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Teacher's Challenges in Implementing HOTS in Learning Arabic During Covid-19 Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

HOTS-based Arabic learning in the Covid-19 pandemic era experienced complex problems because the learning process carried out online had an impact on the implementation of HOTS which was not optimal. This research encourages the disclosure of the challenges faced by teachers when implementing HOTS in learning Arabic in the era of the Covid-19 pandemic. This research used a qualitative approach with the case study method in Islamic senior high school (MAN) 3 Padang Panjang West Sumatera, Indonesia. Collecting data was through an in-depth review of observations, interviews, and documents. Meanwhile, the data analysis technique was based on Miles and Huberman's theory by reducing data, presenting data, and concluding field findings. The data obtained were validated with data triangulation techniques and data sources. This study shows that the challenges faced by teachers stem from three main factors, namely; a) from the students' lack of Arabic language skills and uneven internet connection problems in the areas where students live; b) from the teachers' low understanding of the HOTS concept and its application in learning Arabic and; c) from school rules that have not set HOTS standards as a reference in learning. The test of the effectiveness of the application of HOTS skills in Arabic learning needs to be done through an online learning system.

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Keywords

Arabic Learning; Covid-19; Challenges; HOTS

مستخلص البحث

واجه تعلم اللغة العربية المستند إلى التفكير العليا في عصر جائحة الفيروس كورونا مشاكل معقدة لأن عملية التعلم التي أجريت عبر الإنترنت كان لها تأثير على تنفيذ نظام التفكير العليا الذي لم يكن هو الأمثل. يشجع هذا البحث على الكشف عن التحديات التي يواجهها المعلمون عند تطبيق التفكير العليا في تعلم اللغة العربية في عصر جائحة الفيروس كورونا. يستخدم هذا البحث منهجاً نوعياً مع طريقة دراسة الحالة في المدرسة الثانوية الحكومية ٣ بادنج بانجانج سومطرة الغربية، بإندونيسيا حيث يجمع البيانات من خلال مراجعة متعمقة للملاحظات والمقابلات والوثائق. وفي الوقت نفسه، تعتمد تقنية تحليل البيانات على نظرية مايلز وهوبرمان عن طريق تقليل البيانات، وتقديم البيانات، واستنتاج. تم التحقق من صحة البيانات التي تم الحصول عليها باستخدام تقنيات تليلث البيانات ومصادر البيانات. تظهر هذه الدراسة أن التحديات التي يواجهها المعلمون تنبع من ثلاثة عوامل رئيسية هي: (أ) من افتقار الطلاب إلى مهارات اللغة العربية وعدم انتظام الإتصال بالإنترنت في المناطق التي يعيش فيها الطلاب؛ (ب) من ضعف فهم المعلمين لمفهوم نظام التفكير العليا وتطبيقه في تعلم اللغة العربية؛ (ج) من نظام المدرسة التي لم تضع معايير التفكير العليا كمرجع في التعليم. يجب إجراء اختبار فعالية تطبيق مهارات التفكير العليا في تعلم اللغة العربية من خلال نظام التعلم عبر الإنترنت.

تعلم اللغة العربية: فيروس كورونا: التحديات: التفكير العليا

كلمات أساسية

INTRODUCTION

Educational institutions in Indonesia are one of the sectors affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. The teaching and learning process is carried out from home to break the chain of spreading the Coronavirus, so that the teaching and learning process is carried out online through the application (Audina & Mubarak, 2020). However, there are still many schools that experience problems with the implementation of online learning policies, such as uneven access to the internet and electricity throughout Indonesia, incomplete school infrastructure, not all students have a PC connected to the internet, etc. (Pratama & A'yun, 2020). The facilities needed during the online learning process are the availability of gadgets, internet quota, and compatible online media (Thohir & Muslimah, 2020). Online learning reduces students' learning comfort which has implications for emotional changes or stress (Hastowohadi et al., 2020). Teachers need to use the right strategy in delivering material to students during distance learning.

Research on the distance learning process has been carried out a lot. This was motivated by the policy of implementing a home learning system in the era of the Covid-19 pandemic. The researchers focused their research studies on aspects of media and learning methods that are relevant to be used as solutions in online learning (Hasan, 2020; Al-Marroof et al., 2020; Prananingrum & Kholis, 2020; Bulan & Zainiyati, 2020; Mubarak et al., 2020). However, there is still little discussion about the challenges faced by teachers when teaching online, especially in learning foreign languages such as Arabic. Each student has heterogeneous styles, models and strategies in learning language, some of them can understand the material quickly and some are the opposite (Zafar & Meenakshi, 2012). This is a big task for teachers that must be completed (Faruq & Huda, 2020).

Nowadays Arabic learning has become the center of attention of Arabic academics and practitioners. This response to the decree of the Minister of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia (KMA) No. 184 of 2019 concerning the application of 21st-century life skills which are often referred to as Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) in learning Arabic (Febriani, 2020b). The opposite of HOTS is LOTS (Lower Order Thinking Skills) and MOTS (Middle Order Thinking Skills) as intermediate level thinking skills (Pi'i, 2016). HOTS skills are now an interesting discussion in a school environment, where the concept of learning must be adapted to the demands of 21st-century life, which indicates that learning must contain collaboration, communication, cooperation, and creativity (Saleh, 2019). These four skills encourage students to learn to solve life problems in the future (Pardede, 2020). Students are skilled at solving life problems if students are able to analyze the problems they are experiencing (Faruq & Huda, 2020).

HOTS skills require students to do something based on facts. Making connections between facts, categorizing them, positioning them in new ways, and being able to implement them to find solutions to problems faced by students (Rahmawati, 2018). HOTS demands students' thought processes at a more complex cognitive level, not just reading and memorizing words but being skilled at finding opportunities based on facts (Beddu, 2019). HOTS skills are also often termed metacognitive knowledge. Metacognitive knowledge about thinking skills is very important for more systematic teaching in honing higher order thinking skills (Zohar, 1999).

The discussion about HOTS certainly cannot be separated from Bloom's Taxonomy as the originator of the theory (Baransi & Burbara, 2019). Bloom and colleagues distinguished learning outcomes in three domains, namely the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains (Mustain, 2019). The three domains are then developed in the 2013 curriculum. By implementing HOTS learning, it is hoped that it will be able to produce students who have broad insight and global competitiveness. Meanwhile, the teacher acts as a guide, facilitator and study partner for students (Alsowat, 2016). Furthermore, Ainin (2018) classify the level of thinking as follows:

Table 1. Classification of Thinking Dimensions

HOTS		
Analysis (C4)	Evaluation (C5)	Creation (C6)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to distinguish aspects/elements. • Operational verbs: compare, test, examine, criticize. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to make their own decisions. • Operational verbs: evaluate, judge, argue, decide, support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to create their own ideas. • Operational verbs: construct, design, write, develop, formulate.
MOTS		
Understanding (C2)	Application (C3)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be able to explain concepts. • Active verbs: describe, accept, classify, and report. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to use the information on different aspects. • Active verbs: use, demonstrate, illustrate, operate. 	
LOTS		
Of Knowledge (C1)		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to recall • Active verbs: Remember, register, repeat, and imitate. 		

Table 1 classifies the dimensions of thinking in the cognitive realm into three levels, namely LOTS, MOTS and HOTS. Each domain has a certain operational word that differentiates between each level of thinking in Bloom's Taxonomy theory. The existence of this frame of mind also makes it easier for teachers to classify the learning given to students.

Research on HOTS associated with learning Arabic has been done a lot. Muradi et al (2020) stated that the study was in the form of understanding HOTS, trials of HOTS learning models, HOTS-based media and learning methods and studies on the application and development of HOTS. The application of HOTS in learning Arabic is increasingly complex in the Covid-19 pandemic era. As Febriani's (2020) research shows that the Covid-19 pandemic presents its own challenges for learning Arabic at Islamic universities in Indonesia. Even so, HOTS-based learning is still relevant to be implemented in Arabic learning. Teachers must open opportunities for students to learn independently and think critically (Kamarudin et al., 2016). By utilizing interactive Arabic learning media as an effort to realize students' critical attitudes (Ch, 2020). In addition, teachers are also required to redesign several learning components such as curriculum adjustments, learning materials, media, Arabic learning models and methods used in the Covid-19 pandemic era (Tolinggi & S, 2020), because of the good and organized in the online learning process will support students to do learning independently (Hastowohadi et al., 2020).

Based on the results of the analysis of the research above, it can be confirmed that this study is different from previous studies. This article focuses more on the challenges of senior high school (MAN) 3 Padang Panjang teachers in West Sumatera, Indonesia in teaching HOTS-based Arabic during the Covid-19 pandemic era. This study is also in accordance with the demands of 21st-century life which is the orientation of Arabic learning in the Decree of the Minister of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia (KMA) No. 184 of 2019 concerning the implementation of HOTS are in the spotlight. On this basis, this study aims to explore the challenges faced by teachers in teaching Arabic in the Covid-19 pandemic era by implementing online learning policies. So, it is hoped that there will be an integrative and holistic solution for teachers when teaching HOTS-based Arabic with an online learning process.

METHOD

This research was conducted by adopting a qualitative approach design. The qualitative approach is intended to find out in depth the challenges of teachers when teaching HOTS-based Arabic during the Covid-19 pandemic era at MAN 3 Padang Panjang, West Sumatera, Indonesia. The research method used

is the case study method. As mentioned by Yin (2011), the case study method was carried out to obtain the data needed in detailed field research.

The data collection technique was done by observing, interviewing and studying the documentation. The researcher made in-depth observations about Arabic learning activities through the Zoom application to find out the HOTS-based Arabic learning patterns carried out with an online learning system. Interviews were conducted online via WhatsApp call to Arabic teachers to obtain information on the challenges faced by teachers in teaching HOTS-based Arabic during the Covid-19 pandemic era. Meanwhile, the documentation study was carried out to see data in the form of Arabic textbooks used, instructional instructions, students' assignments used by the teacher to support HOTS-based Arabic learning in the era of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Furthermore, the data obtained from informants were analyzed using the theory of Miles & Huberman (1994), namely reducing data, presenting data and verifying data. After going through the stages of data collection and data analysis techniques carried out, researchers confirmed to informants the field findings were the challenges faced by teachers in teaching HOTS-based Arabic in the era of the Covid-19 pandemic. On that basis, the data validity of this study was measured through data triangulation techniques and data sources.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

HOTS-Based Arabic Learning in the Covid-19 Pandemic Era

Learning Arabic at MAN 3 Padang Panjang, West Sumatera is a compulsory subject for all students. The curriculum used is the 2013 curriculum and the madrasa curriculum that was developed according to school needs, such as the Al-Qur'an memorization program. The two curricula are integrated in a balanced manner through learning activities designed by the teacher for each subject. In learning Arabic in particular, the material taught to students is still about intensively introducing new vocabulary. This material was given because it adjusted to the students' low Arabic language skills, so that the addition of new vocabulary was always done before learning began. In addition, the material design compiled by the Arabic teacher is also classified as simple using power point media, with the aim of making it easy for students to understand the material being taught online.

When learning took place normally before the spread of Covid-19, the allocation of Arabic learning time for class X was done as much as 4x45 minutes per week and for classes XI & XII as much as 2x45 minutes per week. However, during the Covid-19 emergency with an online learning model, Arabic was taught as much as 1x30 minutes per week. Wargadinata et al (2020) emphasized that

under any circumstance's language learning must be carried out and Arabic language skills must also be developed properly. Within 30 minutes the teacher only explains the main material, while the remaining time is given to students in the form of assignments.

Reducing the allocation of lesson time for students in schools is a challenge for Arabic teachers at MAN 3 Padang Panjang, West Sumatera to teach HOTS-based Arabic. Apart from reducing the allocation of time, the students' weak Arabic language skills are also a challenge for teachers to teach HOTS-based Arabic. These constraints can be illustrated through the results of interviews with researchers to the Arabic teacher at MAN 3 Padang Panjang, West Sumatera below:

"HOTS is actually good for learning Arabic. Textbooks made by the government have also led to HOTS skills. But with the Arabic language skills of students at MAN 3 Padang Panjang which are still basic, HOTS skills may still be difficult to put into practice for students in this school. Especially during the pandemic, where one hour of lessons only lasts 30 minutes, plus the various obstacles faced by students when learning online, such as disruption of internet connections, not all students have an Android cellphone that can connect to the internet (Informant, Interview, 2021)."

Schools demand teachers to apply HOTS in learning Arabic in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic. Even though the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia has issued an emergency curriculum in the era of the Covid-19 pandemic number 211 / Sipres / A6 / VIII / 2020 which refers to three things, namely education units continue to use the national curriculum, may use the emergency curriculum and redesign the curriculum accordingly school needs. In this case, MAN 3 Padang Panjang West Sumatera continues to use the 2013 Curriculum as a reference for education in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Based on the observations of researchers and the results of interviews with Arabic teachers, Arabic learning conducted at MAN 3 Padang Panjang West Sumatera has led to HOTS skills. Putri & Sofyan (2019) explained that the indicators of HOTS implementation can be seen from the implementation of C4, C5 and C6. as for the practice in MAN 3 Padang Panjang West Sumatera can be explained as follows: *First*, Analyze (C4). In teaching Arabic, the teacher shares a YouTube video link that matches the teaching material as learning material for students. The teacher provides the opportunity for students to compare the explanations contained in the video with the subject matter from textbooks. After comparing the material, students responded to the video provided by the teacher, so that two-way communication took place between students and teachers. According to the researchers' observations, this learning process requires students to be able to analyze the material provided by the teacher so as to

encourage students to present arguments about the phenomena provided by the teacher. *Second*, evaluate (C5). Evaluating is a skill that a person has to find out the end result of a process (Faiqah, 2017). In the context of learning Arabic, students of MAN 3 Padang Panjang West Sumatera have evaluation skills, this is indicated by the choice of words used when presenting arguments, rebutting opinions of friends and being able to decide which opinions should be accepted and which need to be justified. *Third*, creating (C6). The highest level in HOTS skills is creative skills (Yayuk et al., 2019). After the learning process is complete, students are asked to work on projects based on the material being taught. Assignments given to students contain digital elements, such as making videos, designing infographics related to the material and writing simple sentences contained in the material, overall student assignments are uploaded to Instagram or Facebook. According to the researcher's analysis, the process of creating videos, design skills and students' writing skills above is one of the HOTS indicators for section C6 (creating).

The learning media used by the teacher as a whole is online based, such as WhatsApp Group, Instagram, Facebook, Google Classroom and YouTube. All online media are used in accordance with the material being taught. For example, WhatsApp Group is used to send learning instructions to students, YouTube is a tool for exploring the material being taught, Instagram and Facebook as a medium for uploading assignments done by students, and Google Classroom as a medium for discussion between students and teachers about the material being taught, and as a medium for accessing material and assignments that must be done by students.

The use of the above media in an online learning environment is still limited in MAN 3 Padang Panjang, West Sumatera. Teachers and students do not yet have the skills that support the use of online media (Informant, Interview, 2021). It is necessary to develop Arabic language learning media that is easily accessible to students in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic (Bulan & Zainiyati, 2020). In addition to media development, Fauzi et al (2020) dan Ritonga et al (2020) suggest teachers to innovate in teaching Arabic during the Covid-19 emergency, So that the learning process becomes more meaningful for students and the material presented is easier to understand.

The Arabic teacher at MAN 3 Padang Panjang, West Sumatera simplified the learning given to students during the Covid-19 pandemic era. The learning steps taken by the teacher until now are as follows: a) The teacher designs the Subject matter according to the topic of discussion in the teaching material; b) the teacher chooses learning media in the form of videos from YouTube that match the material and sends the video link to the WhatsApp group. Pimada et al (2020) explain the function of learning media as a learning resource and as

learning support; c) after students watch the video, the teacher provides new vocabulary to the video. The vocabulary is intended to make it easier for students to follow the next learning instruction; d) the teacher prepares an online game to see students' mastery of vocabulary based on the material being studied. Types of problems such as cognitive tests designed using applications Quizizz and Kahoot; e) the teacher discusses student test results through Zoom meetings; f) The teacher discusses the questions given to the students and the students' respond to the test results; g) the teacher provides reward in the form of "grades" for students who are able to answer questions perfectly. Learning steps during the Covid-19 pandemic need innovation to avoid boredom for students.

Teachers' Challenges in Implementing HOTS

Implementation of Arabic language learning in the Covid-19 pandemic era experienced various obstacles. Hadiyanto et al (2020) and Pimada and Amrulloh (2020) stated that among these obstacles stem from the lack of media and learning resources used in schools, the lack of language competence and the teaching methods used. Apart from the above factors, the Covid-19 pandemic adds to the problems in learning Arabic. This is due to the lack of even internet connection to all regions in Indonesia in the midst of the implementation of the online learning policy (Fauziyah, 2020). Especially the frontier, outermost and isolated areas that have not been touched by an internet connection.

The spread of Covid-19 adds new challenges for teachers in teaching HOTS-based Arabic using an online learning model. There are various obstacles faced by teachers when implementing HOTS-based Arabic language learning. These constraints stem from the teacher's lack of understanding of the concept and application of HOTS, as well as inadequate learning facilities and infrastructure in schools, such as language laboratories, digitalization of subjects, training on HOTS application (Kiswara et al., 2019). In the context of learning Arabic at MAN 3 Padang Panjang, West Sumatera, the lack of teacher's skills in implementing HOTS is a major obstacle. The following is an explanation of the results of interviews with teachers

Table 2. Results of Interviews with Teachers

Researchers	Teacher
In your opinion, what are the obstacles in implementing HOTS-based Arabic learning in the Covid-19 pandemic era?	"Students' understanding of Arabic is still minimal, so before the material is taught to students, the vocabulary contained in the material must be given first." "The online learning policy poses an obstacle for me in implementing HOTS-based Arabic learning. Because the internet connection is not evenly distributed in the area where each student lives, the time allocation has been cut to 1 x 30 minutes per meeting. "

Table 2 describes the obstacles faced by teachers when implementing HOTS in Arabic learning at MAN 3 Padang Panjang, West Sumatera during the Covid-19 pandemic era motivated by three main factors, namely: *first*, student’s constraints. Apart from network constraints in online learning, the student’s lack of understanding of Arabic is also a problem for implementing HOTS, not all students have basic Arabic skills, because most students come from public schools that have never learned Arabic;

Table 3. Results of Interviews with Teachers About Constrains and School Facility

Researchers	Teacher
What are the tips you do to overcome obstacles in implementing HOTS-based Arabic learning in the Covid-19 pandemic era?	"Learning from the Covid-19 pandemic era forces teachers to be creative in using the internet to support learning. I sort out Youtube videos related to the material to help students learn. When learning via Zoom takes place, I try to involve students in the learning process, for example actively asking questions, other students responding to friends' questions, project-based learning. Although there are still many shortcomings in improving students' HOTS skills, least I always try to make government policies to implement HOTS-based Arabic language learning. "
What do you need to support your ability to apply HOTS-based Arabic learning?	"It seems that I have to explore more HOTS literature from scientific sources to increase my understanding of HOTS. In addition, I personally need more training on HOTS and further outreach from related parties. I joined the Arabic MGMP in less than 2 years, there has been no discussion about HOTS-based Arabic learning. Or maybe it was discussed before I joined"

Table 3 describes interview result from the second and the third factors. *Second*, teacher’s constraints. Teachers' understanding of the HOTS concept and its good application in learning Arabic is a problem faced by teachers. Even though the HOTS skills of teachers must be developed first before developing students' higher order thinking skills (Abosalem, 2016). Not only that, the skills of teachers to use technology in online learning are a must-have, so that the 30 minutes per meeting time allocation can be utilized properly to achieve the objectives of learning Arabic in the era of the Covid-19 pandemic; *third*, school facility’s constraints. Inadequate infrastructure facilities at MAN 3 Padang Panjang West Sumatera that support the application of HOTS in learning Arabic.

Schools did not formulate specific policies as a reference for teachers in compiling HOTS-based learning models in the Covid-19 pandemic era. Online-based learning designs are left entirely to the teacher, such as making learning

media, selecting learning sources and teaching materials, and learning methods used. Researchers assess that the formulation of guidelines for implementing HOTS in the implementation of learning must be structured in a systematic and planned manner. The goal is that in the implementation process the level of achievement of HOTS skills of students can be measured after participating in learning, and so on can be evaluated.

The obstacles to implementing HOTS in learning Arabic above must be resolved quickly. The solutions made by the teacher to overcome problems when implementing HOTS in learning Arabic in the Covid-19 pandemic era were: (a) for students, the teacher finds a special time outside formal lesson hours to provide guidance for students who are still weak against Arabic, provision of vocabulary and habituation of *muhadatsah*; (b) for Teachers, developing the ability to apply HOTS in learning Arabic is something that must be done, following training and socialization about HOTS from credible institutions, getting used to designing HOTS-based learning, increasing discussions with experts, experts or people who understand the HOTS concept; (c) for school facilities, schools strive to meet the needs of teachers in implementing HOTS-based Arabic learning, making HOTS standards a reference for teachers in designing learning.

CONCLUSIONS

HOTS-based Arabic learning is an orientation to change the curriculum for Islamic Education and Arabic Language based on the Decree of the Minister of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia No. 184 in 2019. There were various challenges faced by teachers when implementing HOTS in learning Arabic during the Covid-19 pandemic era. These challenges stem from three main sectors, namely from students, from teachers and from school infrastructure that do not support the implementation of HOTS. The solution to this, teachers are required to deepen their understanding of the HOTS concept and its application steps in learning Arabic. So that with the conditions of online learning in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, HOTS-based Arabic learning is still consistently being carried out. The findings of this study indicate that the Covid-19 pandemic is an obstacle for teachers in implementing HOTS-based Arabic learning, because the time allocation of 30 minutes is considered insufficient to improve students' HOTS skills. Based on this research which only discusses the constraints of teachers when implementing HOTS in Arabic learning, it is hoped that further research will be conducted to test the effectiveness of the implementation of HOTS skills in Arabic learning through an online learning system in the era of the Covid-19 pandemic, with more varied research methods and a more complex research object.

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