

Meaningful and Contextual Learning in Developing Arabic Language Skills among Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Students: A Literature Review

Pembelajaran Bermakna dan Kontekstual dalam Pengembangan Keterampilan Bahasa Arab Siswa Madrasah Ibtidaiyah: Kajian Literatur

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Abstract: *Vocabulary (mufradāt) is an important component of Arabic language learning at the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah level. However, knowing the meaning of a word does not necessarily mean that students can use it when listening, speaking, reading, or writing. This study examines the relevance of meaningful and contextual learning to the development of Arabic language skills among Madrasah Ibtidaiyah students and proposes a conceptual framework that links mufradāt with language use. The study employs a qualitative approach through a literature study of sources on mufradāt, Arabic language learning at the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah level, meaningful and contextual learning, and the skills of istimā', kalām, qirā'ah, and kitābah. The literature was compared and synthesized thematically to identify relationships among these concepts. The findings indicate that mufradāt should be treated as a resource for understanding and using the language rather than as material to be memorized. Vocabulary becomes more meaningful when it is connected to students' existing knowledge and experiences, and its use can be strengthened through learning contexts close to their everyday lives. The study contributes a conceptual framework that integrates students' experiences, mufradāt, meaning-making, context, and language use within a single learning process. The framework may guide the design of Arabic instruction and teaching materials at this level, but it is derived from the literature and still requires empirical testing.*

Keywords: *mufradāt; meaningful learning; contextual learning; Arabic language skills; Madrasah Ibtidaiyah*

Abstrak: *Mufradāt (kosakata) merupakan bagian penting dalam pembelajaran bahasa Arab di Madrasah Ibtidaiyah. Namun, mengetahui arti sebuah kata belum tentu berarti siswa dapat menggunakannya ketika menyimak, berbicara, membaca, atau menulis. Persoalan ini menunjukkan perlunya mengkaji cara kosakata dipelajari agar tidak berhenti pada kegiatan mengingat makna, tetapi berlanjut pada penggunaan bahasa. Penelitian ini bertujuan mengkaji relevansi pembelajaran bermakna dan kontekstual dalam pengembangan keterampilan bahasa Arab siswa Madrasah Ibtidaiyah sekaligus merumuskan kerangka konseptual yang mengaitkan mufradāt dengan penggunaan bahasa. Kajian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif melalui studi literatur terhadap sumber-sumber yang membahas mufradāt, pembelajaran bahasa Arab di Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, pembelajaran bermakna dan kontekstual, serta keterampilan istimā', kalām, qirā'ah, dan kitābah. Literatur tersebut dibandingkan dan disintesis secara tematik untuk menemukan hubungan antarkonsep. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahwa mufradāt perlu diposisikan sebagai bekal bagi pemahaman dan penggunaan bahasa, bukan sekadar materi*

hafalan. Kosakata menjadi lebih bermakna ketika dikaitkan dengan pengetahuan dan pengalaman siswa, dan penggunaannya dapat diperkuat melalui konteks pembelajaran yang dekat dengan kehidupan mereka. Kontribusi kajian ini adalah kerangka konseptual yang menyatukan pengalaman siswa, mufradāt, pemaknaan, konteks, dan penggunaan bahasa Arab dalam satu alur pembelajaran. Kerangka ini dapat menjadi pijakan awal dalam merancang pembelajaran dan bahan ajar bahasa Arab di Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, tetapi berasal dari kajian literatur sehingga penerapannya masih memerlukan pengujian empiris.

Kata kunci: *mufradāt; pembelajaran bermakna; pembelajaran kontekstual; keterampilan bahasa Arab; Madrasah Ibtidaiyah*

Introduction

Arabic language learning at the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah level is an early stage at which students begin to become familiar with and use Arabic. At this level, *mufradāt* occupies an important position because students need vocabulary to understand and produce language. [Kusumaning et al. \(2022\)](#) found that *mufradāt* instruction in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah still faces several challenges, particularly in helping students understand word meanings and in selecting teaching methods and media suited to students' learning conditions. The issue, therefore, is not whether vocabulary should be taught but how the vocabulary students acquire can become functional in language use.

Students who can give the meaning of a word cannot necessarily use it when listening, speaking, reading, or writing. For this reason, *mufradāt* should not be treated merely as material to be memorized. Vocabulary needs to reappear in expressions, sentences, conversations, and simple texts so that students can gradually recognize how words function in communication. In their study of *mufradāt* cards in thematic learning, [Suwardi et al. \(2023\)](#) showed that vocabulary can serve a stronger instructional function when it is presented within a clear context. Other studies at the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah level have shown that vocabulary learning media can present words more concretely and make them more relevant to students' learning characteristics ([Haris & Maziyah, 2022](#)). What matters, then, is not only how many words students can recall but also whether they encounter sufficient opportunities to understand and use them.

Meaningful learning offers one possible basis for establishing this connection. In Ausubel's theory, new knowledge becomes meaningful when it can be related to knowledge already present in the learner's cognitive structure, and [Bryce and Blown \(2024\)](#) reaffirmed the importance of prior knowledge in learning. In Arabic language learning at the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah level, this principle can be applied by relating new vocabulary to experiences that students already recognize. Familiar knowledge gives students a point of reference when they encounter words and expressions they have not yet mastered.

Contextual learning adds another dimension by placing language in situations that students can recognize. The family environment, classroom, peers, surrounding objects, and everyday activities can provide contexts for introducing and using vocabulary. [Zaeni et al. \(2025\)](#) showed that Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) has been applied in Arabic language instruction to support various abilities, including speaking, writing, and vocabulary acquisition. Context, in this sense, is not simply a way of making lessons more engaging. It helps students understand when a word is used, what it refers to, and how its meaning relates to a particular situation.

Research on Arabic language learning at the elementary level has examined vocabulary, instructional media, and learning context from several perspectives. Some studies have focused on *mufradāt* mastery, while others have developed media to support vocabulary learning. For example, [Ariska et al. \(2023\)](#) used Total Physical Response (TPR) to increase the vocabulary

repertoire of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah students as part of *maharah qirā'ah* instruction, thereby directing vocabulary learning toward reading skills. Other studies have used meaningful or contextual approaches to develop particular language skills. Each line of research makes a useful contribution, but the relationships among these findings have not always been made explicit. The question that remains is how vocabulary introduced in the classroom can move beyond the recognition of individual words and become part of students' actual language use.

The literature reviewed for this study shows that *mufradāt*, meaningful learning, and contextual learning have generally been discussed along separate lines. Research on vocabulary has tended to emphasize mastery and retention, studies of meaningful learning have highlighted the role of prior knowledge, and research on contextual learning has largely emphasized the use of familiar situations. What is less visible is a conceptual account of how these perspectives can be brought together in Arabic language learning at the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah level, particularly in relation to *istimā'*, *kalām*, *qirā'ah*, and *kitābah*. This gap is the starting point of the present article. Rather than proposing another technique for teaching vocabulary, the article offers an integrative synthesis that begins with students' existing experiences, relates them to *mufradāt* and meaning-making, and then connects that understanding with language use in contexts that students can recognize.

The novelty of this article lies in formulating a conceptual framework that places students' experiences, *mufradāt*, meaning-making, context, and Arabic language use within a single connected learning process. In this framework, vocabulary is not an isolated learning target but a resource that supports the development of the four language skills. This formulation addresses the gap identified above, namely the absence of an explicit conceptual relationship among vocabulary, meaningful learning, contextual learning, and language skills. Accordingly, the article aims to examine the relevance of meaningful and contextual learning to the development of Arabic language skills among Madrasah Ibtidaiyah students and to propose a conceptual framework that links *mufradāt* with language use. The framework is derived from a synthesis of the literature rather than from an empirical intervention or validation process. It should therefore be understood as a conceptual basis for developing Arabic language instruction and teaching materials, while its applicability and effectiveness remain open to empirical examination.

Method

This study used a qualitative approach through a literature study. It examined how *mufradāt*, meaningful learning, contextual learning, and Arabic language skills are related at the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah level. The study did not seek to test the effectiveness of a particular instructional model. Instead, it brought together relevant research findings and scholarly discussions to examine the connections among these areas and to develop a conceptual understanding of the issue. The study was therefore designed as a literature-based conceptual synthesis rather than a systematic review or meta-analysis.

The literature was searched through Google Scholar and GARUDA between January and February 2026, with the final search conducted on 28 February 2026. The search used combinations of the terms *mufradāt*, *Arabic vocabulary*, *Arabic language learning*, *meaningful learning*, *contextual learning*, *Contextual Teaching and Learning*, and *Arabic language skills*. The combinations were adjusted to the focus of each search rather than applied as a single fixed query. The initial search produced 30 publications. Their titles and abstracts were examined to determine whether they addressed the main concerns of the study, particularly Arabic language learning, vocabulary, language skills, meaningful learning, or contextual learning. Studies conducted in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah and elementary school settings received particular attention.

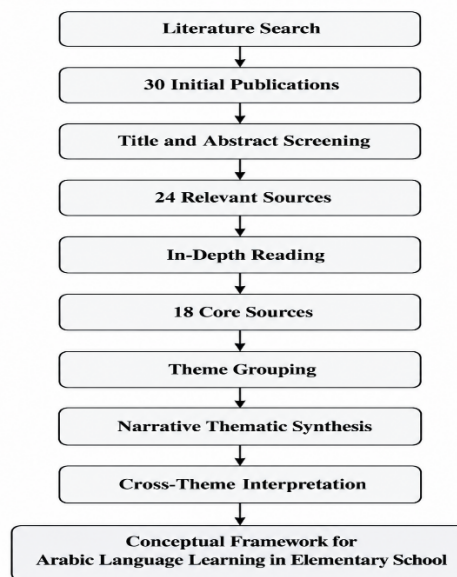
However, studies from other educational levels were retained when their findings or conceptual discussions were considered relevant to the issue examined. At this stage, 24 sources were considered relevant, and 6 publications were excluded.

The 24 sources were then read in full. The reading focused on the findings reported in each study, the learning context in which they were obtained, the problems addressed, and the aspects that could help explain the relationship among vocabulary, students' prior knowledge or experience, learning context, and Arabic language skills. Duplicate publications, when identified, were removed. Sources that did not provide sufficient material for the research focus were not retained as primary sources. After this process, 18 sources were used as the main literature for the synthesis. A number of additional works were consulted to support the methodological and theoretical basis of the study, including works on qualitative research design and literature review methodology (Barry et al., 2022; Fadli, 2021), on meaningful learning (Bryce & Blown, 2024), and on vocabulary knowledge and learning from context (Beck et al., 1983; Laufer & Paribakht, 1998; Nagy et al., 1985; Webb, 2008). These supporting references served a different purpose and were therefore not included among the 18 main sources.

The 18 main sources were then read comparatively. Rather than treating each study as an isolated account, the analysis looked for recurring issues and differences across the literature. The material was grouped around several themes: the position of *mufradāt* in Arabic language learning, students' prior knowledge and experience, meaningful learning, contextual learning, and the use of vocabulary in *istimā'*, *kalām*, *qirā'ah*, and *kitābah*. Findings that pointed in a similar direction were considered together, while differences in research focus and learning context were retained in the interpretation. This process followed a thematic narrative synthesis, in which findings from different studies are related to one another to identify themes, connections, and emerging conceptual understandings (Maeda et al., 2022; Moser & Korstjens, 2023).

No statistical aggregation or quantitative comparison was undertaken. The findings were instead read critically in relation to the research focus, particularly to examine how *mufradāt* could be connected with students' existing knowledge and experience, learning context, and actual language use. The relationships identified through this reading were then used to formulate the conceptual framework. The framework is therefore an interpretation of the literature reviewed, not a tested instructional model. Its proposed relationships remain conceptual and require further examination through classroom-based research.

Figure 1. Stages of Literature Searching, Analysis, and Synthesis in Developing the Conceptual Framework for Arabic Language Learning at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah



Results and Discussion

The Position of Mufradāt in Arabic Language Learning at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah

The literature reviewed places *mufradāt* among the basic components of Arabic language learning at the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah level. Vocabulary is generally introduced from the early stages because students need a sufficient stock of words to understand and take part in subsequent language activities. At the same time, the studies reviewed do not treat vocabulary learning simply as a matter of increasing the number of words students can remember. An analysis of Arabic textbooks based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), for example, highlighted the importance of selecting and presenting vocabulary according to learners' proficiency levels (Firmansyah et al., 2024).

A similar concern appears in Kusumaning et al. (2022), who identified difficulties in *mufradāt* learning at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, particularly in relation to meaning-making and the selection of teaching methods and media suited to students' characteristics. These findings suggest that the position of *mufradāt* at the elementary level is influenced not only by which words are taught but also by how they are introduced and whether students can relate them to knowledge they already possess.

The studies further show that vocabulary is mediated through different learning activities and materials. Suwardi et al. (2023), for instance, found that *mufradāt* cards could improve learning outcomes in thematic learning at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah. Other studies have employed visual materials, games, interactive activities, and direct language practice to make new vocabulary easier to understand and remember. Although the forms differ, these approaches generally move vocabulary away from purely verbal presentation by placing words in a representation or activity that students can recognize. Visual materials may connect a word with a concrete object, games provide repeated practice, and conversational activities give vocabulary a place within an exchange. Research on Arabic vocabulary learning also suggests that the type of learning task and the degree of learner engagement influence how students interact with

vocabulary (Rabie-Ahmed & Mohamed, 2022). The learning medium is thus only part of the issue. What students are asked to do with the vocabulary during learning matters as well.

The relationship between vocabulary and language use becomes clearer in studies that place *mufradāt* within particular language skills. The *hiwar* method, for example, has been used with fifth-grade students at MIN 4 Medan to make previously learned vocabulary part of conversational practice (Khairani et al., 2024). Another study reported the use of *hiwar* modules, *al-mufradāt al-ḥā'itīyyah*, flashcards, and gamification in Arabic learning for Madrasah Ibtidaiyah students (Yurianto et al., 2024). The Make-a-Match model has also been examined in relation to vocabulary learning and listening skills among elementary students (Usnaini & Nuha, 2024), and vocabulary learning has been directed toward *qirā'ah* through TPR (Ariska et al., 2023). The instructional approaches and targeted skills vary across these studies, but the findings point in a similar direction: vocabulary is not only something to be learned and recalled but also material for engaging in actual language activities.

This does not mean that recognition and recall should be set aside. At the beginning level, students need to recognize word forms, associate them with meanings, and retain them for later use. The problem arises when these abilities become the endpoint of instruction, because vocabulary scores or mastery do not necessarily indicate whether students can use the words in listening, speaking, reading, or writing. The studies reviewed show that vocabulary may be introduced through cards, visual materials, games, and other forms of mediated practice, while other activities bring learned vocabulary into *hiwar*, listening, or reading. These approaches are not competing orientations. Recognition and retention provide the linguistic foundation, whereas language activities create opportunities for students to use what they have learned. The distinction lies in whether vocabulary remains at the level of recognition or becomes part of meaningful language use.

On this basis, *mufradāt* can be positioned as a foundation for Arabic language skills rather than the final target of vocabulary instruction. What matters is how students move from encountering a new word, understanding its meaning, and relating it to what they already know, to using it in a particular situation. For Arabic learning at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, vocabulary instruction therefore needs to remain connected with students' existing knowledge and experience while providing opportunities for use in *istimā'*, *kalām*, *qirā'ah*, and *kitābah*. The gap between knowing a word and being able to use it provides the conceptual basis for linking *mufradāt* with meaningful and contextual learning.

The Limitations of Mufradāt Mastery as a Learning Goal

A closer reading of the literature suggests that vocabulary knowledge does not automatically translate into the ability to use language. Students may recognize words, recall their meanings, and perform well on vocabulary tests, yet these abilities do not necessarily show that the vocabulary has become part of their functional language repertoire. The distinction becomes clearer when vocabulary mastery is considered from receptive and productive perspectives. Receptive knowledge involves recognizing and understanding words when they are encountered in listening or reading, whereas productive knowledge requires learners to retrieve and use those words when speaking or writing. The two forms are related, but they do not always develop at the same pace. Research on foreign-language vocabulary learning has reported higher performance on receptive than on productive measures, suggesting that recognizing a word may precede the ability to retrieve and produce it independently (Segura et al., 2022). Studies of second-language learners show a similar pattern: receptive vocabulary size is generally larger than productive vocabulary size, and the difference grows as words become

less frequent (Webb, 2008). The relationship between passive and active vocabulary has also been shown to vary with the language learning context (Laufer & Paribakht, 1998).

The relationship between vocabulary and receptive language skills can be seen in studies involving reading and listening. Lolita and Al Rasyid (2023) found a relationship between Arabic vocabulary learning and students' reading skills, indicating that limited vocabulary can become an obstacle when students try to understand written texts. Usnaini and Nuha (2024), meanwhile, examined vocabulary learning through the Make-a-Match model in relation to listening skills among elementary-level students. These studies place vocabulary knowledge in a receptive position: students need to recognize and interpret words before they can fully understand the messages conveyed through texts or spoken language. Vocabulary mastery at this stage is therefore not merely about remembering word meanings. It also concerns whether students can recognize those words when they appear in actual language input.

The productive side becomes more visible when students must retrieve vocabulary and use it to express meaning. Ghifari et al. (2024) showed that role-playing activities gave students opportunities to use Arabic vocabulary in interaction while strengthening their vocabulary mastery. Falah and Banurea (2024) likewise found that flashcards could support vocabulary acquisition when connected with speaking practice. In both cases, vocabulary is brought into an activity that requires students to do something with the words they have learned, which differs from recognizing a word on a vocabulary list. A student may know the meaning of a word when it is presented and still have difficulty retrieving it when it is needed in communication.

This distinction does not mean that memorization should be abandoned. For beginning learners, familiarity with word forms, meanings, and pronunciation requires repetition and recall, so memorization can play an important role in establishing a basic vocabulary repertoire. The issue is what happens after a word has been remembered. If learning stops when students can give a translation or select the correct meaning, the vocabulary may remain largely at the level of recognition. When the same words return in later activities, however, students have opportunities to recognize them in new contexts and gradually retrieve them for their own use.

Research on learning media illustrates this point. Suwardi et al. (2023) found that *mufradāt* cards improved learning outcomes in thematic learning at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, and such media can make repeated exposure to vocabulary more accessible for beginning learners. Their contribution, however, does not lie only in helping students remember words. Vocabulary becomes more useful when words introduced through cards or similar media are subsequently brought into listening, speaking, reading, or writing activities. In that situation, the medium is part of a broader learning process rather than the endpoint of vocabulary instruction.

A similar tendency appears in activities that place vocabulary within a more recognizable linguistic or learning context. Jufrih et al. (2025) found that interactive games could support Arabic vocabulary acquisition while encouraging learner engagement. Fikri et al. (2026), through fill-in-the-blank sentence puzzles, placed vocabulary within sentence structures and examined its relation to retention and learner engagement. The two approaches differ in form, but both give students more to work with than isolated word lists. A word encountered in a sentence, game, conversation, or other activity can be associated not only with a meaning but also with how it functions in a particular setting.

Taken together, these findings do not position memorization and communicative learning as opposing approaches. Memorization provides a foundation for vocabulary knowledge, receptive activities enable students to recognize and interpret words in spoken and written input, and productive activities require a further step: retrieving and using vocabulary to express or respond to meaning. Vocabulary that has not been sufficiently learned may be difficult to use, but recognition and recall alone do not demonstrate appropriate language use. At the Madrasah

Ibtidaiyah level, *mufradāt* mastery can therefore be understood as developing from recognition and recall toward receptive and productive use. Students may first encounter a new word as an unfamiliar form, associate it with meaning, recognize it in a message, and eventually retrieve it when speaking or writing. Although this progression may vary across learners, knowing a word involves more than being able to state its meaning.

For Arabic learning at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, the implication is not to replace vocabulary instruction with skill-based activities but to strengthen the connection between them. Words that students have learned need opportunities to reappear, acquire meaning from context, and be used for purposes they can understand. The relevant gap is therefore not simply between memorization and communication but between knowing a word and being able to recognize, understand, retrieve, and use it appropriately. This distinction provides a conceptual basis for connecting *mufradāt* with meaningful and contextual learning in the development of Arabic language skills.

Meaningful and Contextual Learning as a Bridge

The discussion above suggests that *mufradāt* learning is less useful when students are only expected to recognize and remember words. The question, then, is how vocabulary can become part of students' actual language experience. Meaningful and contextual learning are relevant to this question, although they address different aspects of the learning process. Meaningful learning concerns the relationship between new knowledge and what learners already know, while contextual learning places that knowledge in situations where it can be understood and used. Keeping this distinction clear is important because the two perspectives can work together without serving the same function.

Meaningful learning is rooted in Ausubel's view that new knowledge is more readily understood when it can be related to relevant knowledge already present in the learner's cognitive structure. The role of prior knowledge remains important in contemporary discussions of meaningful learning (Bryce & Blown, 2024). Research in primary education similarly indicates that learning may become more meaningful when teachers activate students' prior knowledge and connect new content with their personal worlds (Polman et al., 2021). Meaningfulness is thus not simply a matter of presenting information clearly. It also depends on whether learners can find a point of connection between new material and something they already understand.

This point is particularly relevant to Arabic learning because students do not encounter language in isolation from their social and cultural experiences. Their backgrounds can shape how they understand and use language (Syuhadak et al., 2021). Madrasah Ibtidaiyah students, for example, already have experiences related to family, school, food, clothing, places, and everyday activities, and these experiences can become an entry point when new Arabic vocabulary is introduced. In this respect, meaningful learning primarily concerns how new vocabulary is connected to learners' existing knowledge and experience.

Contextual learning takes the discussion a step further because it concerns the situation in which knowledge is encountered and used. Knowing that *qalam* means "pen," for instance, does not necessarily mean that a student can use the word to identify an object, respond to a classroom instruction, ask for a pen, or produce a simple sentence. The connection with prior knowledge may help the student understand the word, but using it in a recognizable situation gives the vocabulary a more concrete linguistic function.

This is where contextual learning becomes relevant to vocabulary instruction. Language materials are connected with circumstances that students can recognize, so that the meaning of a word is not developed only through explanation. Research on learning words from context, however, cautions that context does not automatically teach meaning. Beck et al. (1983) argued

that not all contexts are equally helpful for learning word meanings, and Nagy et al. (1985) documented that learning words from context is possible but typically gradual, building across repeated encounters. For Arabic vocabulary at the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah level, this suggests that contexts need to be chosen so that they clarify how and why a word is used, and that students need to meet the word repeatedly across activities. The discussion of CTL in Arabic instruction similarly links contextual learning with learning outcomes, vocabulary acquisition, and the development of speaking and writing skills (Zaeni et al., 2025). Its relevance to the present discussion lies less in making lessons appear more engaging than in creating opportunities for students to encounter language in activities and situations that have a recognizable purpose.

Studies of CTL provide further support for this orientation. Its implementation has been described through activities such as questioning, inquiry, learning communities, modeling, reflection, and authentic assessment, all of which can connect classroom material with the learning process (Triani & Putra, 2023). Other research has reported improvements in Arabic learning outcomes following the use of CTL (Haryono & Hikmah, 2023). These studies, however, did not specifically investigate the relationship among *mufradāt*, meaningful learning, and the four Arabic language skills at the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah level. Their contribution to this article is therefore limited to explaining how contextualized instruction can bring language material closer to classroom activities and situations of use. They do not, by themselves, establish the conceptual framework proposed here.

Contextualization also does not necessarily require elaborate activities or sophisticated technology. It can be developed through ordinary classroom practices such as relating new material to students' experiences, asking questions, giving examples, encouraging interaction, and inviting students to reflect on what they have learned (Nashfati & Salamuddin, 2025). This is particularly relevant at the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah level, where the context for learning can often be drawn from situations already familiar to students. What matters is how language material is connected to those situations, not how elaborate the learning setting is.

The distinction between meaningful and contextual learning becomes clearer when applied to vocabulary. Learning *ṭha'ām* (food), for example, becomes meaningful when the word is connected with students' existing knowledge and experience of food and eating. It becomes contextual when the same vocabulary is used in recognizable situations, such as identifying food, talking about meals, reading a simple menu, or responding to questions. Meaningful learning thus helps students relate new vocabulary to what they already know, while contextual learning gives that vocabulary a concrete setting for use.

The same distinction applies to instructional media. Flashcards, pictures, games, puzzles, Make-a-Match activities, and digital media may support vocabulary recognition and retention, but their use does not automatically make learning meaningful or contextual. A picture of a *qalam*, for instance, may help students associate the word with a familiar object. Its learning value increases when the word is connected to prior experience and then used in an activity that reflects its classroom or everyday function. The medium thus supports the learning process without determining its character.

This relationship becomes important when *mufradāt* is directed toward *istimā'*, *kalām*, *qirā'ah*, and *kitābah*. Students need to recognize and understand vocabulary, but they also need opportunities to hear, say, read, and write it in situations they can understand. Meaningful learning provides the connection with prior knowledge, while contextual learning helps situate that knowledge in use. Vocabulary can consequently serve as the linguistic material through which language skills are developed rather than remaining an isolated learning target.

On this basis, meaningful and contextual learning can be understood as a bridge between *mufradāt* and Arabic language skills. The process begins with students' existing knowledge,

through which new vocabulary becomes understandable, and continues by placing that vocabulary in recognizable situations where it can be used. This does not require vocabulary instruction to be replaced by skill-based activities. Rather, words that students have learned can be carried into listening, speaking, reading, and writing activities so that their meaning is reinforced through use. The relationship among *mufradāt*, meaningful learning, contextual learning, and the four language skills thus provides the conceptual basis for the framework proposed in this article.

Conceptual Framework for Strengthening Arabic Language Skills through Mufradāt

The preceding discussion shows that *mufradāt* is an important foundation of Arabic language learning at the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah level, but its function extends beyond recognition and recall. The literature reviewed approaches vocabulary from different directions. Some studies focus on vocabulary acquisition through learning media and activities, others connect vocabulary with listening, speaking, reading, or interaction, and research on meaningful and contextual learning emphasizes prior knowledge, students' experiences, and recognizable learning situations (Bryce & Blown, 2024; Fikri et al., 2026; Jufrih et al., 2025; Khairani et al., 2024; Polman et al., 2021; Suwardi et al., 2023; Usnaini & Nuha, 2024; Zaeni et al., 2025). These findings provide the basis for bringing the different strands together in a single conceptual framework.

The framework proposed here is a conceptual synthesis rather than a tested instructional model. Its elements are grounded in previous studies, whereas the relationships among them represent the interpretation developed through this literature study. The starting point is students' existing knowledge and experience. Meaningful learning emphasizes the connection between new knowledge and what learners already know, and students' social and cultural backgrounds may also influence how language is understood and used (Bryce & Blown, 2024; Polman et al., 2021; Syuhadak et al., 2021). On this basis, new *mufradāt* can be introduced through objects, situations, activities, or knowledge that students already recognize.

The next connection concerns the movement from meaning to use. Studies of contextual teaching and learning in Arabic education show the importance of relating learning materials and activities to students' surrounding environments and recognizable situations (Haryono & Hikmah, 2023; Triani & Putra, 2023; Zaeni et al., 2025). In the proposed framework, this supports the relationship between meaning-making and contextualized vocabulary use. The purpose of contextualization is therefore not merely to provide a setting but to help students understand how and why vocabulary is used.

Vocabulary use becomes more visible when students are involved in language activities. *Hiwar*, role-playing, Make-a-Match, and TPR, for example, have been used to bring vocabulary into interaction, listening, or reading activities (Ariska et al., 2023; Ghifari et al., 2024; Khairani et al., 2024; Usnaini & Nuha, 2024). These studies do not establish the complete framework proposed in this article, but they provide evidence for connecting vocabulary learning with opportunities to listen, speak, read, and write. The framework consequently positions language activities between contextualized vocabulary use and the development of *istimā'*, *kalām*, *qirā'ah*, and *kitābah*.

The proposed relationship can be represented as follows:

Students' experiences → New *mufradāt* → Meaning-making → Contextualized use → Language activities → *Istimā'*, *kalām*, *qirā'ah*, and *kitābah* → Strengthening Arabic language skills

This sequence should not be understood as a rigid linear procedure. Language learning may move back and forth among these elements: vocabulary encountered through listening may enter conversation, later appear in reading, and subsequently be used in writing. New

experiences may also reshape how students understand previously learned vocabulary. The framework is therefore iterative rather than strictly linear, and the arrows indicate possible movement among the components rather than a fixed instructional sequence.

Table 1 summarizes the position of each element within the synthesis.

Table 1. Position of Each Element within the Conceptual Synthesis

Focus	Findings and Supporting Studies	Problem Identified	Position in Framework
<i>Mufradāt</i>	Vocabulary is a basic component of Arabic learning and is developed through teaching materials and learning media (Firmansyah et al., 2024; Kusumaning et al., 2022; Suwardi et al., 2023).	Vocabulary learning may remain focused on recognition and recall without sufficient attention to subsequent use.	Foundation
Media and activities	Flashcards, Make-a-Match, role-playing, interactive games, and sentence-based activities support vocabulary learning, retention, and engagement (Fikri et al., 2026; Ghifari et al., 2024; Jufrih et al., 2025; Suwardi et al., 2023; Usnaini & Nuha, 2024).	Activities do not automatically ensure meaningful reuse of vocabulary.	Entry point for use
Meaning-making	Meaningful learning connects new knowledge with prior knowledge and learners' personal worlds (Bryce & Blown, 2024; Polman et al., 2021).	Vocabulary learned without such connections may remain detached from students' existing understanding.	Meaning-making
Context	Contextual learning relates learning materials to students' experiences, environments, and learning situations (Haryono & Hikmah, 2023; Triani & Putra, 2023; Zaeni et al., 2025).	Contextualization does not necessarily lead to repeated vocabulary use across language activities.	Bridge to use
Language activities	Vocabulary can be incorporated into listening, speaking, reading, and interaction through <i>hiwar</i> , role-playing, Make-a-Match, and TPR (Ariska et al., 2023; Ghifari et al., 2024; Khairani et al., 2024; Usnaini & Nuha, 2024).	Vocabulary practice and language-skill development may still be addressed separately.	Language use
Language skills	Vocabulary knowledge is related to engagement with particular language skills, including reading and listening (Ariska et al., 2023; Lolita & Al Rasyid, 2023; Usnaini & Nuha, 2024).	Connections among vocabulary and the four skills are not always organized within an integrated framework.	Strengthening skills

The contribution of this study does not lie in introducing entirely new elements. *Mufradāt*, meaningful learning, contextual learning, learning activities, and language skills have each been examined in previous research. Its contribution lies in bringing these strands into one conceptual relationship, beginning with students' experiences and vocabulary learning and extending toward the use of Arabic across the four language skills. In this formulation, *mufradāt* remains the linguistic foundation, while meaningful and contextual learning provide the conditions through which vocabulary can be understood, reused, and connected with language activities.

The framework remains subject to the limits of a literature study. The relationships among its components should not be interpreted as established causal effects because they have not been empirically tested as a single instructional model. Its contribution is therefore conceptual: it organizes findings from previous studies into a framework that can guide the development of teaching materials or instructional designs and can subsequently be examined through empirical research.

Conclusion

This literature study shows that *mufradāt* is a fundamental part of Arabic language learning at the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah level, although vocabulary learning cannot be reduced to recognizing words and recalling their meanings. The literature reviewed suggests that meaningful and contextual learning can help students connect vocabulary with language use: meaningful learning relates new *mufradāt* to students' existing knowledge and experiences, and contextual learning provides recognizable situations and language activities in which the vocabulary can be used. These findings address the aim of the study by showing that both approaches are relevant to developing *istimā'*, *kalām*, *qirā'ah*, and *kitābah*. Theoretically, the study contributes a conceptual framework that brings students' experiences, *mufradāt*, meaning-making, contextual use, and language skills into one relationship, whereas previous studies have generally examined them separately. Practically, the framework can serve as an initial basis for designing Arabic language instruction and teaching materials that carry vocabulary beyond recognition into use.

The main limitation of this study is that the framework was developed from the literature rather than tested through classroom-based research. Its relationships should therefore be understood as conceptual rather than as established evidence of effectiveness or causality. Further research is needed to examine how the framework works in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah classrooms and how its application may vary according to students' characteristics, learning materials, and instructional environments. Such studies can provide the empirical evidence needed to refine the framework and to develop learning practices that connect *mufradāt* more closely with Arabic language use.

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