RESEARCH ARTICLE

READABILITY LEVEL OF THE ARABIC LANGUAGE TEXTBOOK OF DIPLOMA TAHFIZ AL-QURAN & AL-QIRAAT DARUL QURAN JAKIM

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Manuscript Info	Abstract

Textbooks, or special reference books for language learning, are an important medium in language learning at IPTs in Malaysia. The level of language achievement among IPT students who are not native speakers of Arabic is still low due to various factors, including the ineffective content of textbooks. The evaluation of reading material takes into account many aspects, especially the level of readability. Readability is the level or ease of a material or reading text, while a quality textbook is a reading text that is easy to understand. This study evaluates the readability of Arabic texts among Diploma Tahfiz Al-Quran and Al-Qiraat Darul Quran students in Malaysia. A total of 300 students consists of students in semester 4 and students who have gone through semester 4. This study is to evaluate the level of readability of the textbooks they use through a level-Cloze Test, which will be the start of further study of the book. This readability study serves as a document that can help JAKIM, lecturers, syllabus drafters, textbook writers, and other parties involved. In order to achieve the objectives of this study, the Cloze Test was constructed from three Arabic texts found in Darul Quran Arabic textbooks. Through this test, students are tested to see the difference in scores obtained from the aspect of readability. The study data is analyzed quantitatively and descriptively. The results of the test conducted found that the mean score for the Cloze Test on the textbook was 88%, so this result proves that the level of readability of Darul Quran JAKIM's Arabic textbook is at frustration levelwhich means that the textbook is not suitable enoughfor the ability of students at the Diploma level in Darul Quran JAKIM, which is still at a low level that is less suitable for teaching and learning purposes. Therefore, the responsible parties, especially the drafters of the Darul Quran Arabic language curriculum, should take into account the level of readability of the text provided before it is used as student learning material in order to match the level of the student's language skills.

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Introduction:-

Readability is termed as 'kebolehbacaan' in Malay, and the term Maqru'iyyah or Inqira'iyyah is used in Arabic terms (Tu'aymah& al-Thu'aybi 2006). Readability is a concept that refers to the level or degree of difficulty or ease with which a material is read. Materials that are difficult to read are said to have a high level of readability, while materials that are easy to understand are termed as having a low level of readability (Kamarulzaman Abdul Ghani, Ahmad Sabri Noh, and Nik Mohd Rahimi Nik 2017).

According to Chall (1974), the concept of readability contains three aspects that are interrelated with each other: interest, ease of reading, and understanding. Dale and Chall (1948) explained that readability is a combination of all aspects of a certain part of printed material that affects the success of a group of readers in reading the material. Success is interpreted as the extent to which they understand, read at an optimal speed, and are interested enough to continue reading.

Khadijah Rohani (1987), the person who created the readability formula of the Malay language, and Marohaini (1999) also agreed that readability is the ability and level of ease with which a reading material is understood.

According to Kamarulzaman Abdul Ghani, Ahmad Sabri Noh, and Nik Mohd Rahimi Nik (2017), readability is an interactive process that takes place between the characteristics of the reader and the characteristics of the text being read. The level of readability is measured using measurement methods such as the readability formula of mathematical equations to estimate the level of text readability based on linguistic characteristics. It should be adjusted according to the competence of the reader and the content of the text. The success of reading depends on the appropriateness of the text in terms of content, vocabulary, activities as exercises, and so on, which are of different levels of difficulty and suitable for all levels of students.

Therefore, readability needs to be emphasized in the process of preparing teaching and learning materials so that students can learn Arabic well.

Problem Statement

Many Malaysian scholars are of the opinion that the level of mastery of the Arabic language of students in Malaysia is still at a moderate level and has not yet reached an encouraging level, and most students cannot read Arabic texts fluently even though the texts are at a simple, concise level and have lines (Mat Taib, 2008; Mr. Halim, 2009).

Among the issues that often received attention in past studies is the issue related to the mastery of the Arabic language among tahfiz students. This can be proven from a study (Ku Fatahiyah Ku Azizan et al., 2017) that found that many tahfiz students who have memorized the Quran well are unable to apply the language of the Quran in the compulsory Arabic language course either in or out of class. Research related to learning Arabic among Tahfizwal Qiraat students in Malaysia is also less well conducted. This causes little improvement in the teaching and learning materials of Arabic among tahfiz students, especially at higher levels. (Ku Fatahiyah et al. 2019)

Previous studies have also proven that there is a strong and positive relationship between people who memorize the Qur'an and students' Arabic language learning performance, but the ability of tahfiz students to use mufradat and usbul from the memorized al-Quran in Arabic language skills is at an unsatisfactory level. Arabic language performance among tahfiz students is still moderate (Ku Fatahiyah et al. 2019).

Based on the current situation, in order to increase the mastery of tahfiz students in the subject of Arabic, the researcher sees the need for a study on the readability of Arabic textbooks at the higher education level in IPTs, especially at the Diploma level of Tahfiz al-Quran and al-Qiraat. This is because the use of references or main materials in teaching and learning for the study of Arabic that match the students is very important in helping to improve understanding and good language achievement among students (Aisyah Sjahrony et al. 2017; Nik Mohd Rahimi, Shafizan, & Wan Normeza 2017; Noorazi 2021).

Studies involving the readability of Arabic texts are believed to be beneficial so that the selection of Arabic texts chosen is suitable and benefits students according to their respective levels of mastery in terms of content and language adjustment, as well as motivating students to be interested in the study of Arabic.

Research Methodology:-
This study uses the Cloze Test to determine the level of readability of the book al-Lughah al-Arabiah (Al-Kitab Al-MuqararA'laTullabDiblumTahfiz Al-Quran Wa Al-Qiraat) Darul Quran JAKIM. Highlights of previous studies in Chapter 2 show a high frequency of using the Cloze Test as a tool to measure the readability of Arabic reading materials. This is so because its reliability and validity for Arabic texts have been proven and used by Arabic scholars until now (Tu'aymah, 1985; Zulazhan, 2012; Noorazi, 2021; Fadzli, 2022).

The Cloze Test is a better method than the comprehension test. This is so because the Cloze Test measures the level of difficulty of the text compared to the comprehension test, which measures the difficulty of the prepared questions, which may be more difficult than the text (Harrison, 1980). Referring to the context of Arabic text readability, the Cloze Test is used to measure the level of text difficulty. The Cloze Test is a type of fill-in-the-blank test whose questions are deliberately designed based on the text in the textbook. The students will do their best to fill in the appropriate words in the blanks using appropriate vocabulary based on the hints given. Choosing the right vocabulary depends entirely on the students' ability to understand the text. Students who are able to fill in the blanks with the correct vocabulary show that they understand the text (Nik Mohd Rahimi, Sarizan Sulong, & Wan Normeza 2016).

Cloze Test Instrument Construction Procedures
The researcher has taken the approach of forming the procedure of this study, taking into account the procedural framework used by Zulazhan (2012) based on the recommendations of Tu'aymah (1985), Klare et al. (1972), Harrison (1980), Rye (1982), and Marohaini (1999) to construct Cloze Test questions. Here is the intended procedure:

1. Selection of Total Titles: All the titles in the first part are three titles, not including the introduction, subtopics, and exercises.
2. Number of broken words per title: Tu'aymah (1985) and Harrison (1980) are of the view that the longer the text, the higher the level of reliability and validity of a Cloze Test. For non-Arabic speakers, they suggest titles containing between 350 and 500 words be selected as Cloze Test texts. In relation to that, the characteristics of the title chosen to be used as a Cloze Test text for this study are as follows:
a) A total of 3 texts out of the 4 texts found in the first part of this textbook were chosen to construct cloze questions.
b) The total number of words per title is not less than 350.
c) Citations of the holy verses of the Qur'an, hadith, and Arabic poetry in the text are not taken into account. If there is, then word truncation will not be done on it.
3. Word cutting: For the preparation of a set of Cloze Test questions, word cutting is done consistently. Tu'aymah (1985) stated that the cutting of this word must be consistent without looking at the characteristics of the word, such as nouns, verbs, and particles, or its position in the sentence, such as subject, predicate, actor, and object. However, taking the view of Marohaini (1999), cutting is not done on the first and last sentences to help the respondent's understanding. This study determines that cutting is done on every seventh word except the first and last sentence, with the total number of words cut being 51 according to the selected text.
4. The form of answer used is multiple-choice. This is the conclusion of previous studies by Kamarulzaman (2010), Zulazhan (2012), and Fadzli (2022). Because the sample of this study is Malay students who vary in their level of Arabic language achievement, the use of multiple-choice answers as a form of Cloze Test answer is more appropriate.
5. The three texts that will be constructed for the Cloze Test are not placed on word lines because the texts in the Darul Quran Arabic language textbook are indeed not placed on lines. This takes into account the view of Tu'aymah (1985), who suggests that the Cloze Test text should not be lined because, in general, Arabic reading materials are not lined.
6. When performing a Cloze Test, a brief briefing session was conducted for students online using the Google Meet application. A briefing session was held before the students answered the questions to explain the purpose of the test, the format of the questions, examples of how to answer the questions, and the time allocated for the test.

Table 1

Num.	Topic	Page
1.	الحوار عن حوادث السير	1-3

2.	علم النفس الإسلامي	16-19
3.	قصة قصيرة عنشن طبقة	24-26

Data AnalysisMethods
Scoring Procedure:
This study only accepts the correct answer with the original word as in the Darul Quran Arabic textbook as the correct answer. Then the number of correct answers is converted to a percentage by dividing it by the number of words cut. To determine the level of readability of Darul Quran Arabic textbooks, all answers from respondents will be collected to get an overall average. The average or mean obtained is then matched with the level of readability, as in the following Rye (1982) Readability Score Measurement Table:

Table 2

ReadabilityLevel	Score
Independent	90% - 100%
Instructional	75% - 89%
Frustrational	0% - 74%

The level of frustration is the level of reading material that the reader cannot understand. This shows that the reader's comprehension is poor, the rate of reading fluency is slow and stuttering, and many words need to be evaluated and reanalyzed. The teaching level is the level at which the reading material can be understood but only with the guidance of another party, while the independent level is the level at which the material can be read and understood easily without the need for help and guidance from a third person (Rye 1982). According to Tu'aymah (1985), if the mean obtained is at the independent level, it shows that the textbook studied has a low level of readability and is suitable for the use of the tested students.

Findings
The following are the results tables for the Cloze Ada test held on 300 Darul Quran students from all over Malaysia against three texts from Darul Quran Arabic textbooks.

Table 3 below shows the findings for the readability level of text 1, which shows as many as 26 respondents, or equivalent to 9%, at the independent level, while 21 respondents, or equivalent to 7%, are at the teaching level, and the last level of readability is disappointed, which is the majority of 253 respondents, or equivalent to 84%.

While the mean percentage obtained is 52.42%. Based on the mean percentage obtained by the researcher, in general, the level of readability for text 1 tested is at a disappointing level.

Table 3

ReadabilityLevel	Text 1		Mean
	f	%	
Independent	26	9	52.42
Instructional	21	7	
Frustrational	253	84	

Table 4 below shows the results for the readability level of text 2, which shows as many as 25 respondents, which is equivalent to 8% at the independent level, while 9 respondents, which is equivalent to 3% at the teaching level, and the last one is the level of frustrated readability, which is the majority, which is 266 respondents, which is equivalent to 89%.

While the mean percentage obtained is 43.78%. Based on the mean percentage obtained by the researcher, in general, the level of readability of text 2 tested is at a disappointing level.

Table 4

ReadabilityLevel	Text 2		Mean
	f	%	43.78

Independent	25	8	
Instructional	9	3	
Frustrational	266	89	

Table 5 below shows the results for text readability level 3, which shows as many as 26 respondents, which is equivalent to 9% at the independent level, while 11 respondents, which is equivalent to 4%, are at the teaching level, and the last level of readability is disappointed, which is the majority of 263 respondents, which is equivalent to 87%.

While the mean percentage obtained is 46.06%. Based on the mean percentage obtained by the researcher, in general, the level of readability for text 3 that was tested is disappointing.

Table 5

ReadabilityLevel	Text 3		Mean
	F	%	
Independent	26	9	46.06
Instructional	11	4	
Frustrational	263	87	

Discussion:-
After the analysis was carried out on the three test sets, the researcher found that the mean of the three Cloze Test texts was as follows:

Table 6

ReadabilityLevel	Text 1		Text 2		Text 3		Overall Score		Mean
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
Independent	26	9	25	8	26	9	25	8	47.41
Instructional	21	7	9	3	11	4	10	4	
Frustrational	253	84	266	89	263	87	265	88	

Based on the results of the study for Table 6 above, the three texts 1, 2, and 3 each show the level of readability of the text at the level of frustration. The overall score for the three texts for the independent level is as much as 8%, while for the teaching level it is as much as 4%, and the last and the majority for the frustrated level is at mean 47.41%, so this result proves that the level of readability of the Diploma al-Tahfiz Arabic language textbook and al-Qiraat, which is a book entitled al-Lughah al-Arabiah(Al-Kitab Al-MuqararA'laTullabDiblumTahfiz Al-Quran Wa Al-Qiraat) published by Darul Quran Department of Islamic Religion Malaysia (JAKIM) is not suitable for the ability of the Diploma level students at Darul Quran JAKIM.

Conclusion:-
The complete level of readability of the textbook of the book entitled al-Lughah al-Arabiah (al-Kitab al-Muqarara'laTullabDiblumTahfiz al-Quran wa al-Qiraat) is at this level of frustration because it exceeds the level of the reader's ability target for students majoring in Diploma al-Tahfiz and al-Qiraat all over Malaysia. The findings of this study coincide with the findings of Mohd Fazli (2022), Noorazi (2021), Zulazhan (2010), and Kamarulzaman (2010), which each recorded that the textbooks used in the learning process were disappointing. Therefore, it is hoped that the findings of this study will provide information and recommendations that are very important to lecturers, drafters, and writers of new curricula and books for diploma students in the future to provide related procedures and evaluations to select the texts that are selected at the level of teaching and suitable for the level of students.

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