

# Learning *Nahwu* Using Mind Mapping Method in a Modern Islamic Boarding School

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## ABSTRACT

At the beginning of the twentieth century, many muslim intellectuals studied in various well-known universities in Europe. They returned to their home countries to bring concepts of modern educational methods like the mind mapping method to facilitate the learning of Islamic sciences, especially Arabic. This present research aims at discussing planning, steps, and evaluation adopted in learning *Nahwu* using the mind mapping method at a Modern Islamic Boarding School. In this research, the authors adopted a case study as the research design with the type of field study. The techniques of data collection applied were in-depth interviews, participant observations, and documentation study, while the data were analyzed through data reduction, data display and data verification. The results showed that the preparation of the lesson plan for *Nahwu* with the mind mapping method started from determining basic competences, continued with the learning indicators, the materials, the method used, and the instrument of evaluation that would be used. The steps of the learning activities were as follows: introduction, presenting the core materials, evaluation, and closure. Evaluation in learning *Nahwu* in this method was made by examining the products, performances, and tests administrated to the students either in their daily, mid-term and final tests.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Learning a language cannot be separated from the understanding of the grammar and the syntax of the language. In Arabic, the grammar is called *Nahwu*, which is one of the obligatory subjects for the students in either modern or traditional pesantren. *Nahwu* is an integral part of all Arabic linguistic pillars. More completely, the branches of Arabic consist of *sharaf*, *Nahwu*, *al-rasm*, *'arud*, *qawafi* (poem), *qardi sya'ir*, *insya'*, *khitabah*, *tarikh adab*, *matan al-lughah*, and *balaghah* covering *ma'aniy*, *bayan*, and *badi'*

(Ghalayaini, 1987). *Nahwu* subjects are used by students to make it easier to learn and understand the material contained in the yellow book or Arabic books which are the source of Islamic teachings.

The development of *Nahwu* is driven by the spirit of responsibility for the religion with the study of The Qur'an as the center. *Nahwu* means an alignment to the readings of Arabic (especially the verses of The Qur'an) considered to violate the standardized conventional readings. The mistakes of the readings in the tradition of Arabic language and Arabic nation is called "*al-lahn*" namely errors in pronouncing punctuations so that one is regarded not to be fluent anymore. But, viewed from the students' perception of Arabic, it is the *Nahwu* rules which are considered to be mostly difficult and tiring to study (Wahab, 2015). Even though *Nahwu* is one of the most difficult sciences for students to learn, students must still be eager to learn it because *Nahwu* is the main ability that must be possessed in understanding the material contained in Arabic books.

Many rules exist in *i'rab* in each word like harakat *muqaddarah*, and *'amil* with its own difficulty encountered by students who have less ability in understanding them properly and it is this matter that makes them bored. It often happens that those who have studied Arabic for years in madrasah or pesantren still make mistakes in *Nahwu* when they are speaking, reading or writing Arabic (Wahab, 2014). We can see this happen to the students who are at the Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs) level, where they are still difficult to apply the *Nahwu* rules in their Arabic language skills. This not only occurs in our country where Arabic is a foreign language, but it may also be found in Middle East, and North African countries where Arabic is a mother tongue or a second language for them.

This has been occurring from the early Islamic era up to now when the people choose English as an international language. In the Abbacid era, *Nahwu* was deeply studied, and it was included into branches of Islamic sciences which are equivalent with other sciences like fiqh, hadiths, exegesis, and the like. The study of *Nahwu* conducted by the previous scholars produced so many rules with various different opinions among them so that certain schools bore such as Kufah and Bashrah schools, with great narrations in the discussions poured into various great books on *Nahwu* (Carter, 1985; Sumarna & Delami, 2020).

The method applied in the reference books of *Nahwu* in general used the same method, accompanied with static examples and it is less closed with the students' life reality. At the beginning of the twentieth century, many Egyptian muslim ulema and scholars went to various well-known universities in Europe. They returned to their home countries to bring a more modern educational method and then it was claimed to simplify the learning of *Nahwu* and other Arabic sciences in general (Abdul, 2012).

In the same vein, up to the present, the *Nahwu* lesson or Qawaid still becomes a difficult lesson among the students of Arabic. This problem does not occur among the students of Arabic who learn it for the first time, but also happens to those who have studied Arabic before. This certainly affects the smoothness in studying *Nahwu* in the classroom. This is worsened by a lot of students who tend to be passive, and reluctant to asked to their teachers although they actually have not understood the materials presented by the teachers.

Based on the results of observations, in *Nahwu* learning carried out by teachers still using conventional learning methods, namely lectures, teachers only explain and students take more notes, listen, and pay attention to teachers so that learning is teacher-centered. With the lecture method, students have difficulty understanding the material presented by the teacher so they think learning *Nahwu* is difficult. Difficult assumptions about *Nahwu* will have an impact on students' interest and motivation will be reduced.

The condition requires the use of various methods that are expected to solve the problem. One of the learning methods that may arouse the students' interest in the learning materials presented by the teacher and also that train them to be more creative is a mind mapping method. Mind map is a creative and effective note-taking method that may literally map minds (Buzan, 2006).

According to Michalko (2001), Mind map is an alternative thought of the whole brain for linear thinking. It reaches any direction and catches various thoughts from all sides. The beginning of the use

of mind mapping is a psychologist Tolman considered as a cognitive mapping initiator (Tolman, 1954). The use of the term Mind Maps is claimed as a trademark by The Buzan Organisation, Ltd., in the United Kingdom, and the US in 1990.

Mind maps consist of natural colors and structures, which can be in the form of radiating from the center, using curves, symbols, words and images according to a set of rules that are simple, basic, natural and in accordance with how the brain works. By using a Mind Map, a long list of information can be transformed into a colorful, organized and easy-to-understand diagram that works according to the brain's natural way of doing things. (Pujianti et al., 2019).

Basically, a human brain is mentally divided into two hemispheres, namely right and left ones. Each has different functions and characters. Mind map is a method that may optimize the two hemispheres, right and left (Buzan, 1985). Windura, in Pujianti et al (2019) stated that the left brain which is often called a logical brain is useful for arranging the mental functions and the information process in terms of words, numbers, analyses, logics, orders, lines, lists and calculations. While the right brain often named to be the art or creative brain arranges the mental functions dealing with the conceptual (gestalt) thinkings, pictures, rhythms, colors, dimensions/shapes, imaginations and day-dreaming. The right brain, in terms of memorization, is a long-term memory.

A mind mapping method is greatly an effective method in assisting the thinking process regularly since it uses a graphic method coming from human thought that is beneficial for providing universal keys so that it opens the potency of the brain. By combining colors, pictures, and curved branches, the mind mapping method may more visually be stimulating than traditional recording that tends to be linear and to have one color (Budd, 2004). From the descriptions above, it can be concluded that the mind mapping method is a great route map for memory that enables us to arrange facts and thoughts in such a way that how the brain naturally works is involved since the beginning. This means that remembering information is more easy and reliable than using traditional recording method (Rezapour-Nasrabad, 2019).

Some researches in education done among others made by Zimmerman and Risemberg in Sungur showed that belief and awareness to allow learners to become independent students are greatly related to the improvement of academic quality (Tas & Sungur, 2012). The view may give some improvements in the teaching-learning process in the classroom and other contextual factors that will convincingly affect the students' learning process and motivation. It means that teachers should pay attention to the students' strategic learning efforts to get achievements and to conduct the learning processes. The self-regulating processes and self-confidence focused on a systematic research on variables affect the learning activities based on the students' self-regulation.

Then, a similar study on the use of mind mapping in learning a language was also conducted by Wang and Dostal. In the study, he stated that mind map is effectively used in learning English as a foreign language. Specifically, he made an experiment on the subject of vocabulary learning, since mind map may cover students' divergent thinkings with a lot of variations in either interesting words, colors, symbols, and graphics. He also expressed that this mind map is proper to be used in learning foreign languages (Wang & Dostál, 2018).

Selvi and Chandramohan also did a similar study in a case study on the effectiveness of mind map in learning engineering sciences. In their study, they said that mind map may give positive and significant effects on students' learning results (Selvi & Chandramohan, 2018). Romlie, Bakar, and Azman also conducted a similar study with the subject of an innovative approach in using mind map. In their study, they stated that mind map supports students to be more active and improve their interest and motivations in the learning activities (Romlie, et al, 2017).

Umam also made a similar study with the topic of the effects of the application of mind mapping method on the learning outcomes of Indonesian. This research was aimed at understanding the effects of the application of the mind mapping method on the learning outcomes of Indonesian. This research adopted a quantitative method with experimental design. The result of the analysis showed that there is a significant difference in the students' learning outcomes where the students in the experimental

group given a treatment with a mind mapping method got better outcomes than those of the control group without such a treatment (Umam & Ahyani, 2017). On the basis of the backgrounds, the subject of this present research is aimed at knowing the preparation, the steps, and the evaluation of learning *Nahwu* using the mind mapping method at a Modern Islamic Boarding School. It is hoped that this research can be a consideration for teachers who teach *Nahwu* subjects to apply them in learning so that students can understand the material and increase their interest and motivation.

## 2. METHODS

The objective of this present research was to get an in-depth picture of learning *Nahwu* using the mind mapping method with a qualitative approach. Then, the researchers adopted a research type of case study where this method is employed because on the basis of the problems that empirically study a phenomenon in the context of the real life. But the phenomenon really exists although its theoretical concept is not clearly visible from the sources of the facts used (Bogdan & Knopp, 2003).

The subject in this research was 5 teachers, and 6 students at a Modern Islamic Boarding School. The reason is that because teachers play important roles in improving the learning quality. But the researchers also involved students as the research subject who directly experienced the learning activities using the mind mapping method. The data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observations, and documentation methods.

By a case study design, according to Miles and Huberman, to analyze the data of an individual case, the data analysis in a qualitative research could be conducted through three flows of activities that may occur simultaneously namely 1) data reduction, 2) data displays, and 3) conclusion drawing/verification. The obtained data were then tested using a triangulation method, the attendance extension, persistence of observations, and peer reviews (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

## 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1. Planning the Learning of *Nahwu* with Mind Mapping Method

In planning the learning of *Nahwu*, the teachers planned what they would do in the learning process. The designs that would be conducted by the teachers among others are the process of making the learning materials, the use of media, the approach and method adopted, and the learning evaluation in a time allocation that would be conducted in a certain time to attain the predetermined objectives. One of the most important things in a lesson plan is to arrange the approach and the learning method that would be applied.

The early step in making the lesson plan of *Nahwu* with the mind map method began by determining the basic competences, and indicators that would be made in their lesson plans, then the learning steps used in the Mind Mapping learning model. Besides the learning steps, such a planning was also made in the evaluation instrument. An evaluation instrument is a part of a lesson plan which is important to attend to the way the teachers know the achievement of their learning process.

In making a lesson plan, the components needed among others were basic competences, learning indicators, materials, learning steps in the Mind Mapping model, and evaluation. The basic competences were available and standardized in line with the prevailing curriculum, while for the indicators, the teachers could develop them according to the learning goals intended to achieve. Basic competences and indicators explain the materials that would be conveyed by the teachers to their students through the learning process.

Naturally, mind mapping method is a method that provides us with information that is meaningful to be understood in a simple way. The mind mapping method prepares the thought in such a way that information may be used logically and in an imaginary fashion to create a picture in the brain (Gafos, 2020). In this method, the main idea is determined and its linear view is explained. It is also useful for one-self and group where it may give more effects of written views. This method is

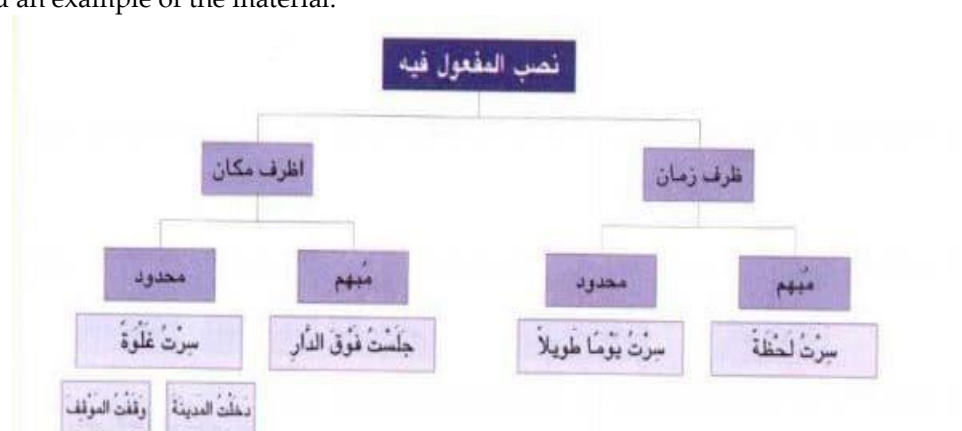
appropriate for the teachers and the students for repetition and to make difficult topics easy to understand.

### 3.2. Steps in Learning *Nahwu* Using the Mind Mapping Method

The application of learning *Nahwu* based on the mind mapping started with the introduction, followed by presenting core materials, assessment, closure and then evaluation. The learning introduction included greeting, saying hello, filling the attendance list, and a-perception. The a-perception was conducted by motivating the students to learn, giving a short quiz on the previous materials, and the explanation of the learning materials that would be discussed. The core materials were given by the teachers using the mind mapping method.

When this research was conducted, the core material presented by the teacher was *adh dharfu*. The teacher presented the learning materials by showing examples of mind mapping. Then the material of *adh dharfu* was explained by the teachers using the board in front of class. The contents and the materials were presented by the teachers through a question-answer system in accordance with the concept proposed by Sutarto and Indrawati made by presenting learning materials in the teaching-learning activities where the teachers ask questions and the students answer the questions or on the other way around. This method makes the student more active and more facilitate the teachers to understand their students' ability in comprehending the learning materials given (Simatupang, 2019).

When presenting the teaching materials, the teachers always actively involved the students by always asking the meanings of sentences they gave in the mind mapping concept. The mind mapping concept of the *adh dharfu* materials given by the teachers included sub-sections that would be studied in learning the *Nahwu* with the topic of *adh dharfu*, namely: (1) *ta'rif* or the definition of *adh dharfu*, (2) types of *adh dharfu*, (3) *amil* influencing to *adh dharfu*, and (4) *naib adh dharfu*. These sub-sections would then be used as the mind map, and written pieces of papers of each student's notes. The following is presented an example of the material:



Picture 1 Example of Mind Mapping for *Adh Dharf* Material

In the picture, it is discussed the division of *dharaf* into two, namely *dharaf zaman* and *dharaf makan*. The division is done using a parallel line between one concept and the other. The teacher also presented the core learning material dealing with key words from the definition and the form of *adh dharfu*. Then the learning of core learning material related to the type of *adh dharfu* in the *Nahwu* was conducted. The teacher then explained the conditions that influence *i'rab* of *adh dharfu* in Arabic sentences and their examples. In the process of presenting the core learning material, the students under the direction from the teacher to actively wrote important points from the mind mapping presentation concerning with the material taught.

From the picture, it is known that for the *amil dharaf* or *amil fihi* that is removed (*mahduf*), in general it is divided into two namely *wujub*, and *jawaz*. The reason why the *amil* is removed in a *wujub* way, because of *sima'i*, because there are *khobar*, *shilah*, *shifah* and the like. Each cause is represented with a key word written in lower part of the mind map. Besides actively taking notes, the students also actively

paid attention to the explanations and questions asked by the teacher when he was presenting the material. Then the teacher checked the students' understanding by asking some questions. At the end of the learning activity, the teacher asked the students to summarize the main learning content at that time in the form of mind mapping from the material they had understood and the additional information they needed. At the last stage, the teacher motivated the students to study, gave feedbacks of the learning process, and informed about the plan of the learning activities that would be conducted in the next meeting.

For students, mind mapping was suitable to be applied in learning *Nahwu* since it is more concise and easy to understand. Learning *Nahwu* is aimed at facilitating students in interpreting Arabic well and correctly. Students once might feel difficulty in studying *Nahwu*, since it is included into a material which is difficult to understand. Besides, students also did not maximize the duration of studying *Nahwu* and did not sharpen their skills in Arabic well. To add the students' learning time in studying *Nahwu*, the teacher gave homeworks they did when they came home.

The students usually often felt boring with studying *Nahwu* because they often could not understand the *Nahwu* material. As a result, the teachers should explain the material in detail, slowly and patiently. Mind mapping also makes the learning material be easily understood, and may cause the students to understand the *Nahwu* material (Sari et al., 2021). Therefore, the method is appropriate if it is applied in studying *Nahwu*. Moreover, mind mapping is also suitable for all subjects, sections, including *maharah* existing in learning Arabic. The following is the table of steps in learning *Nahwu* using mind mapping.

**Table 1. Stages of Learning *Nahwu* using Mind Mapping**

No.	Stage of Learning	Description of Activity
1.	Introduction	Addressing the students Saying hello Filling the attendance list Doing a-perception
2.	Core activity	Giving an example of mid mapping Presenting the material with question and answer activity Asking the students about the meanings which not clear yet Checking students' understanding by asking questions Asking the students to make a summary session in the form of mind mapping
3.	Closure	Giving motivations to study. Giving a feedback on the learning process Informing the learning activity for the next meeting Giving motivations to study.

### 3.3. Evaluation of Learning *Nahwu* Using Mind Mapping Method

The learning assessment was made the teacher by examining the results of the students' works and looking at the students' responses to the process of learning *Nahwu* based on mind mapping that had been conducted in the classroom. The evaluation was done by the teacher by giving tasks in the form of exercises that should be done by the students in their homes. The assessment was conducted by giving homeworks due to the limited time in face-to-face meeting. The results of the students' homeworks were used as the reference for the teacher to measure the level of the students' understanding of the material of *adh dharfu* that had been explained by the teacher.

Besides assessment, there were some types of other assessment done by using the mind mapping model. The types of the assessment among others are performance and test results. The performance was assessed when the students were doing the tasks, and they presented their group work in front of the class. For the work group, the evaluation of the product from the results of doing the Mind Map was also made on the basis of the relevant evaluation indicators.

There were also daily, semester, and end of year exams conducted to know the the cognitive learning results. It was done besides as the instrument of assessing the students' ability in grasping the materials also as the tool of evaluating the success in using the mind mapping model in learning. The students understood the explanation about the evaluation method used in the Mind Mapping learning model (Sudijono, 2006).

The students felt interested in the impression from the Mind Mapping appearance in learning *Nahwu*. The interest could omit the students' boredom and improve their spirits, motivations, seriousness, and their learning activities since they felt that mind mapping is appropriated if it is applied in the learning process. Students also agreed and felt good that mind mapping is an effective and innovative learning model and may arouse their curiosity and greatly facilitate them in understanding the existing learning materials.

Moreover, they felt that mind mapping was more interesting than the lecturing method, so that they were sure that the application of mind mapping would be able to improve their learning results and facilitate them to do the tasks given by their teacher. The students also said that learning *Nahwu* is a key to be able to master Arabic well and correctly so that they could learn the yellow books (kitab kuning) since being familiar with *mufradat* is not enough to be able to master Arabic and to read the yellow book. Students who used to feel difficult in understanding the *Nahwu* material could easily understand the learning materials because of the existence of this mind map.

Learning *Nahwu* using mind mapping is very good, and may help students understand the learning materials, but the teacher's information also greatly influences the effectiveness of this mind mapping method (Chang et al., 2018). The difficulty encountered by students also depends on this way of teaching. If the teacher of Arabic teaches well and interestingly, it will facilitate the students to understand the existing materials. The difficulty felt by the students is mostly caused by the mistakes in starting to learn *Nahwu*, because they do not learn *Nahwu* from the beginning so that they have not mastered the bases of *Nahwu*.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

*Nahwu* learning with mind mapping method is carried out in three stages, namely planning, implementation, and evaluation. The planning stage is by compiling a learning implementation plan, the implementation stage starts from the introduction, this activity, and the closing, then ends with an evaluation. At the time of learning, students and teachers were actively involved with questions and answers and students made a concept mapping of the material being studied. This means that mind mapping can increase students' interest and motivation. The implication of this research is that teachers can consider the use of mind mapping in *Nahwu* subjects. Recommendations for further research is to examine the effectiveness of mind mapping with experimental research.

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