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## **Implementing the Direct Method to Improve Vocabulary Mastery in Arabic Language Learning for Tenth Grade Students at State Islamic Senior High School 3 Medan**

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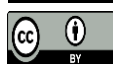
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### **ABSTRACT**

This study was motivated by the low level of Arabic vocabulary mastery among students in Class X 10 at State Islamic Senior High School 3 Medan, which was caused by teaching methods that still relied on lecturing, memorization, and translation. This made it difficult for students to understand the meanings of new vocabulary words. This study aims to improve students' mastery of Arabic vocabulary through the application of the direct method. The method used was Classroom Action Research (CAR), conducted in two cycles. Each cycle consisted of four stages: planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. Data collection instruments included learning outcome tests (pre tests and post tests) and observation sheets for teacher and student activities. There was an increase in the percentage of students achieving learning mastery from 42% in Cycle I to 79% in Cycle II. Students' average scores also increased from 71.25 to 85. It can be concluded that the direct method is an effective method for improving Arabic vocabulary mastery among students in Class X-10 at State Islamic Senior High School 3 Medan.

**Keywords:** *Direct Method, Vocabulary Mastery, Arabic Language Learning.*



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## **Introduction**

Class X 10 at State Islamic Senior High School 3 Medan has a low level of vocabulary mastery, which still needs to be improved. This is evident from the fact that many students still struggle to understand the meanings of new vocabulary words in the lesson material, recall vocabulary they have already learned, and use those words in simple sentences or conversations. During Arabic reading activities, some students still rely on the teacher's assistance or translation tools to understand the text. During speaking exercises, students also tend to be hesitant, lack confidence, and use Indonesian more often than Arabic. This situation indicates that the students' vocabulary proficiency has not yet reached the expected level, thereby affecting their ability to master Arabic language skills comprehensively.

As a madrasah under the Ministry of Religious Affairs, State Islamic Senior High School 3 Medan plays a vital role in developing students' competencies, including their proficiency in Arabic. Arabic is not only studied as a required subject but also serves as a means to understand the sources of Islamic teachings, such as the Qur'an, hadith, and various Arabic-language texts (Azahary et al., 2026). In addition, proficiency in Arabic also serves as a foundation for students who wish to pursue higher education, particularly in programs related to Islamic studies. Therefore, vocabulary mastery is a fundamental competency that students must possess in order to effectively participate in the Arabic language learning process.

In classroom instruction, the researcher found that most students still view Arabic as a difficult subject (Hasanah, 2025). This perception stems from the large number of new vocabulary words they must learn, differences in the writing and pronunciation systems compared to languages they already know, and limited opportunities to use Arabic in everyday communication. As a result, students tend to memorize vocabulary solely to meet academic requirements, rather than to use it in communicative contexts. The vocabulary they have learned is easily forgotten due to a lack of meaningful practice and repetition. These conditions lead to low student participation during lessons, a reluctance to ask or answer questions in Arabic, and suboptimal learning outcomes.

The results of the learning reflection also indicate that the learning process still requires strategies capable of creating a learning environment that is more active, communicative, and learner-centered. Instruction that places too much

emphasis on theoretical explanations and translation has not yet been fully effective in helping learners master vocabulary optimally. Learners need learning experiences that provide opportunities to hear, speak, understand, and use vocabulary directly in various learning situations. In this way, the vocabulary they learn is not merely memorized but is also understood in meaning and can be applied in simple, context-appropriate communication.

Methodology is one of the key components that determine the success of the language learning process. One method that has emerged as an alternative in second language learning is the Direct Method. This method is called the Direct Method because, throughout the learning activities, the teacher uses the target language directly without involving the native language as an intermediary (Pebrian et al., 2020). The emergence of this method offers a solution to various challenges in language learning, which has traditionally been more focused on translation and the explanation of grammatical rules than on the actual use of language in communication.

In the history of Arabic language instruction, the Direct Method emerged as a reaction to the grammar-translation method that had been used previously. While the grammar-translation method is known as the oldest method in Arabic language instruction, the Direct Method is the second-oldest (Azhar et al., 2026). Although various modern learning approaches have emerged, the Direct Method remains widely used in numerous Arabic language education institutions. In fact, this method is one of the best-known methods and also one that has generated the most differing viewpoints among language learning experts and practitioners (Bakri, 2017).

In line with this, one of the methods considered effective in Arabic language learning is the Direct Method (*Thorîqat al-Mubâsyarah*). This method emerged as a response to the shortcomings of the Qawaid-Translation Method, which views language as static. In contrast, the Direct Method treats language as a living tool of communication by placing primary emphasis on the development of speaking skills (kalam), thereby encouraging learners to use the language more actively in everyday communication (Arif, 2019).

Conceptually, the Direct Method, which is based on the principles of behaviorism, offers a comprehensive approach to learning Arabic, particularly in terms of vocabulary acquisition. Through the use of repetition, reinforcement, and direct feedback, this method helps learners acquire the language more effectively and efficiently. Additionally, these strategies make it

easier for learners to remember, understand, and use the vocabulary they have learned in various communicative situations (Falaqi, 2023). The use of the Direct Method has also been shown to reduce learners' reliance on their native language. Instead, learners are encouraged to think and communicate directly in the target language, allowing their language skills to develop more naturally (Fitriah, 2026).

Based on the conditions observed in Class X-10 at State Islamic Senior High School 3 Medan and various theoretical studies on the advantages of the direct method, there is a need for a teaching method capable of improving students' vocabulary mastery more effectively. Through this method, students are introduced to new vocabulary with the aid of concrete objects, pictures, gestures, demonstrations, and contextual usage, without relying on translation. Students not only have the opportunity to hear and pronounce new vocabulary but also to understand its meaning and use it directly in various learning activities. Consequently, the learning experience becomes more active, communicative, and meaningful, which is expected to improve students' vocabulary mastery, confidence in communication, and Arabic language learning outcomes in Class X-10 at State Islamic Senior High School 3 Medan.

### **Research Methodology**

The type of research used was Classroom Action Research (CAR). Classroom Action Research, often abbreviated as CAR, is research conducted by educators to gather information and address challenges in the teaching and learning process in the classroom (Risdiantoro, 2025). Classroom Action Research was chosen because this study addresses a real problem occurring in Class X-10 at State Islamic Senior High School 3 Medan, namely students' low mastery of Arabic vocabulary. This low mastery of vocabulary is caused by several factors.

First, students still have a limited vocabulary, so they have difficulty understanding the learning material—whether in listening, reading, speaking, or writing activities. Second, students tend to simply memorize vocabulary without actively using it in communication, so the vocabulary they have learned is easily forgotten. Third, students still lack the confidence to use Arabic in the learning process because they are worried about making mistakes in pronunciation or sentence structure.

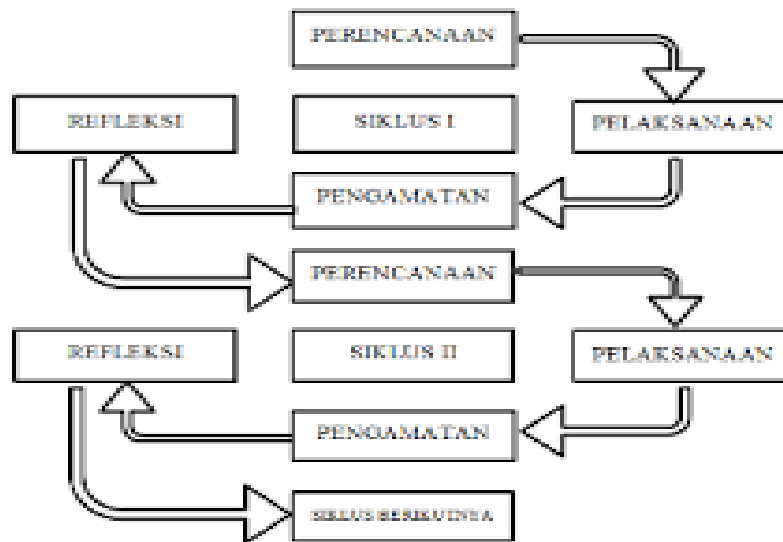
Furthermore, the current learning process does not fully provide students with opportunities to practice using vocabulary directly and repeatedly in

communicative situations. As a result, students are less active in the learning process, and their vocabulary mastery has not developed optimally. Therefore, through Classroom Action Research, teachers can implement systematic improvements through planning, implementation, observation, and reflection to enhance students' mastery of Arabic vocabulary by applying the direct method.

The instrument used in this study was a diagnostic test, which aims to determine students' proficiency levels before and after the learning process. A diagnostic test is a test used to identify students' strengths and weaknesses in the learning process (Asy'ari, 2023). Through this test, the researcher can observe improvements in students' abilities based on the average scores obtained after the intervention or instructional measures were implemented. In addition, diagnostic tests are also used to identify students' initial abilities, so that researchers can design appropriate learning strategies and interventions to improve students' understanding. The test consisted of 8 multiple-choice questions and 2 essay questions, tailored to the lesson plan so that the established learning objectives could be optimally achieved.

Observation is an essential data collection method in qualitative research (Sunati et al., 2025). In this study, observation was conducted by directly participating in the learning activities taking place in the classroom. Observations were conducted systematically, deliberately, and continuously to obtain accurate data regarding student activity sheets, teacher observation sheets, and the learning situation. Through these observations, the researcher was able to identify various phenomena occurring during the learning process carefully, thoroughly, and attentively, ensuring that the data collected could comprehensively support the research findings. Observations were conducted during every session to assess the alignment of the learning implementation with the established plan.

**Image 1.1 Classroom Action Research Procedures**



Source: Salim ( 2015). *Penelitian Tindakan Kelas* (page.36).

The procedures in this study follow the steps of Action Research as outlined by Kurt Lewin. Kurt Lewin explains that there are four main elements in the Action Research process: planning, action, observation, and reflection (Salim et al., 2015). The initial step in Action Research is to develop a lesson plan designed to address learning problems in the classroom. Educators must select strategies or techniques to overcome learning challenges and integrate them into the prepared Lesson Implementation Plan, then observe changes in students. In the next stage, teachers need to reflect on the results of their observations or all the data collected regarding the learning process that has taken place. Reflection can also be conducted after reviewing learning outcomes. The reflection activity must be followed by refinements to the plan, so that Action Research is conducted repeatedly or in cycles (Rustiyarso & Wijaya, 2020).

The primary objective of this action research is to improve the Arabic language learning process and enhance the vocabulary proficiency of students in Class X-10 through the application of the Direct Method. In addition, this action research also serves as a means of professional development for teachers in applying more communicative and contextual teaching methods. This study was conducted during the first semester of the 2025/2026 academic year, specifically in October. The research subjects were the students of Class X-10 at State Senior High School 3 in Medan, totaling 32 students. The title of this study

is The Application of the Direct Method to Improve Vocabulary Mastery in Arabic Language Classes. The data collection techniques used were observation and testing. Data analysis was conducted using two types of data: quantitative and qualitative. Qualitative data were analyzed using descriptive analysis based on the results of observations and reflections from each cycle. Meanwhile, quantitative data were analyzed using statistical tests presented in tables and graphs.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **A. Results**

Based on observations conducted by the researcher in Class X-10 at State Senior High School 3 in Medan during Arabic language classes, the teacher employed memorization, lectures, and translation methods. The teacher can implement corrective actions by applying direct methods in a planned, systematic, and continuous manner to improve the quality of learning. All data presented in the results of this study were obtained through four stages: planning, implementation of actions, observation, and reflection.

First, students still have a limited vocabulary, so they have difficulty understanding the learning material whether in listening, reading, speaking, or writing activities. Second, students tend to simply memorize vocabulary without actively using it in communication, so the vocabulary they have learned is easily forgotten. Third, students still lack the confidence to use Arabic in the learning process because they are worried about making mistakes in pronunciation or sentence structure.

This study was conducted in Class X-10 at State Senior High School 3 in Medan from October 7 to November 24, 2025. Data collection was carried out through learning activities and several cycle stages, beginning with a procedural pre-study, followed by the first cycle and the second cycle. Each cycle consisted of two 70-minute learning sessions, as well as a final exam at the end of the cycle. The learning process was facilitated by the researcher acting as the teacher. The instrument used in this study was a diagnostic test, which aims to determine students' proficiency levels before and after the learning process. A diagnostic test is a test used to identify students' strengths and weaknesses in the learning process (Asy'ari, 2023).

Through this test, the researcher can observe improvements in students' abilities based on the average scores obtained after the intervention or



instructional measures were implemented. In addition, diagnostic tests are also used to identify students' initial abilities, so that researchers can design appropriate learning strategies and interventions to improve students' understanding. The test consisted of 8 multiple-choice questions and 2 essay questions, tailored to the lesson plan so that the established learning objectives could be optimally achieved.

The implementation of the learning activities in this study was conducted in two cycles—the first cycle and the second cycle—each consisting of two sessions. Before conducting the learning activities, the researcher acted as the teacher by preparing the necessary teaching aids, including the Lesson Plan (RPP), teaching materials, evaluation questions, teacher observation sheets, questionnaires, and student record sheets. Based on the procedures carried out over the two cycles—which spanned 13 sessions—the data showed that student learning activities had improved. This improvement in learning activities was observed through direct observation. The first cycle took place on October 10, 11, 17, 18, 24, 25, and 31, 2025, and consisted of two lessons with a total duration of 70 minutes.

The material taught in this session is the theme “school.” This material is considered foundational in Arabic language learning because it is directly related to the students' daily lives. In this lesson, students are introduced to vocabulary related to elements of the school environment, such as classrooms, teachers, students, books, blackboards, and daily learning activities. Mastery of the vocabulary in this theme is important because it serves as the foundation for students to understand simple texts and engage in basic communication in Arabic.

From a pedagogical perspective, the “school” material is highly relevant to the real-life experiences of students at State Senior High School 3 in Medan. This allows the learning process to be more contextual, as students can connect new vocabulary to objects they see and use every day. However, in practice, some students still struggle to remember and pronounce vocabulary related to this theme. These difficulties arise because vocabulary must not only be understood in terms of meaning but also mastered in terms of pronunciation and usage in sentences.

Furthermore, this material requires students' active involvement in the learning process, particularly in speaking activities and directly identifying vocabulary. Without repeated practice and active language use, vocabulary



related to the “school” theme tends not to be retained in long-term memory. This situation indicates that mastering vocabulary is not sufficient through teacher explanations alone but requires learning methods that provide students with direct experience in using the language. Thus, the “school” material serves not only as an introduction to vocabulary but also as a means to comprehensively develop Arabic language skills. Therefore, learning strategies are needed that can actively engage students so that their mastery of vocabulary on this theme can develop optimally. There are 32 students enrolled in Class X-10. Students are required to always use Arabic when speaking.

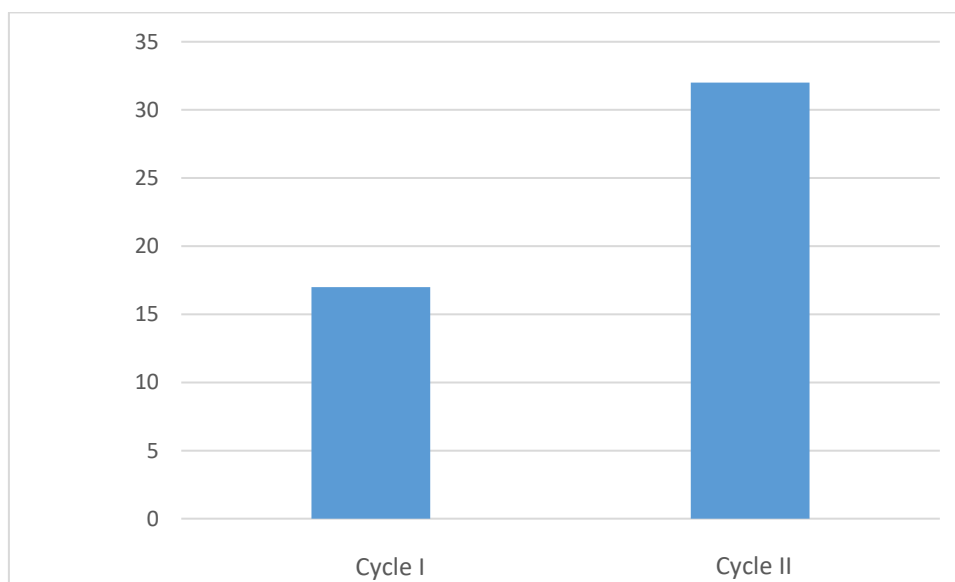
Table 1.1 Student Engagement in Learning

| Category | Average Score, Percentage | Percentage | Cycle |
|----------|---------------------------|------------|-------|
| Fair     | 1,687                     | 16,87%     | I     |
| Good     | 3,166                     | 31,66%     | II    |

Source: Processed data, 2025

The following is a frequency diagram based on the average results of observations of vocabulary mastery among students in Class X-10 during the first and second semesters.

Figure 1.2 Observation Results for Cycle I and Cycle II



Source: Processed data, 2025

Based on the previous table and diagram, the results of the observation of students' vocabulary mastery using the direct method in the first cycle reached

1.687 in the “Fair” category, while in the second cycle it reached 3.166 in the “Good” category. This result represents an 87% increase from the first cycle to the second cycle. The teacher implemented all stages of the learning process more effectively. This was because the direct method contributed to improving students’ vocabulary mastery.

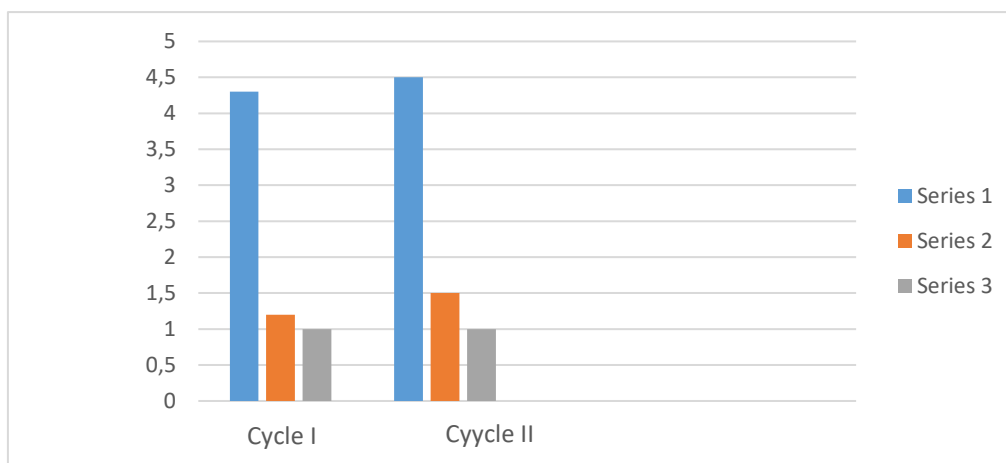
In addition to improving students’ vocabulary mastery, the direct method also helps develop their Arabic vocabulary, fosters active learning, enhances critical thinking skills, and boosts their confidence in speaking Arabic. Students’ vocabulary mastery can be assessed through their test results in the first and second cycles, as follows.

**Table 1.2 Student Assessment Results for Cycle I and Cycle II**

| Score          |               | Explanation               |
|----------------|---------------|---------------------------|
| Second Session | First Session | Amount                    |
| 85             | 71,25         | Average                   |
| 100            | 100           | Highest Score             |
| 24             | 19            | Reached the Score         |
| 8              | 13            | Has Not Reached the Score |

Source: Processed data, 2025

**Figure 1.2 Assessment Results for Cycle I and Cycle II**



Source: Processed data, 2025

Based on the research conducted, it appears that students’ vocabulary mastery—particularly vocabulary related to madrasah—in Arabic language learning through the application of the direct method has improved. The average score of the participants rose from 71.25 in the first cycle to 85 in the

second cycle. Based on this data, 19 students met the minimum passing criteria in the first cycle, where the passing threshold was set at 75, resulting in an overall pass rate of 59%. In the second cycle, there was a 26% increase from 19 students meeting the minimum proficiency criteria to 24 students meeting the minimum proficiency criteria, resulting in an overall pass rate of 75%. Based on the academic passing criteria of  $\leq 75\%$ , academic success has been achieved overall.

Based on the results of the intervention on the *al-madrasah* (school) curriculum, the application of the Direct Method showed that the learning process was more active compared to the pre-intervention conditions. At the beginning of the lesson, the teacher introduced vocabulary in Arabic using pictures, real objects, and activities found in the classroom environment. Students were asked to observe, listen to the teacher's pronunciation, and then repeat the vocabulary words both collectively and individually.

Next, students used the vocabulary in question-and-answer sessions and simple sentences appropriate to the learning context. Nevertheless, several challenges were encountered during the implementation of the program. At the initial meeting, some students appeared to have difficulty fully understanding the instructions, which were given entirely in Arabic. Some students still seemed hesitant when asked to say vocabulary words or answer questions orally. This situation indicates that the students still need time to adapt to the use of Arabic as the language of instruction.

In addition, teachers need more time to introduce each vocabulary word because the meanings are explained through pictures, real objects, gestures, and demonstrations without using direct translations. Time management is one of the challenges, especially when all students are given the opportunity to say the vocabulary words and practice them individually. Differences in students' abilities also affect the pace at which learning outcomes are achieved. Students who already have a vocabulary foundation are able to keep up with the lesson more quickly, while students with lower initial proficiency require more intensive guidance and repetition.

Despite several challenges, the implementation of the Direct Method showed positive progress with each cycle. Students began to get used to using Arabic in learning activities, became more confident in answering questions, and were able to pronounce and use vocabulary in simple sentences. By the end of the intervention, students were not only able to recall vocabulary related to the "al-

madrasah” theme but also use it in simple communication appropriate to the context they had studied. These results indicate that the implementation of the Direct Method is effective in improving students’ vocabulary mastery, although it requires a process of adaptation, good time management, and continuous practice throughout the learning process.

## **B. Discussion**

The direct method is a foreign language learning approach that emerged in response to the shortcomings of the grammar-translation method. This approach uses the target language as the primary medium in the learning process without involving the native language as an intermediary. Thus, learners gain natural language experience through listening, speaking, reading, and writing activities carried out gradually in accordance with the process of first-language acquisition. In its implementation, the direct method emphasizes the full use of the target language, minimizes explicit grammar explanations, increases oral practice, and utilizes visual aids and concrete objects to help learners understand the meaning of vocabulary and sentence structures contextually (Afriati et al., 2025).

Conceptually, the term *Al-Mubasyarah* derives from the words “*Baasyara–Yubasyiru–Mubasyaratan*,” which mean “direct.” Therefore, the *Ṭarīqah Mubāsyarah* is understood as a method of learning Arabic that is carried out without using the mother tongue as the language of instruction. The native language is the first language a person learns from childhood within the family environment; as such, it is the language one masters best, holds emotional value, and plays a crucial role in shaping a community’s cultural identity and traditions. By excluding the native language from the learning process, learners are guided to develop an understanding of meaning through the direct context of language use (Sulkifli, 2024).

The basic principle of the direct method stems from the assumption that the process of learning a foreign language shares characteristics with the process of first-language acquisition. Therefore, learning begins with listening to spoken language and imitating pronunciation, followed by the development of reading and writing skills. The primary focus of this method is to develop students’ communicative skills so that they are able to use Arabic spontaneously, naturally, and in accordance with functional grammatical rules. Grammar is not taught as the main objective but rather as a means to ensure the accuracy of language use in communication, just as native speakers do (Chalik, 2020).

In the process of learning Arabic, the direct method places intensive use of the Arabic language at the core of learning activities. Vocabulary and language structures are introduced gradually through interactions that take place during instruction, so that learners not only understand the forms and structures of the language theoretically but are also able to use them in real-life communication. Through contextual learning, students have the opportunity to interact in various situations relevant to daily life, allowing their language skills to develop in a more natural, communicative, and functional way (Azzahra, 2026).

In line with this, the direct method is also viewed as an effective approach to improving students' communicative competence in Arabic language learning. The direct use of the target language without going through a translation process allows students to understand vocabulary and language structures based on the context in which they are used. Furthermore, conversation-oriented learning, repetition in specific situations, and the use of visual media provide a more meaningful learning experience that aligns with the needs of language learning in the modern era (Anwar & Dewi, 2024).

The effectiveness of the direct method is evident not only in the improvement of students' speaking skills but also in their increased mastery of Arabic vocabulary. The direct and intensive use of the language in communication encourages students to be more active in listening, speaking, memorizing, and using vocabulary in various learning situations. This makes students more skilled at communicating in Arabic compared to when learning is focused solely on memorization or translation (Chalik, 2020).

Vocabulary mastery becomes more effective when students learn a language through direct interaction supported by visual aids and concrete objects. The use of real objects helps students make direct connections between words and their meanings without going through a translation process, thereby strengthening their memory of vocabulary. Furthermore, students' active engagement in observing, pointing out, naming, and relating vocabulary to everyday contexts makes learning more meaningful than simply memorizing a list of vocabulary words in isolation (Sofia & Azzahra, 2026).

The implementation of the direct method also has a positive impact on the overall learning process. Students demonstrate higher levels of engagement, enthusiasm, and participation during learning activities. Activities such as pointing to objects, naming objects, repeating the pronunciation of vocabulary words, and engaging in simple communication practice can increase students'

engagement in the learning process. In addition, the use of concrete objects helps improve the accuracy of vocabulary pronunciation and makes it easier for students to understand meanings directly, in line with the characteristics of their cognitive development (Fatimah, 2026).

The advantages of the direct method are also reflected in its ability to create a communicative, natural, and enjoyable learning environment. This approach can boost students' motivation to learn while developing their oral communication skills through various interactive activities. However, its successful implementation depends heavily on the teacher's ability to design learning activities that are engaging, contextual, and tailored to students' needs so that interactions during the learning process can take place optimally (Hasanah et al., 2024).

The success of implementing the direct method is also influenced by teachers' professional competencies. Teachers are expected to have a solid command of the subject matter, strong Arabic language skills, creativity in selecting learning media, and experience in classroom management so that all learning activities can take place effectively in the target language. With these competencies, teachers are able to create a learning environment that supports natural and continuous language acquisition (Rochmat et al., 2023).

Based on the results of this study, the application of the direct method in Arabic language instruction in the 10th grade at State Islamic Senior High School 3 Medan has been proven to improve students' vocabulary mastery. The direct use of Arabic during the learning process provides students with the opportunity to understand, remember, and use vocabulary in real-life communication contexts.

A learning process that utilizes visual aids, concrete objects, oral exercises, repetition, and active interaction makes it easier for students to master vocabulary while also boosting their confidence in using Arabic. These research findings are consistent with various previous studies indicating that the application of the direct method is expected to improve and develop students' Arabic language skills, particularly in terms of vocabulary mastery as the foundation for communicative competence (Zahro et al., 2022).

## Conclusion

The application of the direct method can improve vocabulary mastery in the Arabic language course for Class X-10 at Senior High School 3 Medan. This can be seen from the assessment results at the end of each cycle. Based on the results of the questionnaire monitoring students' learning activities, there was an increase in the percentage, from 42% in the first cycle to 79%. In addition, there was also an increase in the average test score from 71.25 in the first cycle to 85 in the second cycle. These data indicate that the learning process in the second cycle was better than in the first cycle. No significant obstacles affected the learning process during the implementation of the direct method. Therefore, it is evident that the application of the direct method can improve vocabulary mastery among students in Class X-10 at Senior High School 3 Medan. The researcher hopes that this study will not end here but will be continued to further demonstrate that the direct method can enhance students' vocabulary mastery.

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