

Teaching Methods of Arabic Language Grammar Lessons Among Arabic Teachers at Religious Secondary Schools in Malaysia

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Abstract—It has been proven through past research that students' mastery of Arabic language grammar remains at a low level. This condition is attributed to the less efficient teaching methods practised by Arabic teachers due to their use of traditional teaching methods. Therefore, this study aims to review the teaching methods of Arabic language grammar practised by Arabic teachers upon the effectiveness of the teaching methods in facilitating the students' improvement in Arabic language grammar. A qualitative design was employed by focusing on case studies in various places. Through a purposive sampling, the respondents of this study comprised Arabic language teachers from National Religious High Schools (SMKA), Government Aided Religious Schools (SABK), and State Religious Secondary Schools (SMAN) in Perlis and Kedah, Malaysia. Subsequently, it was found that the majority of Arabic language teachers still practised teacher-oriented teaching methods compared to student-oriented teaching methods such as lectures, memorisation, repetition (*at-tikrar*), and translation. The teachers determined the effectiveness of their teaching methods in assisting the students in mastering the Arabic language grammar based on the students' results of assignments, answers, or responses. Based on several language tests conducted by the teacher, the aforementioned results should be satisfactory. Notably, this study would be a reference for academics and educators' development and diversification of teaching methods that are more interesting and suitable for the students' improvement in their mastery of Arabic language grammar.

Index Terms—teaching, methods, Arabic language grammar, Arabic teachers

I. INTRODUCTION

Arabic language lesson in Malaysia is mainly conducted to equip students with the capability in mastering four Arabic language skills: listening skills (*maharah al-istima'*), speaking skills (*maharah al-kalam*), writing skills (*maharah al-kitabah*), and reading skills (*maharah al-qiraah*) (Azizan et al., 2014; Jamali et al., 2017; Mukhtar & Damit, 2017). Essentially, a student's mastery of the four Arabic language skills is measured by his or her mastery of Arabic language grammar (Maskor et al., 2016; Ramli et al., 2019). Therefore, to ensure that the students acquire all four Arabic language skills, their mastery of Arabic language grammar should reach an optimal level.

Based on previous study findings, it could be seen that students' mastery of Arabic language grammar remains at a low level, not reaching the optimal level in the mastery of Arabic language grammar (Hussin et al., 2015; Karim & Husaini, 2016; Misnan & Ghazali, 2019; Fauzi et al., 2020; Mokhtar et al., 2020). This situation occurs due to several challenges faced by students and Arabic language teachers, especially in practising the teaching methods that are suitable for the students' abilities. Furthermore, the Arabic language is regarded as an uninteresting and challenging subject for the students to learn (Yunisa, 2022). This situation leads to a decline in the level of the student's mastery of Arabic language grammar, followed by a negative impact on students' mastery of Arabic language skills, particularly in *maharah al-kalam* (Misnan & Ghazali, 2019) and *maharah al-kitabah* (Mokhtar et al., 2020).

To ensure that the objective of learning Arabic language grammar can be optimally achieved, many parties play a crucial. Specifically, Arabic lesson teachers play the main role in the teaching and learning (T&L) process in the classroom (Zaini et al., 2019). Furthermore, the teaching methods and approaches practised by teachers during the

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pedagogical process should be emphasised, allowing the students to understand and master each grammar topic being covered. Arabic language teachers constantly face obstacles and difficulties in using teaching methods that are suitable for the students as they are influenced by several factors, such as teacher factors, environmental factors, and teaching-learning materials (TLM) among others (Zaini et al., 2019). In addition, a few Arabic language teachers still practise traditional teaching methods in Arabic language grammar lessons, such as *nahw*, translation method (Sahid & Fettane, 2019; Zaini et al., 2019), and memorisation method (Ramli et al., 2019). Zaini et al. (2019) added that Arabic language teachers are still practising teacher-oriented teaching methods. They also solely provide explanations and lectures without conducting any discussions with the students, which may affect students' motivation and lead to their passivity during the T&L.

In line with the *Pengajaran Abad ke21* (PAK21) introduced by the Malaysian Ministry of Education (MOE), apart from teacher-oriented methods, teachers are also required to implement and practise student-oriented teaching methods. These approaches are essential for providing the students with opportunities to be directly involved in the pedagogy and discussion sessions where they are able to express their opinions. At the same time, the teachers would be involved as a guide throughout the T&L (Kamrozzaman et al., 2023). Therefore, this study mainly aims to identify the teaching methods practised by Arabic teachers during the Arabic language grammar lessons in Malaysian religious secondary schools. It also aims to identify the teachers' perspectives on their methods of ensuring that their applied teaching methods can assist students in understanding and mastering Arabic language grammar.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Highlights of Past Research on Arabic Language Grammar Teaching Methods

Two primary methods are applied in teaching and learning (T&L): teacher-oriented and student-oriented methods (Garrett, 2008; Lightweis, 2013; Manaf & Surat, 2022). Specifically, the teacher-oriented method, also known as the traditional method, has been practised for a long period in T&L (Lightweis, 2013). Students are individuals who receive information passively. Accordingly, this method is where teachers play important roles in the learning process due to their position as information providers or assessors who guide the students in obtaining the correct answers (Paimin & Ghazali, 2012; Emaliana, 2017). Examples of teacher-oriented methods are lectures, questioning, storytelling and demonstration (Yahaya & Pang, 2010). On the other hand, student-oriented learning, also known as active learning, is a teaching method that places further focus on students, while the teachers have the least influence in the teaching process (Zohrabi et al., 2012; Janor et al., 2013). It is also a student-oriented learning activity, which takes place individually or in groups or pairs (Emaliana, 2017), discussion and presentation (Janor et al., 2013), and communication or interaction (Janor et al., 2013; Manaf & Surat, 2022). Examples of this teaching method include the use of mind mapping (Paimin & Ghazali, 2012), the interactive media method (Kamrozzaman et al., 2023), and the '*guru muda*' method (Modius et al., 2023).

Based on the review of past studies, a few studies were specifically focused on the teaching methods of Arabic language grammar. Specifically, several studies were focused on the teaching methods of Arabic language grammar, such as a study on the *rumus* (formula) application method in T&L Arabic language grammar carried out by Jusoh et al. (2014). This *rumus* application consists of a letter or letters representing words including a noun (اسم) labelled with the letter (س) in the *rumus* application. The role of the formula provided in '*aplikasi rumus*' teaching method was applied to describe each grammar method found in the topic of learning Arabic language grammar. The implementation of this *rumus* application method took place when the teacher explained its use to the students, while the students were provided with a simple set containing the contents of the formulas as a reference during the T&L process (Jusoh et al., 2014). Based on the results by Jusoh et al. (2014), it was indicated that the *rumus* (formula) application method in T&L Arabic language grammar could increase the students' level of understanding and mastery of Arabic language grammar. This condition was reflected through the increase in the mean value of 11.36 for the test results of a group of students from the pre-test, with the increase amounting to 38.74. Meanwhile, the mean value of the post-test amounted to 50.10.

Lubis et al. (2016) carried out a study focusing on the teaching methods of Arabic language grammar. In this study, the authors demonstrated several methods practised by teachers in Arabic language grammar pedagogy, such as the *taqlidiah* method or traditional method, *al-sam'iyah al-shafawiyah* method or audio-visual method, and systematic eclectic that is a combination of the *taqlidiah* and *al-sam'iyah al-shafawiyah* methods. The results of Lubis et al.'s (2016) study indicated that a grammar lesson conducted through the systematic eclectic method was clearly more effective as this method combines two or more teaching methods, such as the *taqlidiah* and the *al-sam'iyah al-shafawiyah* methods. In this method, the grammatical aspects were delivered inductively whereby the teacher presented the examples of sentences used in listening, speaking, and reading processes before further explaining the definition of the method and concept.

Ahmid et al.'s (2018) study highlighted that the methods and approaches practised by teachers in teaching grammar had a significant relationship with students' motivation. The students' level of mastery of Arabic language grammar remained at a low level due to the lack of motivation and interest in learning the Arabic language. Furthermore, the teachers who solely focused on one-way teaching methods without two-way interaction with students had a negative impact on students' motivation, followed by their passivity and boredom during T&L. Nevertheless, the diversity and suitability of methods employed by teachers in pedagogy, such as an interactive method, could increase students'

motivation in learning Arabic. This factor may strengthen the students' focus and create a more conducive learning atmosphere. In line with this, Zaini et al. (2019) stated that the variety of teaching methods practised by teachers could boost the students' motivation and increase their engagement in T&L. To illustrate, the student-oriented teaching method offers space for the students to be directly involved in the T&L session, in which the teacher acts as the guide when the students face difficulties in understanding the topics to be learnt. The limited knowledge of the use of teaching methods leads to the teachers' use of traditional methods, such as *nahw* translation (Sahid & Fettane, 2019). In addition, the use of diverse and interesting teaching-learning materials (TLM) in teaching Arabic language grammar would also affect the particular teaching methods being used in the pedagogy (Ramli et al., 2019; Zaini et al., 2019; Hussain et al., 2020). Based on the PAK21, teachers are required to implement the use of information and technology in pedagogy. The use of TLM, such as the use of computers, presentation of videos, songs, and lessons through websites assists teachers in gaining students' attention and strengthening their focus on the T&L. The teacher's skill in the use of many TLMs can develop a more interesting learning atmosphere, which is not solely focused on the use of textbooks.

III. METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted through a qualitative design method using case studies of various places and the selection of respondents was based on purposive sampling. Generally, the selection of research respondents based on the purposive sampling method is the ideal method for research qualitative methods (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2007). A total of nine Arabic language teachers from National Religious Secondary Schools (SMKA), Government Aided Religious Schools (SABK), and State Religious Secondary Schools (SMAN) in Perlis and Kedah were selected as respondents. The objective of selecting Arabic teachers from various school backgrounds was for reviewing the teaching methods of Arabic language grammar that are practised in two different syllabuses: the syllabus of the Kurikulum Standard Sekolah Menengah (KSSM -Standard Secondary School Curriculum) and *Kurikulum Bersepadu Dini* (KBD-Integrated Curriculum).

To answer the first and second objectives of the study, a semi-structured interview method was conducted with nine Arabic language teachers. According to Jasmi (2012), the number of respondents in a qualitative design study for gaining sufficient data is not specified, while Gredler (1996) stated that nine teachers would be a sufficient number of respondents in this case (Gredler, 1996). Moreover, this study was conducted in line with the university research ethics guidelines approved by the Research Ethics Committee (RMC) reference number REC/12/2021(MR/1077). Prior to participation, participants had also received a consent form that ensured the confidentiality of their identity. The interviews were recorded and took approximately 45 minutes. Accordingly, Table 1 presents a summary of information about the respondents:

TABLE 1
RESPONDENTS' BACKGROUND

No	Respondents	Teaching experiences	School categories	Syllabuses
1	T1	14 years	SMKA	KSSM
2	T2	Five months	SMKA	KSSM
3	T3	Six years	SABK	KBD
4	T4	Five years	SABK	KBD
5	T5	12 years	SMAN	KBD
6	T6	Five years	SMAN	KBD
7	T7	One year	SABK	KBD
8	T8	Four years	SABK	KBD
9	T9	17 years	SABK	KBD

The interview questions presented to the Arabic teachers were related to teaching methods for Arabic language grammar and the effectiveness of the teaching methods in facilitating the students' understanding of the subject. This was followed by an analysis of the data and research findings from the interview sessions with Arabic teachers through a thematic analysis method and their categorisation into several themes and sub-themes. Moreover, prior to the use of the interview questions, a pilot study was conducted to ensure that the content of the interview questions was suitable to be used in the study and that the research questions could be answered. The Arabic language experts were also referred to obtain the validity and reliability of the research instrument prior to its use in the study.

IV. RESEARCH FINDINGS

Based on the answers and feedback presented by the respondents during the interview sessions, labelling was carried out on each respondent, starting from the first teacher (T) as T1 until the ninth teacher as T9. This process was conducted to facilitate the data analysis process and protect the personal information of the respondents involved. Subsequently, the results from the interview session with the Arabic language teachers would be used to answer the first objective of this study, which is to identify the method of teaching Arabic language grammar implemented by the Arabic language teachers in Malaysian Religious Secondary Schools. Thus, an interview question was distributed to

teachers with the aim of reviewing the Arabic language grammar teaching methods practised by Arabic teachers, which is as follows:

Interview question: What are the teaching methods used by teachers in teaching Arabic language grammar?

The feedback and answers by the teachers are illustrated in the following table:

TABLE 2
METHODS USED BY ARABIC TEACHERS IN TEACHING ARABIC LANGUAGE GRAMMAR

Themes	Sub-themes	Total respondents	Respondents (Teacher)
Teacher-oriented methods	Memorisation	3	T3, T7, and T8
	Lectures	3	T4, T5, and T6
	Repetition (<i>at-tikrar</i>)	2	T7 and T9
	Exercise	2	T3 and T6
	Notes summarisation	1	T1
	<i>Nahw</i> translation	1	T2
	Research and observation	1	T6
Student-oriented methods	Singing	1	T1
	<i>Guru muda</i> (<i>young teachers</i>)	1	T9

Table 2 illustrates the themes and sub-themes of Arabic language grammar teaching methods practised by teachers during the T&L of this subject. Two main themes were identified, namely teacher-oriented and student-oriented teaching methods, which were branched out into several sub-themes. The majority of Arabic language teachers practised the teacher-oriented teaching method. Specifically, three teachers who applied the memorisation method in teaching Arabic language grammar stated that this application took place during Arabic language grammar pedagogy. Meanwhile, two teachers stated that they used the repetition (*at-tikrar*) method, and the other two teachers practised the exercise method in the Arabic grammar T&L. Moreover, several teacher-oriented methods were employed by Arabic teachers, such as the notes summarisation method, the *nahw* translation method, and the research and observation method. On the other hand, two Arabic language teachers applied student-oriented teaching methods, such as the *guru muda* method and singing method during the T&L of Arabic language grammar in progress. Accordingly, the following feedback was presented by the Arabic teachers during the interview session:

(a) *Teacher-Oriented Teaching Methods*

T1:

"I use a lot of singing methods & **summarise the notes** so that it becomes easier for students to master it."

T2:

"Explaining each element in accordance with or based on the **grammatical methods of the Malay language**."

T3:

"**Memorisation methods** are always used by teachers and practised regularly."

T4:

"**Methods** are used by teachers to **lecture, speak, write, listen, describe**."

T5:

"First of all, the teacher **explains the form of sentences** until the students master it. Students need to remember the signs for each of the *rafak, nasab, jar, and jazam*. The **teacher gives examples for related topics** and then explains them based on the topic that will be taught."

T6:

"Methods used:
1). Make **research and observations** on examples in the form of sentences.
2). **Teacher's explanation** and discussion with students.
3). **Exercises** by students."

T7:

"**Method of repetition and memorisation**, especially the *mufradat* and *fe'el* interpretation."

T8:

"For lower forms which are from 1 to 3, the **memorisation method** is used in the teaching method of grammar at the beginning of the school term. Students need to master grammatical morphemes to ease the learning process."

T9:

"**At-tikrar method** and *guru muda* method."

(b) *Student-Oriented Teaching Methods*

T1:

"I use a lot of **singing methods** and summarise the notes so that it becomes easier for students to master it."

T9:

"At-tikrar method and guru muda method."

The second interview question was distributed to the teachers to identify how the teachers ensured the effectiveness of the teaching methods to assist students in understanding and mastering the aspects of Arabic language grammar. The interview question is as follows:

Interview question: How do teachers ensure that the teaching methods they use assist students in properly understanding and mastering Arabic language grammar?

Subsequently, the results from this interview were analysed, as shown in the following table.

TABLE 3
THEMES AND SUB-THEMES OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ARABIC LANGUAGE GRAMMAR TEACHING METHODS

Themes	Sub-themes	Total respondents	Respondents (teachers)
Evaluation based on exercises, tasks, assessments and student feedback	Students can respond to exercises and questions	6	T1, T4, T5, T6, T7, and T8
	Students may access <i>Tasmi'</i>	2	T4 and T9
	Students can answer the examinations and tests	1	T9
	Teachers can identify and evaluate students' skill levels	1	T3
	Students can create notes and mind maps	1	T2

Table 3 illustrates the themes and sub-themes related to how teachers ensured the effectiveness of Arabic language grammar teaching methods that they practised to facilitate the students' understanding and mastery of Arabic language grammar. In this case, the main theme was identified from the result of the evaluation based on exercises, tasks, assessments, and students' feedback, followed by the emergence of several sub-themes. According to six teachers in this study, the effectiveness of the teaching methods was measured based on the students' ability to answer the provided exercises and questions. Apart from that, two teachers stated that the effectiveness of these methods could be measured through the students' ability in demonstrating to the teachers (*tasmi'*) the topics they have learnt during T&L. Furthermore, several teachers stated that the effectiveness of the Arabic language grammar teaching methods could be measured based on the 1) students' capability to answer the tests provided by the teachers and 2) the teachers' ability to recognise the level of each student's capacity. Another teacher highlighted that the effectiveness of the methods can be measured based on the students' ability to write notes and mind maps. Accordingly, the following answers were presented by Arabic language teachers during the interview sessions:

T1:

"Based on the exercises being given, the students were able to answer correctly after the lesson was conducted."

T2:

"Ask students to make notes/mind maps after listening to the teacher's teaching."

T3:

"Teachers can identify students' abilities and plan teaching plans that are suitable for the students' levels."

T4:

"Reciting it repeatedly with students, giving exercises."

T5:

"1) Test students orally by asking them to make a summary based on the topic studied; 2) every student is asked to answer the questions orally through the questions that are available in the textbook or otherwise on the topic studied."

T6:

"Provide exercises that are easy to understand and use understandable words to increase students' motivation to study Arabic language grammar."

T7:

"Increase exercises and discussions, especially the construction of the sentences."

T8:

"Teachers need to evaluate by giving students the opportunities to answer questions in class. The teachers ask the justification for the answers given so that they can acknowledge if the students have really mastered the grammar or not."

T9:

"1) Tasmi' managed by young teachers; 2) two qawaid topics followed by a test."

V. DISCUSSION

Based on the findings from the interview sessions with Arabic teachers, it was found that the majority of teachers were still practising teacher-oriented teaching methods, which are also known as the traditional methods of teaching Arabic language grammar. Among the traditional methods practised by the teachers were the lecture method, the memorisation method, the repetition method (*at-tikrar*), and the *nahw* translation method. Moreover, several factors encouraged them to practise the traditional methods, such as the low level of teachers' competence (Zaini et al., 2019), lack of knowledge in diversifying teaching methods (Mohamed et al., 2003; Zaini et al., 2019), and their weakness in the use of Internet and technology (Hamzah & Attan, 2012) among others.

Currently, a number of Arabic language teachers are practising student-oriented teaching methods, such as the *guru muda* and singing methods. Specifically, the *guru muda* method involves students who play the roles of teachers or mentors. In this case, these young teachers from outstanding students would be appointed to assist teachers in T&L sessions. They would also be employed as mentors to assist the moderate and weak students in the T&L. Notably, this method could develop an active learning atmosphere through discussions, interactivity, and cooperation among the students. Considering the young teachers who are also among the students, the moderate and weak students would not feel embarrassed or afraid to ask questions (Modius et al., 2023).

The teachers' method of ensuring the effectiveness of the teaching methods could be measured based on the results of the evaluation of exercises, assignments and tests, and satisfactory student feedback through several exercises, language tests, and assignments provided by the teachers. The teaching methods were found to be highly effective, as reflected through the students' ability to answer the exercises and tests provided by the teachers and their capacity to provide accurate answers. In addition, the effectiveness of a teaching method could be measured based on the students' ability to demonstrate to the teacher (*tasmi'*) what they had memorised during the T&L.

The effectiveness of the teaching methods practised by the teachers could also be measured based on students' capabilities to explain the Arabic language grammar based on their understanding of it. The level of the students' ability in this case could be identified by the teachers, allowing them to develop lesson plans based on the level of the students' mastery. This situation would develop productive students and a more conducive learning atmosphere, particularly with the teachers' practice of attractive and interesting teaching methods. Besides, the effectiveness of the teaching method could also be evaluated based on the students' ability to write notes, mind maps, and a summary of what they had learned in the T&L session.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The use of suitable Arabic language grammar teaching methods is highly important for the improvement of students' level of understanding and mastery of Arabic language grammar. Therefore, the use of teaching methods that are less suitable and interesting will affect students' motivation and interest in learning the Arabic language, especially in the grammar aspect. This situation would subsequently disrupt the students' progress in mastering the Arabic language in terms of grammar, listening, reading, writing, and speaking skills. The practice of teaching methods that are more focused on teacher-oriented methods and traditional methods would also have negative impacts on the students' motivation, developing them into passive students.

Taking the findings into consideration, it is suggested that the traditional and teacher-oriented teaching methods practised by the teachers should be shifted to the combination of teacher-oriented and student-oriented methods. To illustrate, this combined method produces students who are more enthusiastic about learning Arabic grammar, contributing to a positive impact on Arabic speaking skills. *Guru muda* (young teachers) methods (Modius et al., 2023), group discussions (Emaliana, 2017), presentation methods (Janor et al., 2013), communication or interaction (Janor et al., 2013; Manaf & Surat, 2022), *rumus* (formula) application method (Jusoh et al., 2014), teaching methods using mind maps (mind mapping) (Paimin & Ghazali, 2012), and interactive media methods (Kamrozzaman et al., 2023) are regarded as suitable practices by Arabic language teachers during T&L Arabic grammar compared to the lecture and memorisation methods. Accordingly, the following Figure 1 illustrates the proposed teaching method process that should be practised by teachers in teaching Arabic grammar.

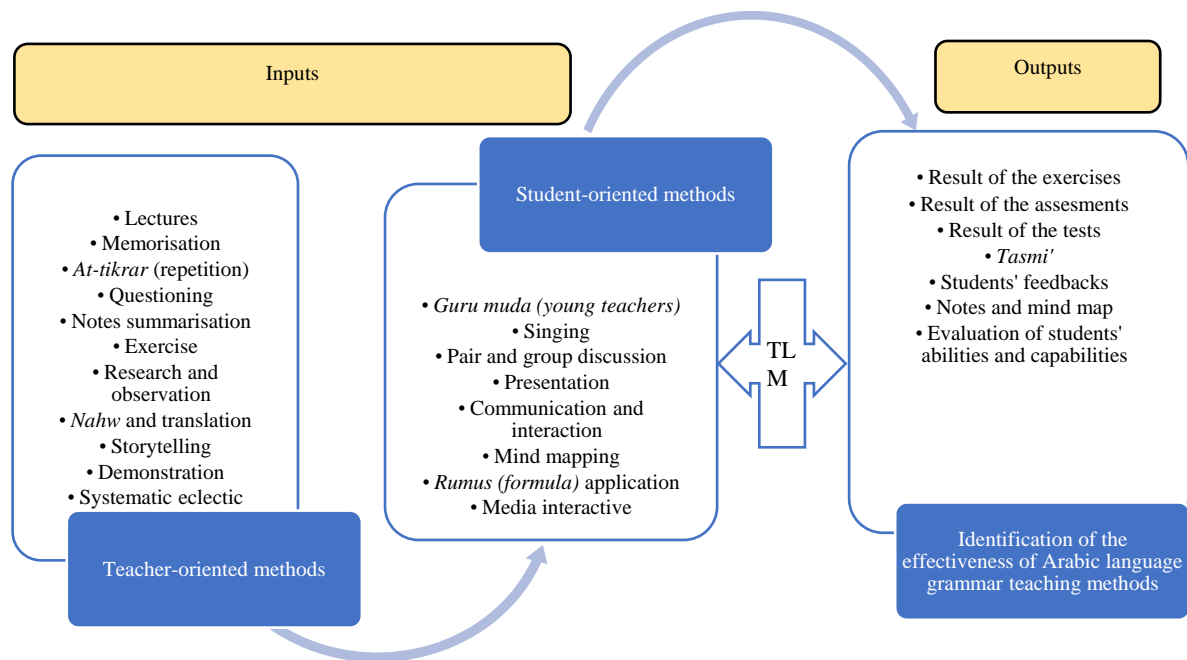


Figure 1. The Process of the Combined Method of Teaching Arabic Language Grammar

The above Figure 1 illustrates the processes of the combined methods of teaching Arabic language grammar. Throughout these processes, teachers are suggested to provide inputs by practising a combination of teacher-oriented and student-oriented teaching methods. Teaching-learning materials (TLM) that are suitable for the teaching methods should be properly provided by the teachers. This is followed by the identification of outputs shown by the students to indicate the effectiveness of the Arabic language grammar teaching methods. Notably, the results of this study would serve as a guideline for academicians and teachers in designing suitable teaching methods for teaching Arabic language grammar. It would also be a reference to the Malaysian Ministry of Education's efforts in improving the competence of teachers, particularly Arabic teachers in diversifying teaching methods that are more student-friendly by focusing on student-oriented methods.

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