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Implementation of the Al-Miftah Lil 'Ulum Method in Learning the Yellow Book at the Flagship School of Al-Muhajirin Muara Wahau

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Abstract :

Reading unvowelled Arabic texts requires learners to connect grammatical rules, pronunciation, and meaning. At the primary school level, implementing Al-Miftah Lil 'Ulum therefore involves adjusting instruction to learners' readiness rather than transferring a programme unchanged. This study examines planning, teaching and assessment, and the supporting conditions and barriers at MI Unggulan Al-Muhajirin Muara Wahau. A qualitative case study was conducted from February to April 2026 using observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. The documented interview sources comprise a principal, two teachers recorded in a joint appendix entry, and one fifth-grade student. Data were condensed, displayed, and interpreted through iterative verification and comparison across sources and techniques. The findings identify a connected implementation pattern: Quran-reading readiness informs entry and grouping; songs, visual modules, explanations, and guided Fathul Qorib practice support learning; and individually timed module examinations regulate progression. Enjoyment and perceived ease of memorisation coexist with difficulty understanding words and sentences. Teacher development and institutional resources support implementation, whereas differences in readiness, learning pace, and children's mood require responsive assistance. The study contributes a contextual explanation of the relationship between readiness, instructional support, and mastery-based progression. It recommends explicit assessment criteria and records of feedback and assistance. The findings describe implementation and participants' experiences rather than establish causal effectiveness or quantified learning gains.

Keywords : *Al-Miftah Lil 'Ulum; Kitab Kuning; Arabic Grammar; Islamic Education; Madrasah Ibtidaiyah.*

Abstrak :

Membaca teks Arab tanpa harakat menuntut siswa menghubungkan kaidah, ketepatan bacaan, dan makna. Pada jenjang madrasah ibtidaiyah, implementasi Al-Miftah Lil 'Ulum karena itu memerlukan penyesuaian dengan kesiapan siswa. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis perencanaan, pelaksanaan dan evaluasi, serta faktor pendukung, hambatan, dan respons pembelajaran di MI Unggulan Al-Muhajirin Muara Wahau. Penelitian menggunakan studi kasus kualitatif pada Februari–April 2026 melalui observasi, wawancara semi-terstruktur, dan dokumentasi. Sumber wawancara terdokumentasi meliputi seorang kepala madrasah, dua guru yang dicatat dalam satu entri lampiran bersama, dan seorang siswa kelas V. Data dianalisis melalui kondensasi, penyajian, serta penarikan dan verifikasi kesimpulan dengan perbandingan sumber dan teknik. Hasil menunjukkan hubungan antara kesiapan membaca Al-Qur'an sebagai dasar masuk dan pengelompokan, penggunaan lagu serta modul visual dan latihan terbimbing Fathul Qorib sebagai dukungan pembelajaran, dan tes kenaikan jilid sesuai ketuntasan individu sebagai pengatur kemajuan. Kesenangan belajar dan kemudahan menghafal tetap disertai kesulitan memahami kata atau kalimat. Kompetensi pengajar dan sumber daya madrasah mendukung pelaksanaan, sedangkan variasi kesiapan, tempo belajar, dan suasana hati anak memerlukan bantuan yang responsif. Kontribusi penelitian berupa penjelasan kontekstual hubungan kesiapan, dukungan, dan kemajuan berbasis ketuntasan. Pengembangan program perlu memperjelas kriteria penilaian dan pencatatan umpan balik. Temuan menjelaskan implementasi dan pengalaman peserta, tanpa menetapkan efektivitas kausal atau besarnya peningkatan hasil belajar.

Kata Kunci: *Al-Miftah Lil 'Ulum; Kitab Kuning; Gramatika Arab; Pendidikan Islam; Madrasah Ibtidaiyah.*

INTRODUCTION

Learning the yellow book at the madrasah ibtidaiyah level exposes students to layered demands. When the text is not equipped with harakat, students need to recognize the form of the word, determine the relationship between words, choose reading, and understand the meaning. The memorization of nahwu and sharaf formulas provides preliminary knowledge, but its application requires practice in the text. The pedagogical problem lies in the way teachers relate the knowledge of the rules to reading activities when the initial ability and readiness to follow the lesson are different.

Al-Miftah Lil 'Ulum offers learning rules through tiered materials accompanied by formulations and songs. Studies in Sidogiri, Nurul Huda, and other Islamic boarding school environments place the organization of materials, exercises, and evaluations as important parts of implementation (Muzaky and Ishari 2020; Hufron and Wahid 2023; Muniro, Bukhori, and Islam 2023). These three elements show that methods work through learning settings. However, the completeness of the activity stages has not explained how children with different readiness receive help and decisions to continue with the material.

Al-Miftah's literature shows at least two tendencies. The implementation study emphasizes the organization of implementation, while the study of reading ability and effectiveness directs attention to the participants' achievements (Hakim 2021; Yakin and Suhri 2024). The mapping of Almahmudi and Rofik (2025) also shows the development of scientific attention to this method. These differences in focus need to be bridged: a positive assessment of achievement requires an explanation of the process, while a description of the process requires indicators that distinguish between engagement, memorization, application of rules, and reading comprehension. The findings of one research design cannot be directly used to infer the influence on other cases.

The application in MI has its own problems because the reading trajectory and the child's learning development are not uniform. Umam (2024) expands the context of the discussion of Al-Miftah to learning at the MI level. Meanwhile, the study of flipped classroom-based learning and self-efficacy experience shows opportunities for changes in activity settings and attention to participants' experiences (Fathurrohman, Ijudin, and Munawaroh 2024; Ma'isyah and Imami 2025). Together, the study directs attention to the suitability of activities with participants. However, the variation in innovation does not automatically explain the connection between entry readiness, assistance during training, and progress evaluation.

The relationship can be read through three concepts. Differentiation pays attention to the suitability of tasks and assistance to the needs of students; grouping alone does not guarantee responsive learning (Deunk et al. 2018). Scaffolding places teacher assistance in relation to the difficulty of tasks and the shifting of responsibilities to students (Wood, Bruner, and Ross 1976; van de Pol, Volman, and Beishuizen 2010). Formative evaluation demands information about goals, mistakes, and corrective steps, so that assessment does not stop at the decision to pass or not pass (Hattie and Timperley 2007). These concepts are used as an interpretive lens, rather than as a model that is assumed to have been fully implemented.

MI Unggulan Al-Muhajirin Muara Wahau provides a relevant case to examine this problem. The research notes contain differences in initial reading ability, the use of songs and modules, the practice of Fathul Qorib, and the volume increase test when students are considered complete. At the same time, students' experiences show that a liking for songs can be present with difficulties in understanding words or sentences. This situation allows for a sharper examination of the relationship between engagement, comprehension, and learning progress, without equating the three.

The gap examined in this article is how these implementation elements are

interrelated in the learning of the yellow book in MI children. Its contribution lies in the explanation of the pedagogical relationship between readiness to enter, learning support, and progress decisions, not on the location of the research alone. The research aims to: (1) analyze the learning planning of Al-Miftah Lil 'Ulum; (2) describe its implementation and evaluation; and (3) identify supporting factors, barriers, and teacher responses. These limitations maintain the fit between implementation questions and available qualitative evidence.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research uses a qualitative approach with a case study design at the Al-Muhajirin Flagship MI, Wahau Baru Village, Muara Wahau District, East Kutai Regency, East Kalimantan. Data collection took place in February–April 2026. The case is limited to the implementation of Al-Miftah Lil 'Ulum in learning the yellow book, including planning, learning process, evaluation, and implementation conditions. The program has been running since 2021 according to the teacher's information; the year of the start of the program is distinguished from the research period of 2026.

The selection of sources was purposively based on involvement in policy and learning, in accordance with the principle of relevance of sources in implementation research (Palinkas et al. 2015). The records analyzed included four informant identities: the head of the madrasah (KM), two teaching teachers (G1 and G2), and a student in grade V (S1). The appendices of the interviews of the two teachers were presented together, so they were treated as a single joint answer entry when individual attribution was not available. The number indicated the sources that could be traced in the research material, not the number of students of the program. A single student perspective was also not used to represent the entire participant experience.

Data were obtained through observation without the involvement of the researcher in teaching, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. Observations were directed at the sequence of activities, media use, interactions, reading exercises, and evaluation. The interview guidelines included the basis of grouping, materials and strategies, learning experience, completeness, and constraints. The teacher's notes were dated April 7, 2026, while the notes of the madrasah heads and students were dated April 9, 2026. The documents studied were related to learning tools, modules, schedules, and documentation of activities. Interviews, observations descriptions, and documents were differentiated so that information about the policy was not automatically considered evidence of all classroom practices.

The analysis followed the condensation of data, presentation, and conclusion drawing and verification (Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña 2014). In the review of the article, units of information in the form of statements or descriptions of activities were grouped based on their meaning. Information about the fluency of reading the Qur'an was categorized as readiness; songs and modules were grouped as presentation support; Fathul Qorib exercises as application; and tests when completed as progress arrangements. Categories were compared to form themes and relationships between themes. The principles of thematic analysis were used to maintain the relationship between units of evidence, categories, and interpretations (Braun and Clarke 2006). This recoding was a sharpening of the article's analysis of the documented material.

Credibility is sought through triangulation of sources and techniques as well as clarification of answers to informants as described in the research procedure. The teacher's description of the song is compared with the description of the S1 activity and experience; the evaluation information is compared with the explanation of the madrasah head. Testimony that limits the conclusion is maintained, especially the difficulty of understanding the language even though the students like the activity. This strategy is in

line with the attention to the traceability of evidence in qualitative research (Shenton 2004). The adequacy of information is read according to the focus and richness of the source, not determined only by the number of informants (Malterud, Siersma, and Guassora 2016).

Student identities are disguised to limit the disclosure of personal data. The available documentation does not allow for the determination of the age of all participants, the complete frequency and duration of each session, nor the written details of the consent of the guardian and the child. The article does not add an ethical approval number or undocumented claims of saturation. The limitations of activity logs and assessment results are taken into account in the scope of the conclusion; the research is directed to explain implementation, not to measure causal changes in learning outcomes.

FINDINGS

Planning: Teacher Readiness and Student Placement

Planning brings together teacher readiness, module-based tools, and students' initial abilities. The head of the madrasah explained the background of the pesantren and the teacher certification: "So our teachers who teach the Al-Miftah Lil Ulum method are alumni of Islamic boarding schools in Penyepen who already have certification to teach the Al-Miftah method" (KM, interview April 9, 2026). This information shows that the institution associates the implementation of the program with the mastery of the method by the teacher. The learning plan refers to the Al-Miftah material and is supported by the development of teacher competence.

Interview entries G1–G2 explained that Al-Miftah learning continued after the students' reading of the Qur'an was considered good and fluent. In grade I, some children were still in the early volumes of reading learning, while some had read the Qur'an. The grouping therefore considered initial ability, not formal classes only. This finding placed reading readiness as the basis for placement before the demands of learning rules and books were given.

The teacher mentioned four volumes with an estimated completion of two to three years. The information describes the trajectory of the program according to the teacher, not the results of longitudinal observations of the research. The connection of entry prerequisites, tiered material, and differences in tempo are important features of planning in this case.

Implementation: Songs, Explanation of Rules, and Book Exercises

The activity is arranged in an introduction, core, and conclusion. The teacher begins with a prayer, the recitation of Al-Fatihah, and a song through the audio of Al-Miftah. In the interview, it is explained: "We start with the introduction, then read Al-Fatihah, after which we sing to the audio music of al-miftah" (teacher's note, April 7, 2026). The introduction connects the study routine with the repetition of the material, while the core activity contains explanations, questions and answers, and reading exercises.

Color and picture modules are used with the audio of the song. The media provides a form of presentation of formulas that are easy for children to follow according to the teacher's description. The S1 experience supports the perceived recall function: "It makes it easier for me to remember and memorize the material" (S1, interview attachment). These findings show the preferred learning experience as well as the memorization function, but it does not explain the accuracy of the application to all texts.

The observation description mentions Fathul Qorib as a practice book. Thus, learning does not stop at mentioning formulas; students are directed to face the structure of the language in the text through explanations and exercises. The order that can be

traced is the repetition of the material, explanations, questions and answers, and reading practices. The notes have not detailed each turn of the students' responses, so the sequence is understood as a pattern of activities, not an identical interaction protocol at all meetings.

Evaluation: Process Examination and Individual Progress

Process evaluation is carried out through attention to activeness, question and answer responses, and exercises. Evaluation of results contains a written test on the subject matter and an oral test or reading practice. Munaqosah activities are also part of the program assessment. This combination shows attention to material knowledge and reading performance, although both have not been presented in an analytical rubric that can be compared between time.

The timing of the increase in volume follows the readiness of the individual. The teacher stated: "the test depends on the acceleration of the child, because all children have different understandings, which have been considered complete directly in the test" (teacher's note, April 7, 2026). The difference in tempo is responded to through test opportunities when students are considered ready. Evaluation therefore has the function of regulating progress, in addition to checking material mastery.

The head of the madrasah positively assessed the student's ability to answer questions in munaqosah, and S1 related the perception of his progress with the report card. Both statements were informant assessments. Because the research material did not include a recap of the initial and final scores or the distribution of completeness, these results were not converted into an improvement rate, percentage of success, or evidence of a single influence of the method.

Supporting Factors: Resource and Policy Connectivity

The main support includes teachers who understand the methods according to the madrasah head, module-based devices, audio and visual media, exercise books, and the organization of activities by the madrasah. These factors work on different functions: the teacher's competence supports explanations and learning decisions; the modules provide the order of the material; audio provides a means of repetition; and the book provides the context of application.

The policy of continuing learning after students have read the Qur'an fluently connects the program with the trajectory of religious literacy in madrasas. Institutional support is therefore not only in the form of providing media, but also regulating access and sustainability of learning. S1's positive response to songs is a support for the participant's level of experience, while difficulties in understanding the language still require special attention.

Barriers: Readiness, Language Comprehension, and Mood

Academic barriers are seen in variations in initial ability and speed of understanding the material. This problem is different from the language difficulties expressed by S1: "My difficulties may still be some words or sentences that I do not understand" (S1, interview attachment). This recognition is important because it comes from students who also like songs. The ease of remembering formulas does not always eliminate the difficulty of understanding the text.

G1–G2 also refers to children's mood as a challenge, especially in grade I. This data points to the need to adjust activities to readiness to participate in learning; the data are not used to provide psychological diagnoses or to state that all students have the same problem. The barriers in this case are layered: readiness to enter affects placement, tempo affects progress, language comprehension affects reading practice, and mood related to activity involvement.

Learning Responses to Student Differences

Documented responses included grouping based on initial ability, the use of four-volume materials, songs and visual modules, guided exercises, and tests when students were assessed complete. Groupings answered differences in starting points; variety of presentation supported engagement and recall; exercises connected formulations to text; while individual test times accommodated differences in pace.

The response did not explain all follow-up needs. The research record did not contain scheduled remedial procedures, peer tutoring, or reduced assistance traced to the same student. Therefore, the development of special mentoring and the recording of assistance levels were placed as recommendations. The need for additional time in thesis suggestions was also distinguished from those that had a description of a direct interview.

DISCUSSION

Readiness to Enter as Part of Implementation

Implementation in this case begins before the delivery of the material. The requirement of fluency in reading the Qur'an and the grouping of abilities indicate that the placement of students is a pedagogical decision. These prerequisites provide a basis for dealing with the Arabic form of writing, but do not automatically guarantee mastery of vocabulary, sentence structure, or unconditional reading. Thus, initial readiness and final results need to be differentiated in assessing the program.

These findings sharpen the reading of implementation that emphasizes the planning, implementation, and evaluation stages (Muzaky and Ishari 2020; Hufron and Wahid 2023). In the context of MI as well as the concern of Umam (2024), an important question is not only whether materials are available, but who is ready to enter certain demands. Grouping is the beginning of differentiation; its quality depends on the subsequent adjustment of tasks and assistance (Deunk et al. 2018). The implication is that madrasas need to connect the basis of placement with development records, so that the group does not become a permanent label of ability.

From Memorization of Formulations to Understanding Texts

Students' descriptions show a non-simple relationship between media and mastery. Songs help remember according to S1, but the same students still have difficulty with words or sentences. This pattern explains why enthusiasm is not enough to be an indicator of reading success. The repetition of formulas, explanations of meaning, and application need to be connected through assignments that ask students to explain the reason for reading.

In the perspective of cognitive load, breaking down material into parts and the use of examples can help regulate the complexity of tasks (Sweller, van Merriënboer, and Paas 2019). However, this study does not measure cognitive load; the concept explains the possible function of sequencing materials. Compared to the focus on self-efficacy in Ma'isyah and Imami (2025), this case confirms that positive experiences need to be read together with evidence of understanding. Variations of settings such as flipped classroom in Fathurrohman, Ijudin, and Munawaroh (2024) are comparators of innovation, while the practices found here remain in the form of songs, modules, explanations, and exercises. Consequently, media development needs to be accompanied by application examinations, not just the addition of a variety of activities.

Guided Exercises and Scaffolding Boundaries

The practice of Fathul Qorib provides a context for the application of rules outside of the formulation of the module. The relationship between the rules and the book is also a concern of Yakin and Suhri (2024), while Muniro, Bukhori, and Islam (2023) place the use of methods in reading activities. In this case, explanations, questions and answers, and exercises can be interpreted as support for dealing with the demands of

the text. Support is needed because the difficulty of reading can lie in the form of words, grammatical relationships, and meanings.

Wood, Bruner, and Ross (1976) help explain the function of aids in task completion. However, van de Pol, Volman, and Beishuizen (2010) emphasize the importance of aid appropriateness and the transfer of responsibilities. The available records do not show changes in assistance in the same student over time. Therefore, the results support the existence of guided exercises, while the full scaffolding mechanism cannot be ascertained. Recording whether students succeed after the model, after instructions, or independently is a recommendation to assess the process more carefully.

Evaluation as a Regulator of Progress and Feedback

The volume increase test when students are assessed completely shows the relationship between assessment and the decision to continue the material. The difference in speed has a place in the program organization, so progress does not have to be simultaneous. These findings provide an explanation of the process for the discussion of evaluation in Miftahurrohmah, Mustajab, and Husna (2022) and Iwan (2024). Siswati et al. (2022) also place evaluation as the basis for knowing the development and improvement of the learning process in early madrasas. In the case of MI, the problem that is sharpened is the relationship between test decisions and differences in student tempos. However, the suitability of test timing is not equivalent to the implementation of complete mastery learning because the criteria, follow-up of errors, and re-examination cycles have not been detailed.

Feedback needs to inform learning positions and next steps, not just graduation status (Hattie and Timperley 2007). Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006), in the context of higher education, link formative evaluation with learning settings. In MI children, this principle requires concrete mentoring: teachers help identify mistakes and provide workable corrective tasks. This cross-level adjustment is important so that the concept of learning settings is not assumed to appear automatically through tests.

The proposed development indicators include the introduction of word forms, the determination of word functions, the accuracy of reading the text without expectations, the explanation of meaning, and the application of rules in other examples. The level of assistance also needs to be noted. This indicator is a rubric recommendation, not an instrument that is stated to have been used. With a separate indicator, teachers can distinguish students who memorize formulas but have difficulty applying them from students who read correctly but do not understand the meaning.

Supporting Factors and Obstacles as Pedagogical Relationships

Teacher support, modules, media, and policies do not work in isolation. Teachers use materials to select explanations; media provide a means of repetition; books provide implementation tasks; and policies govern placement and progress. This relationship helps explain why a list of facilities alone is not enough to assess the quality of implementation. Certification information from the head of the madrasah supports the picture of institutional readiness, but the quality of interaction still needs to be read from the use of aids in learning activities.

Similarly, barriers are not entirely student deficiencies. Variations in readiness and tempo demand task management, while language difficulties demand examples and explanations. Hakim's study (2021) compares attention to the conditions of participants and teachers in the implementation of the method. In this case, the song partially answers the need for engagement, but cannot be assumed to solve all difficulties of understanding. The implication is the adjustment of responses according to the type of difficulty: starting points are addressed through placement, conceptual difficulties

through explanation and exercise, and tempo through responsive evaluation opportunities.

Synthesis of Implementation and Limitations of Findings

The results and discussions form a synthesis of the readiness–support–progress relationship. Reading readiness is the basis for entering programs and groupings. Support in the form of tiered materials, songs, visual modules, explanations, and book exercises help students face assignments. The assessment of completeness then becomes the basis for continuing the volume. This synthesis explains implementation as a series of interconnected decisions, beyond the examination that the preliminary, core, and closing stages have been implemented.

The contribution remains contextual. The relationship between evaluation and volume increase is supported by the teacher's statement; the relationship between evaluation and remedial forms and reduced assistance has not been explained in detail. Therefore, the cycle of evaluation–mentoring–re-examination is the direction of development, not part of the validated model. Compared to the research trends mapped by Almahmudi and Rofik (2025), the emphasis of this article is the connection of pedagogical decisions in implementation at the MI level.

The limits of the study include a single madrasah, a narrow representation of student experience, and the absence of a complete log of activities and a recap of assessment results. Statements about report cards and munaqosah inform the perception of achievement, but do not allow an assessment of the magnitude of improvement or the cause of change. Follow-up research needs to trace the development of the same students through assignments, responses, assistance, and repeated assessments. With such a design, the explanation of the process can be deepened before the question of influence is tested through an appropriate design.

CONCLUSION

The implementation of the Al-Miftah Lil 'Ulum method in learning the yellow book at the Al-Muhajirin Muara Wahau Flagship MI in February-April 2026 shows the interconnectedness of readiness-based planning, learning through tiered materials and exercises, and evaluation of individual progress. Fluency in reading the Qur'an and grouping is the basis for placement; songs, visual modules, explanations, and Fathul Qorib practices support activities; while tests according to completeness regulate the increase in volume. The support of teachers and madrasas goes hand in hand with the challenges of variation in ability, difficulty understanding language, and children's mood.

The research contribution is a synthesis of implementation as a relationship of readiness, support, and learning progress. The findings of students who love songs but still have difficulty understanding words or sentences demonstrate the importance of differentiating memorization, engagement, and comprehension. Tempo adjustments have an empirical basis in individual test descriptions, while reduction in assistance and remedial follow-up still requires tracing. These results describe the process and experience in a single case without establishing causal effectiveness.

Madrassas need to clarify indicators of completeness, record errors and levels of assistance, and link evaluation results to corrective tasks. Subsequent research needs to expand the variety of students' experiences and record individual progress repeatedly. The documentation will help assess whether the support provided is appropriate for needs and whether students are moving towards more independent reading of the book.

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