Applied Linguistics – Exploring the Connection of Word-Card Games in Acquiring EFL with Islamic Perspectives

Kalayo Hasibuan^{1, a)}, Titania Bella Putri², Risa Maharani³

¹²³Universitas Islam Negeri Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau, Indonesia

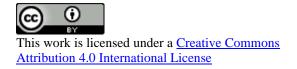
^{a)} kalayohasibuan@gmail.com

Abstract. This article explores the connection between word-card games and the acquisition of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) from an Islamic perspective. Word-card games have gained popularity as an effective tool for enhancing vocabulary acquisition, language skills, and learner interaction. Islamic education emphasizes holistic development, encompassing moral values and spiritual growth alongside intellectual pursuits. The use of word-card games in EFL instruction aligns with Islamic educational principles by creating an interactive and engaging learning environment that promotes active engagement, collaboration, ethics, and linguistic competence. This article highlights the significance of word-card games in EFL acquisition within an Islamic context, offering insights into the potential benefits and implications for educators. The integration of word-card games in EFL instruction can bridge the gap between language learning and Islamic values, empowering learners to develop language proficiency while embracing ethical conduct and character building. Further research is needed to explore the specific impacts and outcomes of word-card games within Islamic educators, with valuable guidance for designing culturally and spiritually

Keywords: Word-Card Game, Islamic Perspective, Vocabulary

Abstrak. Artikel ini mengeksplorasi hubungan antara permainan kartu kata dan penguasaan Bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa Asing (EFL) dari perspektif Islam. Permainan kartu kata telah mendapatkan popularitas sebagai alat yang efektif untuk meningkatkan perolehan kosa kata, keterampilan bahasa, dan interaksi pelajar. Pendidikan Islam menekankan pengembangan holistik, mencakup nilai-nilai moral dan pertumbuhan spiritual di samping upaya intelektual. Penggunaan permainan kartu kata dalam pengajaran EFL sejalan dengan prinsip-prinsip pendidikan Islam dengan menciptakan lingkungan belajar yang interaktif dan menarik yang mendorong keterlibatan aktif, kolaborasi, etika, dan kompetensi linguistik. Artikel ini menyoroti pentingnya permainan kartu kata dalam pengajaran EFL dapat menjembatani kesenjangan antara pembelajaran bahasa dan nilai-nilai Islam, memberdayakan pelajar untuk mengembangkan kemahiran bahasa sambil menerapkan perilaku etis dan pembangunan karakter. Penelitian lebih lanjut diperlukan untuk mengeksplorasi dampak dan hasil spesifik dari permainan kartu kata dalam pendidikan Islam, sehingga memberikan para pendidik panduan berharga untuk merancang pengalaman pembelajaran bahasa yang relevan secara budaya dan spiritual.

Kata kunci: Permainan Kartu Kata, Perspektif Islam, Kosakata



INTRODUCTION

Word-card games are kinds of games that play words in a certain language. Usually, this game concerns vocabulary and the meaning of it. Vocabulary is one of the most important aspects in learning a new language, a foreign language. There are many methods or steps in teaching or learning vocabulary, one of which is by using word cards (Humphrey, 2016).

Word cards or vocabulary cards are media that are used as useful learning tools containing keywords of the words to be learned. The word cards contain the level of difficulty according to the student's level, in the word cards there are pictures as a visual form for students to recognize pictures and vocabulary, this can provide benefits and students understand the use of words, meanings, and forms of speech from these cards (Nation, 2005). This word card game is very commonly used in learning as a form of media to help students understand in depth the language being studied. To use these word cards, students need to be given instructions on how to use and apply them to learn. The cards used must often be given different patterns so that learning becomes varied but time consuming (Sheridan, & Markslag, 2017). Students need to be actively involved in acquiring and maintaining vocabulary learned through word - card games, this might generate meaning within the learner so that they have the opportunity to be able to practice spoken or oral communication (listening and speaking skills).

There are many methods of learning vocabulary from reading to memorizing. Learning a foreign language, especially English, can frustrate learners if the appropriate strategy is not applied and it can be accepted by English as a foreign language (EFL) learners. The breadth of English vocabulary is estimated at 2400 high-frequency word families and unfortunately, many of the English books used by EFL students do not recycle this frequency vocabulary and it is possible that students rarely encounter these high-frequency words in their classes (Nation, 2005).

The success of word cards is a method of learning vocabulary that is done deliberately, this learning is to be able to help students actively remember the forms of words in a second language because each side is presented differently. New vocabulary is acquired through the use of word cards. Humphrey, (2016) argues that the results of research on vocabulary learned with word cards compared to vocabulary learned without word cards showed that word card words were learned better overall.

The challenges faced by teachers in teaching English today can be helped by using English learning word-card games. EFL learners experience difficulties in writing English sentences, especially the components of the language, namely vocabulary and grammar. Many do not have much mastery of vocabulary and the right words to use in constructing sentences properly. In this case, vocabulary becomes the main problem in learning foreign languages, especially English for

EFL learners. Learning English through word-card games is an alternative solution to this problem. It is expected that when students have adequate vocabulary and grammar, they can write proper English sentences. Word-card games can help with language learning goals, namely increasing EFL learners" proficiency in vocabulary and grammar. The more learners play games, the more they understand and use words to improve their vocabulary and grammar. Finally, game players can also collaborate to learn words, and scorers, who will give the correct answer from word cards, can help other players learn words.

DISCUSSIONS

A. The connection between word-card games and the acquisition of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) with Islamic perspectives

The connection between word-card games and the acquisition of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) with Islamic perspectives offers valuable insights into the potential benefits and implications for language educators. By examining the various dimensions of this connection, including active engagement, collaboration, ethics, and linguistic competence, we can gain a deeper understanding of how word-card games can align with Islamic educational principles and enhance the language learning experience.

One significant aspect of word-card games is their ability to promote active engagement among learners. Through the interactive nature of these games, students become active participants in the learning process, rather than passive recipients of information. This aligns with the Islamic concept of "ikhtiyar" (choice) and "ijtihad" (intellectual effort), which emphasize the individual's responsibility to actively seek knowledge and engage in personal development (Al-Attas, 1980). By actively engaging in word-card games, learners take ownership of their language learning journey, leading to increased motivation and deeper cognitive processing.

Collaboration and teamwork are inherent features of word-card games. Learners often engage in cooperative activities that require them to work together, share ideas, and support one another. This collaborative aspect resonates with Islamic teachings of cooperation and mutual support, fostering values of unity and collective progress (Yazit & Nordin, 2015). By participating in collaborative word-card games, learners develop not only their language components and skills but as well as their interpersonal and social competencies, creating a harmonious and inclusive learning environment. Ethics and morality play a significant role in Islamic education. Word-card games provide opportunities for learners to practice honesty, fairness, and integrity in their interactions. As students engage in friendly competition, they are encouraged to exhibit good sportsmanship, respect their peers, and demonstrate ethical conduct. Koln, (2012) argues that this also aligns with the Islamic principles of "adab" (manners) and "akhlaq" (morality). Through word-card games, learners are not only acquiring language skills but also internalizing and practicing moral values, leading to the holistic development of their characters.

Linguistic competence is a key goal in EFL instruction, and word-card games offer a platform for developing language proficiency. These games enhance vocabulary acquisition, grammatical knowledge, and language fluency. Linguistic competence is deeply rooted in Islamic teachings that emphasize effective expression and clarity in speech and writing (Hassan & Ahmed, 2020). By engaging in word-card games, learners have the opportunity to expand their vocabulary, reinforce grammatical structures, and develop fluency through meaningful language production. This linguistic competence enables learners to communicate effectively and confidently, aligning with both language learning objectives and Islamic educational goals.

In addition, the words in card games must be appropriate for age, language level and previous learning but must be slightly more difficult than the competency the student is aiming to train. Further, looking at the competence of students in the game, playing time must also be considered so that the game does not get bored and students can think quickly. Time is not too short and not too long. If it is s too short then it is not enough to be able to think fast and if it is too long then the game will feel boring. The purpose of the game is to excite the learners and play at the same time. Learners will be able to accept the game if it is positive, fun and expresses laughter so that the learning experience can be more attached to students. The game must be designed with a clear instruction language. These rules are to make the game run smoothly and correctly so that learners who play the game will play according to the same rules.

Word cards are designed precisely and correctly, in addition to language, word cards are formed with sizes that adjust both in terms of font, color, design, quality so that they are comfortable to look at while playing. In making these word cards, the language used as instruction must be based on the principles of language education. This principle will make quality word cards, fun, effective and meaningful. The word card maker must ensure that the word cards can help students improve the vocabulary they are learning. Second, the game designer must pay attention to the level of challenge used in the word cards. Word cards are designed not too easy and not too difficult for students. The game designer must make sure that the rules of the game will be enjoyable. The word card technique can be stored in the learners" memories for a long span of time, and learning target words can attract their attention and encourage them to be more active in learning. Therefore, the use of word cards can also increase motivation, vocabulary, and satisfaction by teachers and students themselves (Wagiu, 2011). Vocabulary cannot be taught but it can be explained by all kinds of activities experienced by the learners.

According to Nation (2001), the acquisition of vocabulary is crucial for proficiency in all language skills, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing, in both English as a second language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context. Neuman & Dwyer (2009) further support this notion by defining vocabulary as the words necessary for effective communication, encompassing both expressive/productive vocabulary (used in speaking) and receptive vocabulary (used in listening). So that, the acquisition of vocabulary is an essential aspect of language learning that students must prioritize. A solid vocabulary foundation facilitates the learning of the four language skills. Conversely, students may struggle with developing their language skills if they lack a sufficient vocabulary.

Bagwell (2010) asserts that word-card games used for vocabulary acquisition constitute to be an effective method for enhancing fundamental vocabulary skills. These card games utilize colorful word cards that depict everyday objects. The choice of word-card games is based on their ability to foster vocabulary development, allowing students to actively engage with both their existing knowledge and expand their vocabulary.

The competitive nature of word-card games adds an element of excitement and motivation to the language learning process. Learners are encouraged to compete against their peers, creating a stimulating environment that fosters engagement and active participation. Moreover, the collaborative aspect of these games promotes teamwork, cooperation, and mutual support among learners (Gu, 2018). This collaborative approach aligns with the principles of Islamic education, which emphasizes the values of "ukhuwwah" (brotherhood) and "ta'awun" (cooperation), fostering a sense of unity and collective responsibility.

Islamic education places significant emphasis on the holistic development of individuals, incorporating moral values and spiritual growth alongside intellectual pursuits (Abu-Tineh, 2021). In an Islamic framework, language learning is not limited to mere linguistic competence but also encompasses the nurturing of ethical conduct and character building. The use of word- card games in EFL instruction can align with Islamic educational principles by creating a supportive and interactive learning environment that encourages positive social interaction, ethical behavior, and language proficiency.

The connection between word-card games and Islamic perspectives in EFL instruction can be explored through various dimensions. Firstly, the active engagement promoted by word- card games aligns with the Islamic concept of "ikhtiyar" (choice) and "ijtihad" (intellectual effort), which emphasizes the individual's responsibility to actively seek knowledge and engage in personal development (Al-Attas, 1980). Secondly, the collaboration and cooperation inherent in word-card games resonate with Islamic teachings of cooperation and mutual support, fostering values of unity and collective progress (Yazit & Nordin, 2015). Additionally, word-card games provide opportunities for learners to practice honesty, fairness, and integrity in their interactions, aligning with the Islamic principles of "adab" (manners) and "akhlaq" (morality) (Koln, 2012). Lastly, word card games contribute to the development of linguistic competence, a value deeply rooted in Islamic teachings that emphasize effective expression and clarity in speech and writing (Hassan & Ahmed, 2020).

A word-card game typically consists of a deck of cards that can be purchased or created by the teacher. Furthermore, word-card games are enjoyable activities. One of the word-card games is shown in Picture 1 "English and Arabic Words Playing Cards designed and produced by Kalayo Hasibuan (Property Rights, 2023)".

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Picture 1: A Copy of Property Rights "English and Arabic Words Playing Cards"

The English and Arabic Words Playing Cards can be seen and reviewed below. The cards are designed with colorful pictures. The words are written in English and Arabic equipped with their sounds/pronunciations. The following word-card game instructions are performed:

1. Cards are distributed randomly to students.

2. Cards collected by the players with letters A, B, C put them in front of the class on the table.

3. The game starts with card A. In card A, there is an opening sentence using Arabic writing, English numbers and Arabic number 1.

4. The game begins with the player having the card with the answer greeting can collect cards overlapping the first greeting card. It can be seen that on the second card, there are greeting words, English vocabulary, Arabic vocabulary written with Airplane vocabulary.

5. The game continues by looking for the owner of the airplane picture card and then collecting it in front of the pile of previous cards, the owner of the airplane card looks for the owner of the card with the vocabulary on the card according to the vocabulary written.

6. This game is continued until cards A, B, and C run out with the flow of cards that have written vocabulary looking for picture cards that match the vocabulary mentioned.

7. Cards consist of different pictures and vocabulary so players have to find the appropriate picture in their card by collecting it in front and stacking it with the card that becomes the partner.

8. Picture word-card A, B, and C are attached.

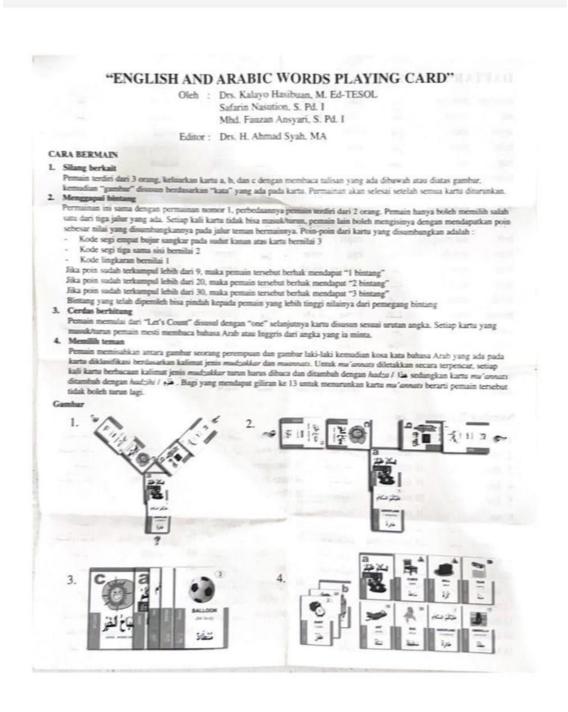
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How the English and Arabic Words Playing Cards are played is shown through the pictures below.



Picture 2: Players are playing the word-card games

Picture 3: The Manual of Playing the Word-Card Games



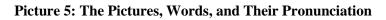
Through the English and Arabic Words Playing Card Game, words or vocabularies of the two most important languages in the world, namely English and Arabic are combined. In the picture above we can see how the steps are in playing, what are the meanings of the cards and how the cards are arranged.



Picture 4: The Design of Pictures Denoting meaning Words in English and Arabic

In the picture, above we can see the word-card design. It seems that it can be understood easily. There are English and Arabic vocabulary. Arabic is very important in the Islamic world. The introduction of these two languages can help students know the vocabulary of both languages simultaneously. Even though this vocabulary game is intentional, students will develop their way of thinking with the card because there is an image design in it to explain the word to be searched for on other cards, and the available vocabulary can be pronounced because there is a guide on how to pronounce it on the card. The vocabulary used can also be understood by students because these objects are around students.

More explanation about how the English and Arabic Words Playing Card are played is shown in Picture 5.













The card above is a continuation of the vocabulary game. This game is very fun because students will be enthusiastic in playing the game. The Hijaiyah (Arabic letter) in the card game is equipped with vocabulary will enable to attract children's attention so that learning activities are more effective so that it has an effect on increasing the ability to recognize Arabic vocabulary, especially the Arabic vocabulary on the card.

Picture 6: List of Words attached in English and Arabic Words Playing Card Game

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The picture above is a list of vocabulary that can be seen from all the cards. From the dictionary of the words used in the word-card games, students with the teachers can correct students" speech, or see if the game is done correctly according to the order of the vocabulary and pictures intended. this game can be used to teach vocabulary in teaching vocabulary or Mufradat in Arabic, but teachers in Arabic rarely use it because they do not know it can be used as a medium to wake up the neurons and relax the mind so it can work best (Khalilullah, 2012).

According to Harmer (2007), pictures serve as valuable aids in a wide range of communication activities, particularly when incorporated into games. By engaging in games, all students actively participate in the teaching and learning process, working together as a team to understand the content, and compete in the games. Games and pictures not only capture students" interest but also surpass the traditional approach of solely reading books and memorizing new vocabulary. Teachers have the opportunity to design games that facilitate the English learning objectives. These games can be tailored to different activities and subject matters, such as enhancing vocabulary acquisition and improving pronunciation skills.

Arabic has extraordinary characteristics and difficulties, so a quality learning approach, foundation, and model is needed. Various ways to learn Arabic are discussed in this paper. The language is considered to be used actively, so students are given many opportunities to express their feelings in Arabic. In addition, there is a foundation needed to develop appropriate learning methods that allow us to map materials such as priority, accuracy, gradation, motivation, and stabilization.

B. Playing Word Cards Can Benefit for Practice a Foreign Language with an Islamic Perspective

Word-card games have been found to be effective in providing children with an opportunity to practice the target language (a foreign language) they are learning, as they serve as models for the language that learners will encounter in real-life situations (Zdybiewska, as cited in Uberman, (2002). In line with this perspective, Kim (1995:35) outlines six advantages of incorporating language games in the classroom:

- 1. Games are motivating and challenging, capturing students' interest and enthusiasm.
- 2. Games offer a refreshing break from the routine of language classes.
- 3. Games assist students in maintaining their learning efforts over time.
- 4. Games provide practice in various language skills and promote their integration.
- 5. Games foster interaction and communication among students.

6. Games create a meaningful context for students to apply the language they are learning.

Thus, using word-card games in language learning proves to be an effective approach due to its motivational nature, ability to break the monotony of traditional lessons, and promotion of holistic language development through interactive and meaningful activities.

Besides that, there is relationship between word-card games and syllabus for English subject can vary depending on the context and the specific educational goals. Those are:

1. Vocabulary Building: Word-card games can be used as a fun and interactive way to enhance vocabulary skills. Teacher can help students learn new words, meaning, and how to uses them in sentences. Incorporating word-card games into the syllabus can be an effective strategy for vocabulary acquisition

2. Language Practice: Playing word-card games can provide students with opportunities to practice different aspects of language, such as spelling, grammar, and syntax. By incorporating these games into the syllabus, teacher can create engaging activities that promote language practice and reinforcement.

3. Review and Reinforcement: Word-card games can be utilized as a review tool to reinforce previously learned material. By incorporating specific vocabulary or concepts from the syllabus into the game, students can revisit and solidify students understanding of the topics covered in class.

4. Contextual Learning: Word-card games facilitate contextual learning by presenting words or phrases within a specific context. This approach helps students understand the practical usage of words, student relationships, and student meanings. Integrating such games into the syllabus can enhance comprehension and retention of the material.

5. Critical Thinking and Problem-solving: Certain word-card games, such as word puzzle can stimulate critical thinking and problem-solving skills. These games encourage students to think creatively and strategically to solve linguistic challenges. Including such activities in the syllabus can foster cognitive development and enhance language skills.

Allah Taʿʿala says, not only Arabic, but other languages including English has to be learned by for mankind. Qurʿʿan in Surah Ibrahim verse 4, Allah states as follows:

Meaning (https://quran.com/ibrahim/4): "We have not sent a messenger except in the language of his people to clarify 'the message' for them. Then Allah leaves whoever He wills to stray and guides whoever He wills. And He is the Almighty, All-Wise".

Terjemahan : "Dan Kami tidak mengutus seorang rasul pun, melainkan dengan bahasa kaumnya, agar dia dapat memberi penjelasan kepada mereka. Maka Allah menyesatkan siapa yang Dia kehendaki, dan memberi petunjuk kepada siapa yang Dia kehendaki. Dia Yang Mahaperkasa, Mahabijaksana" [QS. Ibrahim: 4).

It can be understood that Allah and the Prophet also ordered the ummah to learn other languages because there are benefits that can be of benefit if learned and good wisdom is taken. Learning a foreign language is also a medium for preaching to mankind, in this case it can facilitate the delivery of Da"wah to people who do not understand Arabic.

Playing word-card games in English with an Islamic perspective can offer several benefits:

1. Language Proficiency: Engaging in word-card games enhances English language skills, including vocabulary expansion, improved spelling and grammar, and enhanced communication abilities. This is especially beneficial for individuals in multicultural or English-speaking environments.

2. Islamic Knowledge: Word-card games with Islamic themes deepen players' understanding of Islam. By interacting with Islamic vocabulary, concepts, teachings, and historical events, players can enhance their knowledge of Qur" anic verses and moral values.

3. Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving: Word-card games often require strategic thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills. By incorporating an Islamic perspective, players can apply critical thinking abilities to analyze and interpret Islamic concepts, fostering connections between different elements of the faith.

4. Moral Development: Word-card games in English, focused around Islamic themes, reinforce and promote moral values and ethical behavior. By integrating Islamic teachings into the game, players can reflect upon and internalize virtues such as honesty, compassion, justice, and patience.

5. Cultural Exchange and Understanding: Playing word-card games in English facilitates interaction among individuals from diverse backgrounds, fostering cultural exchange, understanding, and appreciation. Players can share their perspectives, experiences, and interpretations of Islamic concepts, leading to mutual learning and growth.

6. Interactive Learning: Word-card games provide an interactive and engaging learning experience, making the process enjoyable and encouraging active participation, which leads to

better retention of information. Incorporating Islamic themes into the games adds relevance and meaning to the learning experience for players.

In Islamic principles, students are allowed to engage in word card games in English, provided that the content and themes of the games conform to Islamic values. Islam emphasizes the importance of seeking knowledge and utilizing beneficial means to participate in educational endeavors.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, in an Islamic perspective, understanding and learning foreign languages can facilitate work, da'wah, and the dissemination of information widely because it is not only the language used, but there are benefits behind learning other languages. With the help of word cards which contain vocabulary covering both languages, this can help students learn Arabic and English words and sentences. Word cards are very beneficial for students and teachers. For students to understand new vocabulary with fun, meaningful learning methods and will be remembered for a long time because there are activities in it. For teachers, this can facilitate the delivery of learning because the method is easy, fun and not word card media is not difficult to find nowadays.

DAFTAR RUJUKAN

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