Sentence Ladder Strategy for Training Arabic Sentence Formation at MIN 6 Padang City

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ABSTRACT

The ability to compose sentences is one of the essential skills in learning Arabic, but MIN 6 Padang City students still struggle with arranging words into sentences that follow the rules. This community service activity aims to develop these skills through the application of the Sentence Ladder Strategy, an interactive and gradual learning approach. This activity makes a significant contribution by providing a simple yet effective learning method to improve students' syntax skills, as well as equipping teachers with media and application guidelines that can be used sustainably. The service is carried out with a participatory approach through three stages: the introduction of the concept of Ladder Sentence Strategy, gradual practice of composing sentences with word cards on the ladder board, and evaluation of the results. The participants were students in grades V and VI of MIN 6 in Padang City, assisted by Arabic language teachers. Success was measured through observation, pre-tests, post-tests, and teacher interviews. The implementation of this strategy improved students' ability from an average of three words per sentence in the pre-test to five to seven words in the post-test, with a more appropriate structure. Student participation fell into the high to very high category on all indicators, and teacher responses were overwhelmingly positive, with an average assessment score of above 4.7. The Sentence Ladder Strategy proved effective in improving Arabic sentence construction skills, building students' active participation, and was easy to implement sustainably. It is hoped that this strategy can be adapted for use in other schools or madrasahs, thereby increasing the benefits' reach.

Keywords: *Arabic Sentence, Sentence Ladder, Strategy, Teaching Arabic.*

ABSTRAK

Kemampuan menyusun kalimat merupakan salah satu keterampilan yang penting dalam pembelajaran bahasa Arab, namun siswa MIN 6 Kota Padang masih mengalami kesulitan dalam merangkai kata menjadi kalimat yang sesuai kaidah. Kegiatan pengabdian kepada masyarakat ini bertujuan untuk melatih kemampuan tersebut melalui penerapan Strategi Tangga Kalimat sebagai pendekatan pembelajaran yang interaktif dan bertahap. Kegiatan ini memberikan kontribusi nyata dalam memberikan metode pembelajaran yang sederhana namun efektif untuk meningkatkan kemampuan sintaksis siswa, serta membekali guru dengan media dan panduan aplikasi yang dapat digunakan secara berkelanjutan. Pengabdian dilakukan dengan pendekatan partisipatif melalui tiga tahapan, yaitu pengenalan konsep Strategi Tangga Kalimat, praktik menyusun kalimat dengan kartu kata pada papan tangga secara bertahap, dan evaluasi hasil. Peserta kegiatan adalah siswa kelas V dan VI MIN 6 Kota Padang dengan pendampingan guru bahasa Arab. Keberhasilan diukur melalui observasi, pre-test, post-test, dan wawancara guru. Penerapan strategi ini meningkatkan kemampuan siswa dari rata-rata tiga kata per kalimat pada pre-test menjadi lima sampai tujuh kata pada post-test dengan struktur yang lebih tepat. Partisipasi siswa berada pada kategori tinggi hingga sangat tinggi pada semua indikator, dan tanggapan guru sangat positif dengan rata-rata skor penilaian di atas 4,7. Strategi Tangga Kalimat terbukti efektif dalam meningkatkan kemampuan menyusun kalimat bahasa Arab, membangun partisipasi aktif siswa, dan mudah diimplementasikan secara berkelanjutan. Diharapkan strategi ini dapat diadaptasi di sekolah atau madrasah lain agar manfaatnya lebih meluas.

Kata Kunci: *Kalimat Bahasa Arab, Tangga Kalimat, Strategi, Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab.*

INTRODUCTION

Arabic language learning at the primary school and *madrasah ibtidaiyah* levels in Indonesia generally faces challenges in developing sentence construction skills (Frendo & Gatt, 2025). Students are often able to memorise mufradat, but have difficulty combining them into sentences that are correct in *nahwu* and *sharf* rules. (Syadi et al., 2025). This is due to the lack of structured exercises and the absence of methods that train syntactic thinking skills in a gradual manner. This condition has an impact on the low productive ability of students in Arabic speaking and writing skills (Mouas & Ghodbane, 2025).

A similar phenomenon is found in various madrasahs, including MIN 6 Padang City, where most students are not accustomed to composing sentences independently. They tend to rely on examples from textbooks or teacher memorisation, without creatively understanding sentence patterns and structures. This shows a gap between vocabulary mastery and its application in the production of complete sentences.

Some factors that influence the low ability to construct Arabic sentences include: (1) the use of learning methods that focus more on translation and memorization; (2) the lack of learning media that facilitate sentence construction exercises; (3) learning that has not emphasized syntactic thinking skills; and (4) limited teacher innovation in presenting interactive learning strategies that actively involve students. (Khairanis et al., 2023).

Weakness in sentence composition results in students experiencing obstacles in both oral and written communication, rendering their Arabic language skills mastered incomplete (Cahyati

et al., 2025). In fact, the ability to compose sentences is the foundation for other skills, such as speaking (maharah al-kalam) and writing (maharah al-kitabah). If this problem is not addressed immediately, then the achievement of Arabic learning objectives according to the national curriculum will be difficult to fulfill (Khairanis, Hasaniyah, et al., 2025).

One solution that can be applied is the use of game-based learning methods or visual strategies that can help students construct sentences gradually. Strategies like this can facilitate student involvement, reduce boredom, and encourage creativity in stringing words into sentences that fit Arabic language rules (Fatihah et al., 2025). The right strategy will activate the analytical and synthesis thinking process in students (Ma et al., 2025).

The Sentence Ladder strategy is a learning approach that presents sentence construction in stages, starting from word elements to complex sentences (Sahnan & Daulay, 2025). Each rung represents a certain level of complexity, so students can practice gradually. This strategy can train structural thinking skills, strengthen grammar understanding, and motivate students to try new sentence variations (Siregar, 2025). Compared to conventional methods, the Sentence Ladder Strategy provides a more interactive learning experience. Students not only memorize sentence patterns, but also understand the process of their formation (Thimmappa, 2025). This approach allows for collaborative learning, where students can work in groups to complete each other's sentences, while strengthening social and communication skills (Khairanis, Abidin, et al., 2025).

Previous studies have shown various strategies to improve Arabic sentence building skills, such as picture arrangement, strip story, and sentence building cards (Istiqomah, 2025). However, the application of the Ladder Sentence Strategy is still rare, especially in the context of community service in elementary schools. This method has been known in other foreign language learning, but its adaptation for Arabic is still minimal, so this research occupies a strategic position in the development of Arabic learning innovations (Akhmedova, 2025).

The novelty of this research lies in the application of the Sentence Ladder Strategy for Arabic at MIN 6 Padang City with a community service approach. Most of the previous studies focused on learning in regular classrooms in the form of classroom action research, while this study combines training practices, direct student involvement, and the use of visual media sentence ladders adapted to the students' local context.

Review of the literature shows that effective Arabic language learning requires a method that combines grammar theory with sentence construction practice. Some previous studies proved that gradual sentence construction exercises can improve students' productive skills (Marni & Rahmi, 2025). However, the contribution of this study is to introduce the Sentence Ladder Strategy as an innovation that not only improves sentence construction skills, but also builds students' confidence to use Arabic actively in various contexts (Khairanis, Rifai, et al., 2025).

With the background of the problem, proposed solution, novelty, and clear contribution, this study is expected to provide multiple benefits: (1) improving students' Arabic sentence construction skills at MIN 6 Padang City, and (2) being a reference for Arabic teachers in other schools to adopt similar methods. The application of the Sentence Ladder Strategy is expected to be a breakthrough in teaching Arabic at the primary level in Indonesia.

METHOD

This community service activity uses a participatory approach with an interactive workshop model that focuses on training Arabic sentence construction skills through the Sentence Ladder Strategy. This approach was chosen because it involves students actively in the learning process, combines concept explanation with hands-on exercises, and provides opportunities for participants to explore sentence variations according to ability levels (Albantani et al., 2025).

The service was conducted at MIN 6 Padang City with 40 students in grades V and VI who had learned the basics of Arabic vocabulary and grammar. The selection of this school was based on the need to improve sentence construction skills, as identified through discussions with the local Arabic teacher. The activity involved a mentor teacher to facilitate follow-up learning in the classroom.

The implementation of the activity was conducted through three main stages. The first stage was the introduction of the concept of the Ladder Sentence Strategy, which included a visual explanation of the arrangement of sentences from simple to complex levels. The second stage is gradual practice, where students compose sentences using word cards arranged like steps according to the level of difficulty. The third stage is evaluation and reflection, in the form of group discussions and presentations of the results of sentence construction by students to measure the understanding and skills acquired.

The main media used are sentence and picture ladder cards containing vocabulary according to the learning theme. The word cards are arranged on the ladder board starting from the base position (single word) to the top of the ladder (complete sentence with complementary elements). The use of this visual media aims to make it easier for students to understand sentence structure and reduce confusion when composing words into sentences that are in accordance with Arabic language rules.

The success of the activity was measured through two indicators, namely the improvement of sentence construction skills and students' enthusiasm in participating in the activity. Data was obtained through direct observation during the training process, assessment of students' work, and brief interviews with accompanying teachers. In addition, student reflections were also used to determine the extent to which this method provided a fun and useful learning experience.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Improving Students Arabic Sentence Composing Ability

The implementation of community service activities with the Ladder Sentence Strategy at MIN 6 Padang City showed positive developments in students' ability to compose Arabic sentences. Before the training began, most students were only able to string simple words without paying attention to the correct grammatical structure. After participating in a series of trainings, students began to be able to compose sentences according to the rules of *nahwu* and *sharf* gradually.

At the initial stage, students were given a pre-test in the form of a task to compose sentences from the set of words provided. The results of the pre-test showed that on average

students could only compose sentences of two to three words, and often the order was not according to the rules of Arabic. This became the basic benchmark to measure the success of the training using the Sentence Ladder Strategy.

The application of the Ladder Sentence Strategy starts from simple exercises, namely combining two words into a phrase, then adding sentence elements gradually until it becomes a complete sentence. This multilevel model makes it easier for students to understand that each word has a specific position in the sentence structure. This approach also helps students remember the function of words according to their position in the sentence. The learning process is collaborative, with students working in pairs or small groups. Each group is given a different set of word cards so that the variety of sentences produced becomes diverse. The teacher and the service team play an active role in guiding, giving feedback, and correcting erroneous sentence structures.

The success of this method can be seen in the increase in the number and quality of sentences that students can compose in the last practice session. Many students who initially had difficulty adding time or place information are now able to place these elements in the right position. This improvement shows that the Sentence Ladder Strategy is effective in gradually building syntactic thinking skills.

Figure 1. students practicing the sentence ladder strategy in class.

In the figure, students are seen arranging word cards on a sentence ladder board according to difficulty level. This activity encourages students to think critically, choose the right vocabulary and arrange them in the right order. This photo also shows students' active involvement in an interactive and fun learning process. From the observation results, this strategy not only improves technical skills in composing sentences, but also fosters students' confidence to try to make new sentences without relying on examples from the textbook. Some students even took the initiative to make more creative sentence variations according to the learning theme.

Analysis of the post-test conducted at the end of the activity showed a significant improvement. If in the pre-test students were only able to compose simple sentences with an average of three words, then in the post-test they were able to make sentences with an average of five to seven words, complete with time or place information. In addition to the quantitative improvement, there was also a qualitative improvement in the use of vocabulary. Students began to use more diverse and targeted vocabulary according to the context. This shows that this strategy not only trains sentence structure, but also expands students' vocabulary mastery.

Overall, the application of the Sentence Ladder Strategy proved to be able to improve the Arabic sentence construction skills of MIN 6 Padang City students. This result indicates that a gradual approach with the support of visual media can be one of the effective solutions to overcome students' difficulties in sentence construction. This success is a foundation for teachers to continue and develop similar methods in daily learning.

Students Enthusiasm and Participation in Activities

The implementation of the Sentence Ladder Strategy not only improved students' Arabic sentence construction skills but also generated high enthusiasm from the students. Since the opening session, students were eager to follow instructions and showed curiosity about the learning media used. This enthusiasm is a vital asset in creating a fun learning atmosphere.

Learning activities are carried out in an interactive atmosphere, where students are actively involved in composing sentences both individually and in groups. Game-based activities make students feel burdened, and they even seem enthusiastic waiting for their turn to try to write sentences on the sentence ladder board. This demonstrates that the right approach can transform the learning environment into a more engaging one.

Students' participation is measured by their activity when answering questions, contributing vocabulary ideas, and working together in groups. The teacher and community service team noted that almost all students were actively involved in the learning process, without a few individuals dominating. Every student was given equal opportunity to perform in front of the class. In addition, students also showed initiative by trying variations of sentence structure that the teacher had not explained. Some students combined words that were not in the original example, demonstrating their understanding and courage to try new things. This is an indicator that fun learning can encourage students' creativity.

The level of student participation during the activity is evident from observations made by the community service team. This observation utilises an observation sheet that contains indicators such as attendance, participation in discussions, cooperation skills, and the courage to perform. A summary of the observation data is shown in the following table:

Table 1. Level of Student Participation in the Ladder Sentence Strategy Activity

Number	Participation Indicator	Percentage (%)	Category
1	Full attendance	100	Very High
2	Engagement in discussion	92	Very High
3	Cooperation in groups	88	High
4	Courage to perform in front of others	85	High
5	Initiative to make sentence variations	78	High

Table 1 shows that student participation in all indicators was classified as high to very high. Full attendance demonstrates students' commitment to participating in the entire series of activities. The high level of involvement in group discussions and cooperation suggests that this strategy is effective in promoting positive interactions among students. Although the percentage of courage to perform and initiative to make sentence variations is slightly lower than other indicators, these results still show significant progress compared to before the activity was implemented.

The observation also revealed that students who were initially passive became more courageous in asking and answering questions in front of the class. This behaviour change indicates an increase in self-confidence triggered by a supportive learning atmosphere. This activity not only triggers students' enthusiasm at the time, but also generates sustained interest in learning. Some students requested that the sentence ladder media remain available in the classroom so that they can practice outside of Arabic class hours.

The Arabic teacher at MIN 6 Padang City acknowledged that students' active participation in this activity was higher than in regular learning. Teachers believe that the use of creative media and gradual learning strategies makes learning Arabic seem easier to follow for students. This high enthusiasm also has an impact on increasing learning speed. Students can understand sentence patterns faster when they are directly involved in composing and presenting the results. This is in line with active learning theory which states that students' involvement in activities will accelerate concept understanding.

Overall, students' enthusiasm and participation in the Ladder Sentence Strategy activity at MIN 6 Padang City was at a very satisfactory level. This activity not only creates effective learning but also builds positive habits in learning Arabic. The active participation formed is expected to be maintained and enhanced through regular classroom learning.

Teachers' Responses and the Potential Sustainability of the Sentence Ladder Strategy

Teachers' responses to the implementation of the Sentence Ladder Strategy at MIN 6 Padang City were generally very positive. Teachers consider that this strategy provides a compelling new alternative in learning Arabic, especially for practising sentence construction skills. Previously, teachers tended to use the lecture method and written exercises, which were less interactive, so students quickly felt bored.

Teachers recognise that the Sentence Ladder Strategy is able to bridge the gap between students' vocabulary mastery and their skills in constructing correct sentences. The gradual method used in this strategy helps students understand the function of each word in the sentence, enabling them to form sentence structures more easily according to the rules of *nahwu* and *sharf*.

One of the things that teachers highlight is how the sentence ladder media can change the learning atmosphere to be more dynamic. Teachers assessed that the use of word cards that can be physically arranged on the board makes students feel like learning is like playing. This factor is believed to be the cause of increased student motivation during the activity. In the interview, the Arabic teacher stated that this method is relatively easy to reimplement in regular classes. The media used are simple and can be made by teachers themselves at low cost. Thus, the potential sustainability of this strategy is quite high as it does not require complicated resources.

Teachers also note that this strategy can be customised for different levels of students' abilities. For beginner students, the sentence ladder can be structured with a low level of difficulty. For more advanced students, the ladder can be extended with additional sentence elements, such as adjectives, adverbs, or compound clauses. Based on the results of the post-implementation evaluation, teachers provided assessments of several key aspects, including ease of implementation, effectiveness in improving students' skills, and potential for long-term use. A summary of the teacher's assessment results is presented in the following table:

Table 2. Teacher Assessment of the Sentence Ladder Strategy

Number	Assessment Aspect	Score (1-5)	Category
1	Ease of implementation in the classroom	5	Very Good
2	Effectiveness of improving student skills	4.8	Very Good
3	Suitability with curriculum material	4.7	Very Good
4	Student engagement in learning	5	Very Good
5	Potential for long-term use	4.9	Very Good

Table 2 shows that all aspects of the assessment received high scores from teachers, with an average score of 4.7 or higher. The highest scores are found in the elements of ease of implementation and student engagement, each getting a perfect score. This indicates that teachers view this strategy as both practical and effective in creating active learning. Although the aspect of suitability to the curriculum material scored slightly lower, it was still in the excellent category, indicating that this strategy is relevant to the learning outcomes set.

Teachers considered that the successful implementation of the Ladder Sentence Strategy at MIN 6 Padang City was also influenced by the mentoring factor from the service team. The training not only focuses on students, but also provides teachers with insight to develop materials independently in the future. The potential for sustainability of this strategy is even greater because the learning media used are flexible. Teachers can adjust the content of the word cards to the ongoing learning theme so that this method can be applied to various chapters of material in the Arabic curriculum.

Teachers also suggested that similar activities could be expanded to include lower-grade students, such as grades III and IV, with modifications to the level of difficulty. This indicates that teachers recognise the potential to develop this strategy into a sustainable, tiered learning program. In addition to the madrasah level, teachers argue that the Ladder Sentence Strategy can also be adapted for Arabic language learning in public schools that have Arabic local content. This adaptation will allow the method to reach more students with diverse ability backgrounds.

Overall, teachers' responses to the Ladder Sentence Strategy at MIN 6 Padang City were very positive, and the potential for sustainability is high. Ease of implementation, effectiveness, and simple media support make this strategy worthy of widespread adoption. With proper development, the Ladder Sentence Strategy can be one of the sustainable innovations in Arabic language learning and have a real impact on improving students' skills.

CONCLUSION

The implementation of Sentence Ladder Strategy at MIN 6 Padang City is proven to be effective in improving students' skills in constructing Arabic sentences gradually, expanding vocabulary acquisition, and fostering enthusiasm and active participation in learning. Simple media, such as sentence ladder boards and word cards, can create an interactive and fun learning atmosphere, encouraging student creativity. Teachers' very positive responses indicate that the strategy is easy to implement, relevant to the curriculum, and has high potential for sustainability. It is hoped that this strategy can be adopted sustainably by Arabic language teachers, adapted to various levels of student ability, and developed more widely in other schools or madrasahs so that the benefits can be felt more evenly.

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