became more inclusive, with previously passive students becoming more willing to participate. Teachers reported that Gimkit provided equal opportunities for all students to contribute, regardless of their skill levels.

These changes were also reflected in teachers' reflective journals, which highlighted that engaging all students in learning activities became easier with Gimkit. The diversity of student participation, including both active and previously disengaged learners, demonstrated that Gimkit successfully fostered a supportive and enjoyable learning environment. Teachers also observed a more positive classroom climate, where students felt valued and motivated to learn. In conclusion, while technological challenges exist, the benefits of implementing Gimkit are substantial in fostering a more inclusive, interactive, and engaging learning environment. The platform not only boosts students' interest and participation but also transforms classroom dynamics, creating opportunities for all learners to thrive.

### **Broader Impacts**

The implementation of Gimkit has influenced not only Arabic language learning but also the overall study habits and attitudes of students. Survey results reveal that 80% of students feel more confident tackling learning challenges, both in Arabic and other subjects. Teachers observed notable improvements in students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Students became more proactive, frequently asking questions and seeking solutions during lessons. One teacher noted, "Students are now more independent in their learning. They're no longer afraid to try or make mistakes." Additionally, these positive changes are reflected in students' attitudes toward learning in general. They exhibit greater enthusiasm and a stronger desire to excel academically. Teachers reported that students are adopting a growth mindset, viewing mistakes as valuable learning opportunities.

This evidence highlights the potential for other educational institutions to adopt technology-driven approaches like Gimkit. By fostering engaging and supportive learning experiences, schools can help students unlock their full potential. The use of Gimkit has also transformed classroom dynamics into a more interactive and inclusive environment. Teachers observed students collaborating more frequently during lessons. Previously individualistic students began engaging in discussions and sharing ideas with peers. Group discussions revealed students helping each other and sharing strategies to answer questions effectively. They also support group members when mistakes were made, thus creating a cooperative learning atmosphere. As expressed by a student, "I feel more confident because my friends are always there to help when I am struggling. We learn together, not just compete."

The students engaged more actively interacting with peers and teachers. They asked more questions and sought further explanations for challenging material where this behaviour was rarely seen before. This shift demonstrates that Gimkit not only enhances students' interest in learning, but also motivates them to participate actively, transforming them into more proactive learners. Observation data also showed that the classroom environment became more inclusive. Students who previously avoided participation or felt marginalised started contributing to discussions and class activities. Teachers noted that Gimkit provided equal opportunities for all students to contribute, regardless of their ability levels. This fostered a sense of fairness and inclusivity, creating an open and equitable learning space for all.

These positive changes were also evident in teachers' reflective journals. Teachers found it easier to engage all students in learning activities with Gimkit. The diversity of student participation, including both active and previously passive learners, demonstrated that Gimkit successfully cultivated a supportive and enjoyable atmosphere. Teachers also observed a more positive classroom climate, where students

felt valued and encouraged to continue learning. In summary, Gimkit has successfully transformed the classroom into a more interactive, inclusive, and enjoyable space. The platform not only boosts students' interest in learning but also reshapes how they collaborate, discuss, and participate in lessons. Observations and teachers' reflections indicate that Gimkit fosters a positive learning environment, where every student feels appreciated, motivated, and empowered to thrive.

## Discussion

The findings of this study underscore the effectiveness of Gimkit as a learning tool in enhancing students' interest and vocabulary mastery in Arabic language education. Learning interest is a critical factor that drives students to engage actively in their educational pursuits. This interest is often rooted in curiosity, excitement, and a desire for knowledge. Inayati (2024) posits that interest arises from engaging in enjoyable activities without external pressure, while Slameto (2018) highlights the importance of emotional engagement and sustained attention in fostering this interest. Indicators such as enjoyment, attention, and involvement are essential for assessing changes in students' interest levels. Furthermore, Khairani (2014) notes that learning interest is influenced by a combination of internal drives, social motivations, and emotional states, indicating that it is not an innate trait but rather cultivated through strategic interactions and a supportive learning environment (Beisenbayev & Almukhametov, 2024; Saili & Taat, 2023). Vocabulary acquisition, a fundamental aspect of language mastery, is defined as the ability to understand and effectively use a range of words in communication. Djiwando (as cited in Himmawati, 2022) categorizes vocabulary mastery into active-productive and passive-receptive skills, where active mastery is necessary for speaking and writing, and receptive mastery is essential for listening and reading. Indicators of vocabulary mastery include the ability to translate, pronounce, and accurately use words in context (Mustofa, 2011). The gamified nature of Gimkit facilitates vocabulary learning through its randomized quiz format, which reinforces retention while maintaining student engagement through competitive and visually appealing elements (Abubakari & Zakaria, 2023; Fandir, 2024). The utilisation of engaging game elements through gamification can create an interesting and effective learning experience, especially in the context of vocabulary acquisition (Muchyidin et al., 2025).

The introduction of Gimkit significantly transformed classroom dynamics. Initially, students exhibited passive behaviors, limited engagement, and low enthusiasm, often struggling with vocabulary memorization. However, the implementation of Gimkit in Cycle I led to marked improvements, with students becoming more active and motivated. The gamified quizzes not only encouraged participation but also fostered a more interactive and enjoyable learning experience. Despite some challenges, such as difficulties in memorizing large amounts of new vocabulary, adjustments made in Cycle II—such as reducing the quantity of new vocabulary—resulted in improved retention and sustained student engagement (Abubakari & Zakaria, 2023; Suhid et al., 2021). Moreover, the implementation of Gimkit addressed broader challenges, including technical issues related to internet connectivity and students' initial unfamiliarity with the platform. Over time, these challenges diminished as students adapted to using the tool. Although the repetitive nature of similar game modes posed a risk of monotony, incorporating varied teaching methods alongside Gimkit helped mitigate this concern. It was also noted that some students focused more on the gaming aspects rather than the educational objectives, emphasizing the need for a balanced approach that



integrates gamification with clear pedagogical goals (Hasanah & Faddad SZ, 2023; Zubairi et al., 2022). The positive impacts of Gimkit extended beyond language learning, influencing students' overall attitudes toward education. The platform fostered increased motivation, confidence, independence, and curiosity. Competitive elements encouraged students to learn from their mistakes and build resilience, while cooperative modes enhanced teamwork and communication skills.

Data from questionnaires and interviews indicated that students found the gamified quizzes engaging and effective for strengthening vocabulary retention. Teachers observed that Gimkit facilitated focus and persistence, enabling students to grasp and apply the material more effectively. These findings suggest that integrating technology-driven tools like Gimkit can create a conducive learning environment that supports language acquisition and enhances students' broader educational experiences (Oktavianti Nendra Utami et al., 2023; Sholeh, 2023). In conclusion, the integration of Gimkit into Arabic language teaching at MTs Sadamiyyah Jepara has proven successful in fostering students' interest and improving their vocabulary mastery. By leveraging its gamified features, Gimkit transformed learning into an engaging and interactive process, significantly increasing student participation, motivation, and retention. The study observed notable progress across two cycles, with students displaying enhanced focus, enthusiasm, and perseverance. Challenges, such as initial unfamiliarity with the platform and technical issues, were effectively addressed through iterative adjustments, including simplified vocabulary content and collaborative strategies. This research highlights the critical role of gamification in addressing key issues in language education, such as student disengagement and learning inefficiency. By adopting gamified tools like Gimkit, educators can create inclusive, enjoyable, and effective learning experiences that cater to diverse student needs, ultimately enhancing language acquisition in contemporary Islamic educational environments (Sofiyandi et al., 2024; Suroso et al., 2021).

## Conclusion

The integration of Gimkit into Arabic language teaching at MTs Sadamiyyah Jepara has demonstrated substantial success in fostering students' interest and improving their vocabulary mastery. By leveraging its gamified features, Gimkit transformed learning into an engaging and interactive process, significantly increasing student participation, motivation, and retention. The study observed notable progress across two cycles, with students displaying enhanced focus, enthusiasm, and perseverance. Challenges, such as initial unfamiliarity with the platform and technical issues, were effectively mitigated through iterative adjustments, including simplified vocabulary content and collaborative strategies. This research highlights the critical role of gamification in addressing key issues in language education, such as student disengagement and learning inefficiency. By adopting gamified tools like Gimkit, educators can create inclusive, enjoyable, and effective learning experiences that cater to diverse student needs. The findings emphasize the relevance of integrating digital innovations into Arabic education, providing a replicable model for enhancing language acquisition in contemporary Islamic educational environments.

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