



Reimagining Arabic Language Instruction Through Visual Wall Charts: Insights from an Indonesian Madrasah Experience

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Abstract

Background of study: The teaching of Arabic in Indonesian schools often encounters difficulties, particularly in capturing students' interest and helping them understand the material. These problems are closely tied to the language's perceived complexity and the lack of interactive media in the classroom.

Aims and scope of paper: This study set out to explore how wall chart media "simple yet visually engaging tools" can support the Arabic learning process. Specifically, it examined whether these visual aids could foster greater student motivation, enhance understanding, and encourage participation during lessons.

Methods: A qualitative case study was conducted at MA NU 03 Sunan Katong. The data were gathered through direct classroom observations, teacher and student interviews, and documentation review. Thematic analysis was applied to identify meaningful patterns, supported by source triangulation for credibility.

Result: The study revealed that students responded positively to the use of wall charts. They felt more involved in learning activities, and complex topics became easier to grasp through clear visual explanations. Teachers also reported smoother lesson delivery and livelier classroom interactions. Academic outcomes showed noticeable improvement when wall charts were integrated into teaching.

Conclusion: Wall charts offer a practical and effective solution for improving Arabic language instruction, particularly in settings where resources are limited. Beyond their educational value, these visual tools contribute to a more vibrant and student-centered learning environment.

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INTRODUCTION

Arabic holds a central role in Islamic education across Indonesia, as it is not only a school subject but also the sacred language of worship. Despite this significance, Arabic is often viewed as one of the most difficult subjects by students in madrasahs. Its unfamiliar structure and limited everyday use make it less approachable for many learners. As a result, students often feel disconnected from the material, and their motivation to learn gradually declines (Branchu & Flaureau, 2022; Capone & Lepore, 2022). These challenges are further exacerbated by conventional teaching practices that still dominate many classrooms. The frequent use of lectures and rote memorization has not proven sufficient in helping students fully grasp the language. In most cases, learning becomes passive and monotonous. These conditions call for new approaches that can make Arabic learning more relevant and engaging (Mohamed Hashim et al., 2022; Ritonga et al., 2022).

In response to these concerns, educators have begun to explore alternative strategies to bridge the gap between teacher delivery and student understanding. One such strategy involves the use of instructional media to support the learning process. Among various types of media, visual tools have received growing attention, particularly for language learning (Zhang & Zou, 2022b, 2022a). Visual media offer learners a concrete way to connect with abstract language concepts. For instance, charts,

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illustrations, and graphic organizers can help break down complex ideas into manageable parts (Castro-Alonso et al., 2021; Tian et al., 2025). These tools also cater to different learning styles, especially for visual and kinesthetic learners. When used effectively, they can transform the classroom into a more dynamic and participatory space. Visual media do not merely decorate the classroom—they serve as cognitive scaffolds that support deeper learning.

One of the simplest yet impactful visual tools is the wall chart. These charts, often displayed prominently in classrooms, contain essential information presented in a visually organized manner (Haynes-Brown & Fetters, 2021; Schraw & Richmond, 2022). Wall charts are practical, affordable, and easy to adapt for different subject areas, including language instruction. In Arabic learning, they can display key vocabulary, grammar structures, or conversational patterns. Their visibility makes them constantly available for student reference, reinforcing learning over time (Haynes-Brown & Fetters, 2021; Yang et al., 2021). Additionally, wall charts encourage group interaction when used in collaborative tasks or presentations. This combination of visual clarity and interactivity has the potential to make Arabic learning more accessible and meaningful. However, the implementation of such tools in actual classrooms is still under-documented in academic research.

Although several studies have highlighted the benefits of visual aids in general, little has been written about the specific role of wall charts in Arabic language teaching in Indonesian contexts. This is particularly important as madrasahs vary widely in resources and instructional practices. In some schools, teachers must rely on creativity rather than technology to enhance their lessons (ElSayary, 2024; Tang, 2022). Wall charts, as low-tech but high-impact tools, provide an excellent starting point. Still, there is a need to explore how these tools are used in real classrooms—what works, what doesn't, and how students respond. Without such insights, discussions about media use risk remaining theoretical. To move forward, more grounded, practice-based evidence is required (Hamm et al., 2025; Sherwood, 2024). This study responds to that need.

In one Indonesian madrasah, a group of teachers introduced wall charts into Arabic lessons in an effort to address declining student interest. These charts were designed collaboratively and tailored to the learning goals of each unit. They included illustrations, Arabic terms, and colorful designs to attract students' attention. Early observations indicated that students began to refer to the charts during class, even without teacher prompts (Powell & Courchesne, 2024; Woo et al., 2025). This spontaneous engagement suggested a shift in how students approached the material. Teachers also reported that lesson delivery felt more fluid and less repetitive (Kabilan & Annamalai, 2022). Rather than explaining the same content repeatedly, they could point to the chart as a shared reference. This simple change helped open up space for more meaningful interactions in the classroom.

Student responses were equally revealing. Many of them expressed that the wall charts made the material easier to understand. Some students said they felt more comfortable participating in class, especially during discussions (Howell, 2021). Others appreciated having something to look at that could remind them of previous lessons. In particular, visual learners benefited from the colorful and organized layout of the charts. It helped them remember vocabulary and grammar rules more clearly. Meanwhile, group activities centered around the charts fostered peer interaction and reduced anxiety. The overall classroom atmosphere became more active and student-driven (Rasa et al., 2025). These early results pointed to the value of further examining wall chart implementation as an instructional strategy.

While these findings are promising, it is important not to overstate the impact of one medium alone. Wall charts are not a cure-all for the challenges of Arabic instruction. They must be integrated thoughtfully, aligned with learning goals, and supported by active pedagogy (Børte & Lillejord, 2024; Fields et al., 2021). Their effectiveness also depends on how well they resonate with students' needs and classroom dynamics. Moreover, the process of designing and using wall charts must be

sustainable for teachers. This includes access to materials, time for preparation, and support from school leadership. Only when these factors are considered can wall charts move from occasional decorations to meaningful learning tools. Hence, understanding the conditions that support or hinder their use is a vital part of this study (Kierans & Taylor, 2021; Luo et al., 2022).

In light of these considerations, this research explores how wall charts are implemented in Arabic language instruction at MA NU 03 Sunan Katong. It examines both teacher and student perspectives to understand the media's strengths and limitations in practice (Dumitrica & Jarmula, 2022). The study also investigates how the use of wall charts affects student engagement, motivation, and learning outcomes. Through qualitative methods such as classroom observation, interviews, and documentation analysis, this research seeks to provide a rich and grounded understanding of visual media in context. Ultimately, the goal is to offer practical insights for educators who are looking for effective, low-cost ways to improve their teaching. By doing so, this study contributes not only to Arabic pedagogy but also to broader discussions on instructional innovation in religious education (Kolb, 2023; Memon et al., 2021).

Recent studies emphasize the growing need for more interactive and meaningful Arabic language learning. Moyo et al. (2024) believes traditional, rigid methods no longer meet students' needs and calls for tools that speak to learners directly. Eraydin & Buran (2025) point out how students' identity and sense of belonging influence how they perceive language learning. Visual tools, as Hameed & Al-Khateeb (2024) suggest, help simplify difficult texts and support comprehension. Shehata (2024) found learners gained confidence when visual cues supported pronunciation. Similarly, Nedjar & M'hamedi (2024) show that hands-on, visual strategies make language learning more accessible, especially for special groups. Mazari et al. (2024) prove how multimodal input deepens understanding of language structure. Alayed (2024) supports this by highlighting the lasting role of visual learning across a decade of Arabic education research. Boudad et al. (2023) reveal that emotional and dialectal nuance in Arabic becomes clearer when presented visually. Abdelsamie et al. (2024) agree repetition through visual material boosts mastery. Altogether, these insights support the use of wall charts in class. Simple but powerful, they help students connect, stay engaged, and make sense of the language.

Although Arabic is widely taught in madrasahs across Indonesia, many instructional practices still rely heavily on conventional lectures and rote memorization. Meanwhile, the use of media has been largely discussed in language learning, but often in the context of advanced digital technology or online learning. Little attention has been paid to simple, low-tech tools like wall charts, particularly in classroom-based Arabic instruction. While some studies highlight the benefits of visual learning in general, few have explored how such tools function in real madrasah settings, where resources are limited, and teaching relies more on creativity than technology. The interaction between visual media and student motivation also remains underrepresented in Arabic pedagogy research. In addition, previous works rarely examine how different learning styles respond to printed visual aids like wall charts. This leaves a gap in both theory and practice regarding accessible instructional methods in Arabic language education.

Arabic is often seen as difficult by students, especially because it is not used in daily life and contains structures that are unfamiliar to most Indonesian learners. Many students lose interest when instruction feels abstract or disconnected from their experiences. At the same time, teachers are expected to find ways to make lessons more engaging, even when working with limited tools. Wall charts may seem basic, but their visual nature and potential for interaction make them worth exploring. They offer a practical way to simplify complex ideas and keep students focused on key points. By involving students in the creation or use of these charts, learning becomes more active and memorable. Despite their potential, wall charts are rarely studied in depth, especially in Arabic

classrooms. This study is rooted in a real classroom setting, aiming to better understand how wall charts can support teaching and learning in meaningful ways.

This study sets out to examine how wall chart media are used in the teaching of Arabic in an Indonesian madrasah. It aims to understand whether these tools can help students learn more effectively and feel more motivated in the classroom. The research looks at how wall charts affect not only student comprehension but also participation and classroom atmosphere. It also explores how teachers perceive the usefulness and limitations of wall charts in their practice. The goal is to provide a grounded picture of how a simple teaching tool might make a real difference in Arabic instruction. More broadly, this study seeks to offer insights for educators who are looking for affordable, adaptable, and student-friendly strategies. By documenting classroom experiences, it hopes to contribute to the ongoing effort to improve Arabic language learning in ways that are both practical and impactful.

METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative approach using a case study design. This approach was chosen because it enables the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of how wall chart media is implemented in actual Arabic language classroom instruction. The case study design allows for a contextual exploration of teaching practices, examining the processes and dynamics that occur within the classroom. The main focus is not only on learning outcomes but also on students' experiences, teacher strategies, and the interactions that emerge during the use of the media. This design allows the researcher to observe directly how the wall chart is utilized, how students respond, as well as the challenges and advantages encountered in daily practice. The study was conducted over the course of one semester, allowing changes to be observed gradually and naturally. This approach also provides flexibility in gathering data from multiple sources to enhance the validity of the findings.

Participants

The subjects of this study were one Arabic language teacher and 33 tenth-grade students at a madrasah in Indonesia. This class was selected because the teacher had been actively using wall chart media since the beginning of the semester. The students came from diverse backgrounds in terms of academic ability and learning styles, offering a rich variety of data. The participating teacher was a permanent staff member with experience in managing classes and developing Arabic language instructional materials. Student participation was voluntary, and they were informed of the research objectives and assured confidentiality. The direct involvement of both the teacher and students provided an authentic depiction of the process and impact of using wall charts in teaching and learning activities.

Instruments

To collect comprehensive data, the researcher employed three main instruments: classroom observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. Observations were conducted directly in the classroom, recording how the wall chart media was used in delivering material, how students interacted with it, and how the learning atmosphere was shaped. Interviews were conducted with the teacher and selected students to gain deeper insights into their perspectives and experiences. Questions were formulated flexibly to allow respondents to express their views openly. In addition, supporting documents were collected, including lesson plans, visual media used, and student work related to the use of wall charts. This triangulation approach was intended to strengthen the validity and depth of the information gathered.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's qualitative analysis model, which includes three main stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. In the first stage, raw data from field notes, interview transcripts, and documents were organized and selected based on the research focus. Subsequently, the data were presented in the form of matrices and narratives to help the researcher identify patterns and relationships among the information. Codes and themes were developed inductively from the existing data, reflecting naturally emerging phenomena in the field. Preliminary findings were discussed collaboratively among researchers to obtain sharper and more objective interpretations. The final stage involved drawing conclusions based on consistent patterns supported by data from multiple sources. This process was conducted systematically to ensure that the results genuinely reflected the realities observed in the field.

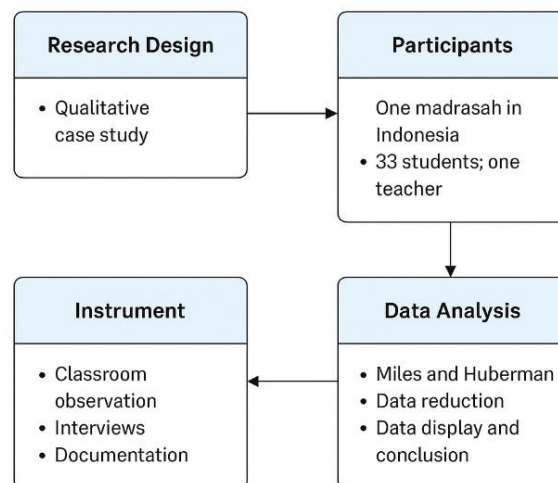


Figure 1. Flowchart of Research Methodology in the Implementation of Wall Chart Media in Arabic Language Learning.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The implementation of wall chart media in Arabic language lessons brought noticeable changes to the way students engaged with the material. During the observation period, students in Class X-D at MA NU 03 Sunan Katong were seen responding more actively to learning activities when wall charts were part of the lesson. Unlike the traditional lecture format that often made students passive, the use of visual aids encouraged them to ask questions, contribute during group discussions, and follow along more attentively. Complex topics such as sentence structure and vocabulary appeared less intimidating when presented through diagrams and visual layouts. In addition to capturing attention, the wall charts supported learning by giving students something tangible to refer to during activities. Many students relied on the wall charts to recall vocabulary and grammar rules, especially when preparing answers or presentations. Several students, when interviewed, shared that they felt more confident when learning with visual aids. The charts not only helped them understand the content but also served as a guide during collaborative exercises. Tasks like envelope-based sentence analysis became more structured, as students could visually organize their ideas and present them with clarity. From the teacher's perspective, the wall charts proved to be a helpful instructional tool. Instead of repeating the same explanation multiple times, the teacher could point to a visual summary of the material. This saved time and created more space for interaction. Lessons became more student-driven, with learners actively interpreting the information presented on the charts. The wall charts were also used as part of assessment tasks, where students were asked to engage with the content by solving challenges or summarizing key points from the charts.

To better understand the impact of wall chart use, student learning outcomes were reviewed. Compared to earlier lessons without media, the average performance improved. Students achieved higher scores on post-lesson evaluations, and their responses demonstrated better comprehension. The following figure illustrates this development across five core learning areas:

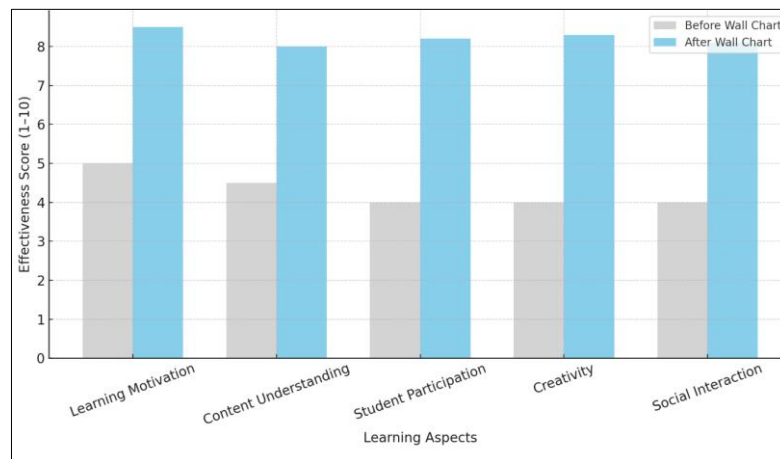


Figure 2. Effectiveness of Wall Chart Media in Arabic Language Learning

The bar chart compares five aspects of the learning process—motivation, comprehension, participation, creativity, and social interaction—before and after the use of wall charts. As shown in the figure, each category experienced a meaningful increase. For example, student motivation, initially low, rose substantially when visual aids were introduced. Creativity and classroom participation also improved as students became more involved in discussions and group tasks.

Discussion

The results of this study underscore how wall chart media can serve as a practical yet powerful instructional tool in Arabic language learning. Observations showed that students responded with greater interest and enthusiasm when lessons were reinforced with visuals. This aligns with Shehata (2022) who emphasized the role of visual cues in helping learners internalize pronunciation and develop clarity. Similarly, Moyo (2021) advocated for pedagogical shifts that center on learner engagement, especially in traditionally rigid classrooms. In this study, wall charts were not merely decorative aids—they were structured, meaningful, and integrated into the core of each lesson. By turning complex linguistic structures into visual forms, students were able to comprehend abstract ideas more easily. As Hameed and Al-Khateeb (2023) noted, when learners face difficult grammar patterns, graphic supports reduce confusion and enhance focus. Through this transformation, Arabic language instruction became more accessible and less intimidating. The simplicity of the charts belied their cognitive impact. Motivationally, the use of wall charts encouraged students to be more present and invested in their learning process. When educational content feels relevant and understandable, learners are more likely to participate, as explained by Eraydin and Buran (2023). In our case, visual learning tools provided that relevance, turning Arabic vocabulary into something concrete and memorable. This emotional connection to the material created a more positive atmosphere in the classroom.

Peer collaboration further strengthened this process, as students supported one another in interpreting and applying the content. Boudad et al. (2022) found similar results, where visually contextualized resources increased cultural resonance and cognitive engagement. In this study, charts sparked genuine interest and inspired students to discuss language topics without prompting. This shift from passive reception to active interpretation contributed to improved language retention. It also validated students' diverse ways of learning, making the classroom feel inclusive and responsive. Teachers, too, experienced benefits from incorporating wall charts into their

instructional routines. Instead of constantly repeating explanations, they could refer students to charts that captured core concepts at a glance. This efficiency was particularly helpful in large or mixed-ability classrooms. Abdelsamie, Azab, and Hefny (2023) argued that repeated exposure to visual representations leads to better structural mastery, a claim supported by our field observations. Alayed (2021) also stressed that visual strategies in Arabic sign language instruction improved independence and retention. Our findings complement this by showing how visual aids support autonomy even among hearing students. Wall charts gave teachers more flexibility to adapt instruction in real time. They could assess student understanding based on how learners interacted with the visuals. This shift in instructional control encouraged a more dialogic and flexible learning culture. Teachers transitioned from being content transmitters to facilitators of inquiry. Importantly, wall charts were found to support not just academic skills, but also students' interpersonal and intrapersonal development. As learners constructed and presented information from the charts, they developed confidence, teamwork, and critical thinking. Nedjar and M'hamedi (2024) underscored the value of inclusive visuals in promoting student agency, especially for learners with varying needs. Although their work focused on specialized populations, the pedagogical principle carries over. Our students engaged in meaningful dialogue, shared interpretations, and built group-based understandings of Arabic rules.

The charts created a shared cognitive space where learners could build on each other's insights. Through this, they practiced leadership, listening, and language skills simultaneously. These interactions made language learning feel more authentic and socially grounded. Such outcomes show that wall charts contribute to whole-person education—not just rote memorization of forms. From a differentiated instruction standpoint, the media's success across learning styles was evident. Visual learners benefited from spatial and color cues, while kinesthetic learners thrived during physical manipulation of materials. Even auditory learners were supported indirectly, as wall chart discussions stimulated verbal exchanges and explanation. This reflects findings by Mazari et al. (2022), who emphasized the value of multimodal environments for deeper comprehension. Instead of designing separate lessons for each type of learner, the wall chart created a unified framework that addressed multiple modalities at once. Students noted that the visual references helped them recall key terms and grammar rules more effectively. The integration of movement, speech, and imagery provided cognitive reinforcement. This intersection of modalities created a richer, more inclusive learning experience. Wall charts, therefore, can be considered a bridge between learning diversity and instructional efficiency. Unlike digital tools, wall charts are cost-effective and easy to implement, especially in resource-limited environments. This low-tech solution does not require electricity, internet, or expensive devices—just pedagogical intention and creativity. Teachers in this study were able to design and produce charts with local materials, making them practical and replicable. This aligns with the views of Khoudja et al. (2023), who emphasized the power of simple prompt-based tools in learner-centered settings. Furthermore, students were invited to contribute to the design and updating of the charts. This participatory approach enhanced ownership and motivation. Learners felt proud when their input became a visible part of the classroom.

The physical presence of the charts also helped maintain continuity, as key lessons remained on display throughout the unit. All of this contributed to an instructional environment that was both flexible and grounded. Despite these strengths, the study acknowledges some limitations. Wall charts, if not updated regularly, risk becoming stagnant or overlooked. Teachers must dedicate time to designing effective visuals that are clear, accurate, and pedagogically aligned. In large or poorly designed classrooms, positioning and visibility may also limit their usefulness. Nonetheless, these limitations are manageable with thoughtful planning. Teachers can rotate chart content, involve students in updates, and link visuals to active tasks. These strategies preserve the novelty and relevance of the media. As several researchers suggest, including Shehata (2022) and Alayed (2021),

visuals must be integrated intentionally, not superficially. In our study, even small adjustments—like using student handwriting or colorful layout—made a noticeable difference in student engagement. With continued refinement, the use of wall charts can become a sustainable part of instructional design. From a broader pedagogical lens, this study supports the argument that visual planning should be a central part of curriculum development. Often, visuals are treated as secondary or supplementary to text-based content. However, as our findings show, carefully designed visuals can serve as scaffolds for complex thinking. Mazari et al. (2022) and Shehata (2022) both emphasized the cognitive benefits of long-term exposure to structured visuals. In Arabic learning, where syntax and morphology can feel overwhelming, visual cues offer relief and structure.

Wall charts helped demystify these patterns by laying them out in digestible chunks. Their impact was not in decoration but in interpretation—guiding learners to see how language works. For this reason, future lesson plans should incorporate visual targets alongside cognitive objectives. Doing so encourages both understanding and retention. In summary, the use of wall charts in Arabic classrooms demonstrated multiple benefits: improved engagement, deeper comprehension, increased collaboration, and heightened motivation. These findings are in line with the works of Moyo (2021), Boudad et al. (2022), and Hameed and Al-Khateeb (2023), who collectively emphasize the value of adaptive and inclusive instruction. Wall charts are inexpensive, effective, and scalable, making them a viable option for diverse educational contexts. By promoting student-centered, multimodal, and collaborative learning, they transform classrooms into spaces where language becomes visible, navigable, and meaningful. As education continues to evolve, it is important to remember that some of the most impactful innovations are also the simplest. Wall charts, in their humble form, provide a powerful reminder that clarity, creativity, and connection are the heart of effective teaching.

Implications

The results of this study present several meaningful implications for language educators and instructional designers, particularly within Arabic language teaching. First, the effective use of wall chart media reinforces the idea that impactful teaching strategies do not always require advanced technology. Simple, well-designed visual tools can significantly improve student engagement and comprehension. This finding encourages teachers, especially in resource-limited contexts, to explore creative low-tech options without feeling disadvantaged by the lack of digital tools. Second, the integration of wall charts offers a tangible pathway for implementing student-centered learning. By allowing students to interact with and even co-create visual content, teachers can foster greater ownership and autonomy in the learning process. Third, the success of wall charts in this study supports the broader movement toward multimodal instruction, where visuals are treated not as extras but as essential scaffolds for understanding complex material. This approach has the potential to benefit a wide range of learners and can be adapted across subjects beyond Arabic.

Limitations

While the findings are promising, this study is not without its limitations. It was conducted in a single madrasah setting, which means the results may not fully represent the experiences of students in different institutions or cultural contexts. The study relied primarily on qualitative data, such as observations and interviews, which, while rich in narrative detail, lack the measurable precision of quantitative analysis. Additionally, the research focused on a relatively short implementation period. Long-term effects—such as whether the observed improvements in motivation and comprehension are sustained over time—remain unexplored. Another limitation concerns the variability in wall chart design. Since the charts were created by teachers using local resources, the quality and clarity of the media could vary significantly depending on each teacher's skill, time, and access to materials. Furthermore, student responses may have been influenced by novelty, meaning the excitement around a new method might not persist over longer durations.

Suggestions

In light of the above, several recommendations can be made. Future research should adopt a mixed-methods approach to provide a more comprehensive picture of the effectiveness of wall charts, combining classroom observation with test scores and student surveys. Expanding the scope of study to include multiple schools or regions would help validate whether the benefits observed here are widely applicable. Researchers might also consider tracking student performance over a semester or academic year to assess the long-term value of visual media in learning Arabic. From a practical standpoint, schools should support teachers in developing visual materials by offering workshops or design tools that make chart creation easier and more effective. Involving students in the design of wall charts could also be a powerful way to increase engagement and creative expression. Lastly, educators may explore blending traditional visuals with simple digital enhancements, such as QR codes or augmented content, to create more interactive learning environments that remain accessible and affordable.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this research reaffirm the value of using simple, visual-based learning tools—such as wall charts—to improve student engagement and understanding in Arabic language classrooms. In a context where traditional teaching methods often dominate and where access to technology may be limited, wall charts proved to be an effective alternative for fostering more active and inclusive learning. Their visual structure helped students break down complex grammar rules and vocabulary into manageable, memorable parts. At the same time, the use of wall charts opened new spaces for interaction, creativity, and student participation. Teachers found them helpful for maintaining lesson flow, reducing repetition, and promoting student autonomy. While wall charts may appear modest in form, their thoughtful application brought meaningful change to the classroom environment. This study demonstrates that innovation in education does not always require advanced tools—sometimes, a well-placed visual can make a language come alive. Moving forward, such strategies deserve wider attention and thoughtful adaptation across various learning contexts.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

Nur Laila Azizah served as the lead author who designed the study, conducted classroom observations, collected and analyzed the data, and drafted the manuscript.

Luthfiyah Khoirun Nisa contributed significantly to the fieldwork by supporting data collection through interviews and documentation, as well as assisting in validating the findings.

Naifah as the supervising lecturer, provided guidance throughout the research process, including the conceptual framework, research methodology, and critical revisions to the manuscript for academic quality and clarity.

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