Arabic Learning Strategies on Social Media: A Study of Students at Madrasah Al-Furqan Medan

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the role of social media in improving Arabic language skills in students in madrasas/schools and identify its benefits and challenges. This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study method conducted at Madrasah Al-Furqan, Medan. The data was obtained through in-depth interviews of students who used social media for Arabic language learning. Data analysis was carried out using thematic analysis techniques. The findings show that social media, especially platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok, have proven to be effective in improving Arabic language skills. Users reported improvements in vocabulary, grammar comprehension, and speaking skills. However, challenges arise related to the use of non-standard language and the lack of structure in learning. This research provides input to teachers to be innovative in fun learning so that it is more structured and collaborative between teachers and digital content creators to improve the quality of Arabic language learning on social media.

Keywords: *Social Media; Learning Arabic; Student; Madrasah Al-Furqan Medan*

Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis peran media sosial dalam meningkatkan kemampuan bahasa Arab pada siswa di madrasah/sekolah serta mengidentifikasi manfaat dan tantangannya. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode studi kasus yang dilakukan di Madrasah Al-Furqan Medan. Data diperoleh melalui wawancara mendalam siswa yang menggunakan media sosial untuk pembelajaran bahasa Arab. Analisis data dilakukan dengan teknik analisis tematik. Temuan menunjukan bahwa media sosial, terutama platform seperti YouTube, Instagram, dan TikTok, terbukti efektif dalam meningkatkan kemampuan bahasa Arab. Pengguna melaporkan peningkatan kosakata, pemahaman tata bahasa, dan keterampilan berbicara. Namun, tantangan muncul terkait penggunaan bahasa tidak baku dan kurangnya struktur dalam pembelajaran. Penelitian ini memberi masukan kepada guru untuk inovatif dalam pembelajaran yang menyenangkan sehingga lebih terstruktur dan kolaborasi antara pengajar dan pembuat konten digital untuk meningkatkan kualitas pembelajaran bahasa Arab di media sosial.

Kata Kunci: *Media Sosial; Belajar Bahasa Arab; Siswa; Madrasah Al-Furqan Medan*

INTRODUCTION

In the rapidly developing digital era, social media has become one of the main platforms in various aspects of life, including in the field of education. Social media offers various conveniences in conveying information in an interactive and flexible manner, so that it is an effective means to improve learning skills. In the context of language learning, social media provides a wide space for the younger generation to access information, interact, and practice in the language they are learning. According to (Linur & Mubarak, 2020), the integration of social media in education has had a significant impact, especially in supporting language learning in a more creative and interesting way. This is a great opportunity for students to use technology as a more modern means of learning.

Although social media has great potential, mastery of Arabic in students in Indonesia is still a fairly complex challenge. Arabic, which plays an important role in the Muslim world, is often considered difficult for students to learn. Based on a survey conducted by researchers (Yulianti et al., 2024). of 500 students at several universities in Indonesia, 60% of respondents admitted that they had difficulty mastering Arabic even though they had studied it formally at school or university. The survey highlights the lack of engaging and interactive resources in learning Arabic. This situation shows that there is an urgent need to find more effective learning solutions, one of which is by utilizing the potential of social media which has become part of students' daily lives.

In the context of learning Arabic, social media has the ability to provide various supporting resources, such as learning videos, interactive infographics, and online discussions. Platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok have been used by many learners to improve their skills in vocabulary, grammar, and speaking skills. According to (Ramdani et al., 2021), social media not only helps in increasing learning motivation, but also provides flexibility for students to learn anytime and anywhere. However, its use also requires special attention to ensure that the content used is in accordance with the learning objectives and supports formal mastery of the Arabic language.

This study aims to identify how social media can play a role in the development of Arabic language skills in students, both in the aspects of speaking, reading, writing, and listening. In addition, this study also explores the most effective types of content to support learning as well as the challenges faced by students in using social media as a means of learning Arabic. With a comprehensive approach, it is hoped that this research can make a significant contribution to the development of Arabic language learning methods that are more innovative and relevant to the needs of the digital generation.

METHOD

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study method conducted at Madrasah Al-Furqan, Medan, to explore students' experiences, perspectives, and subjective understanding related to the use of social media as an Arabic language learning tool. Data used from active student informants who use social media from YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok to learn Arabic, to complete the data and support data analysis are used through journal articles, theses, and theses related to the theme of this research. Furthermore, data analysts with data triangulation techniques through the stages of data reduction, data interpretation, data presentation and drawing conclusions were carried out to increase the validity of the findings by comparing the results of the three data collection techniques.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Social Media and Arabic Learning

Social media has become one of the main tools used by the younger generation to access information, including in learning Arabic. The role of social media is significant because of its flexible, interactive, and easily accessible nature anytime and anywhere (Budiman & Al-Ahyar, 2022). Arabic as the language of the Qur'an has an important value that needs to be learned by Muslims. In this context, social media provides various platforms, such as YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, WhatsApp, and Twitter, which offer diverse educational content. The content includes video tutorials, interactive infographics, group discussions, and quizzes to make learning Arabic easier (Rahmawati et al., 2023). All of these are effective solutions, especially for the younger generation who are often more familiar with technology and social media than conventional learning methods (Kurniati, 2022).

The results of the study showed that students at Madrasah Al-Furqan took advantage of various social media platforms to improve their Arabic language skills. Based on in-depth interviews, students revealed that social media provides a more flexible, interactive, and interest-tailored learning experience, in contrast to conventional methods that are more rigid and limited. Social media allows students to learn in a fun and accessible way at any time, making it an attractive option for them. From the survey data collected, there are several types of content that are most often used by students in the Arabic learning process. This data illustrates the tendency of students to choose platforms that suit the type of content they need to deepen their understanding of the Arabic language. The following Table 1 illustrates the frequency of use of each platform and the types of content that students frequently access:

Table 1: Frequency of use of each platform and types of content frequently accessed by students

Number	Platform	Content Type	Usage Frequency (%)
1.	YouTube	Grammar learning videos	70%
2.	Instagram	Daily vocabulary infographic	50%
3.	TikTok	Video everyday conversations	40%
4.	WhatsApp	Group discussions with friends	30%

Source: Data processed by the author

YouTube proved to be the most frequently used platform by students, with 70% of respondents reporting the use of grammar learning videos as the primary content they accessed. YouTube's strength lies in its ability to provide structured and easy-to-follow videos, covering a wide range of materials such as basic grammar, new vocabulary, and pronunciation exercises. The video presented in this visual format makes it easier for students to understand concepts that were previously difficult to understand through text (Makarima, 2019). For example, one student reveals, "By watching YouTube, I can learn difficult grammar in an easier way because there are visual explanations." This shows that learning videos that combine text, sound, and visuals are able to explain the material in more depth and are easy for students to digest.

In addition to YouTube, Instagram is also widely used by students to deepen their Arabic vocabulary. As many as 50% of respondents reported that they regularly access infographics presented in the form of images or short videos. This content features a list of words, phrases, or expressions that are relevant to everyday life, making it easier for students to remember and understand new vocabulary in a more practical context (Rahmasari, 2020). The advantage of using Instagram is its ability to present content in an engaging and easy-to-understand form, which makes the learning process even more enjoyable.

Although TikTok is better known as an entertainment platform, the study revealed that 40% of students utilize it to learn Arabic conversations. TikTok offers short videos that feature everyday conversations, allowing students to practice Arabic in a more informal and realistic context (Karami & Rif'ah, 2021). These videos often depict real-life situations, such as introducing themselves, talking about daily activities, or asking for directions, which can help students develop speaking skills in Arabic in a direct and relevant way.

Meanwhile, WhatsApp is used by 30% of students to discuss in groups. WhatsApp groups are an effective means for students to practice speaking Arabic with their peers. The discussions that took place in this group included writing exercises, conversations, and sharing learning materials. In addition, the instant messaging feature on WhatsApp allows

students to share experiences, ask questions, and provide support in the learning process. Students are more confident because the use of grub whatsapp has a good impact and supports each other by being more confident in communicating, if something is wrong, participants give each other corrections to correct Arabic pronunciation.

Overall, the results of this study show that social media, through various platforms and types of content provided, provides opportunities for students to deepen Arabic in a more flexible, interactive, and engaging way. The use of platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, and WhatsApp allows students to learn in a way that is more in line with their personal needs and preferences, making social media an effective means of learning Arabic at Madrasah Al-Furqan.

Improvement of Arabic on Social Media

The use of social media in the context of learning Arabic has had a very significant impact in facilitating the student learning process in this digital era. Not only does it provide wider access to a variety of learning resources, but it also offers a variety of innovative approaches that make learning Arabic more interesting and effective. Based on the research conducted, the use of social media in learning Arabic provides a wide range of benefits for students, ranging from increasing vocabulary, deeper understanding of grammar, to improving speaking skills in Arabic (Priantiwi & Abdurrahman, 2023). The following is a more in-depth discussion of the main benefits obtained by students through the use of social media in learning Arabic.

1. Vocabulary

One of the biggest benefits that students get from using social media is the improvement of their Arabic vocabulary. As many as 80% of respondents in this study reported that they gained new vocabulary from various content contained on Instagram and TikTok. On both platforms, vocabulary is often presented in the form of infographics, short videos, and easy-to-understand images. The content is generally packaged in a way that is interesting and relevant to daily life, so that students can remember and memorize it better. Students can learn new vocabulary that they find when they open the social media Instagram. Because through the content on Instagram, students can learn more fun and close every day accompanied by the use of a piece of time. On the other hand, they also learn through Instagram, they feel happy and master faster.

This shows that social media is able to present learning that is more fun and not boring. By presenting vocabulary in familiar contexts, such as the names of objects, daily activities, and social situations, students can understand and remember the vocabulary more easily.

In addition, social media also provides students with the opportunity to learn vocabulary in various variants of Arabic, both in the form of standard language (Fusha) and dialects used in everyday conversation, such as Egyptian, Levantine, or Khaleeji dialects (Karami & Rif'ah, 2021). Thus, students not only learn formal Arabic, but can also get to know the variety of languages used in informal communication, which can improve their understanding in various contexts. The use of videos and images accompanied by examples of word use contexts also makes it easier for students to associate vocabulary with real situations. For example, a TikTok video showing everyday conversations in a market or restaurant will help students understand how vocabulary is used in real-life situations. This makes vocabulary learning more meaningful and applicable.

2. Grammar

In addition to improving vocabulary, the use of social media also provides great benefits in understanding Arabic grammar. Platforms like YouTube have become a major resource for students in learning Arabic grammar in depth. Learning videos on YouTube often provide a very detailed explanation of various aspects of Arabic grammar, including the use of verbs, sentence structure, sentence types, and other grammatical rules. These explanations are accompanied by supportive visuals, such as illustrations or example sentences, so that students can understand concepts that were previously considered difficult. Students revealed that it was easier for them to understand vocabulary and grammar after watching the content of the learning video broadcast on YouTube, because the visualization presented provided explanations that were easy to capture and understand. These videos present the material in a more interactive form, combining verbal explanations with visualizations that clarify every step in understanding grammar (Saputra et al., 2021). For example, to explain the structure of a sentence in Arabic, a video can show how subjects, predicates, and objects are arranged in a sentence, as well as how verb changes affect the structure of that sentence.

With supportive visuals, students not only learn grammar theory in the abstract, but also can see how the theory is applied in real contexts. This makes learning easier to understand and more enjoyable for students, as they can see firsthand how grammar works in real conversations. Additionally, learning videos on YouTube often cover more in-depth and complex topics, which are not always covered in school textbooks. Thus, students have access to a wider variety of materials and can delve deeper into certain topics that interest them or that they find difficult to understand. These videos are often structured in a systematic manner, starting from the basics to the more advanced material, so that students can learn gradually and reinforce their understanding over time.

Speak

One of the important aspects of language learning is the ability to speak. To improve the ability to speak in Arabic, students need a lot of practice and opportunities to interact in the language being studied. This is where the role of social media, especially WhatsApp, is crucial. WhatsApp allows students to practice speaking Arabic through discussion groups or live conversations with their peers. In these discussion groups, students can share material, correct mistakes, and provide support to each other. One student stated that speaking in the WhatsApp grub made him more confident to speak Arabic. This shows that discussions in WhatsApp groups provide a safe and supportive environment for students to practice speaking without fear or embarrassment. They can correct each other's mistakes directly, which helps them improve their speaking skills. In addition, the interaction in these groups also helps students feel closer to their peers, which increases their motivation to keep practicing.

Social media speaking practice also allows students to practice speaking in a variety of contexts, from casual conversations to discussions on more serious topics. This gives them the opportunity to hone their speaking skills in Arabic which is more varied and suitable for various social situations. Additionally, through social media, students can practice speaking anytime and anywhere, providing more flexibility in their learning process. In addition to WhatsApp groups, some students also use other apps such as Zoom or Google Meet to hold virtual meetings with friends or teachers. In these virtual meetings, students can discuss, ask each other, and practice speaking in Arabic directly, which further enriches their learning experience. (Sholihah et al., 2022).

Challenges in the Use of Social Media in Madrasah Al-Furqan

While social media offers a variety of benefits in learning Arabic, there are some significant challenges to be aware of, which can affect the effectiveness of using social media as a means of learning the language (Jamil & Agung, 2022). Here are some of the key challenges found in this study:

1. Non-Standard Language (Local Dialect)

One of the main challenges faced by students in utilizing social media to learn Arabic is the dominance of the use of Arabic dialects or non-standard in the available content. Many videos, particularly on platforms like TikTok, use local dialects such as Egyptian or Levantine, which are very popular among content creators. Although this dialect has its own relevance and popularity, its use can be confusing for students seeking to master standard Arabic (fushah), which is used in formal contexts, such as in the mass media, literature, and official communications.

The dialects used in these contents often have significant differences in terms of sentence structure, pronunciation, and vocabulary compared to standard Arabic. This can result in difficulties in integrating the knowledge

gained from social media into formal Arabic understanding, which is essential for a variety of academic and professional situations (Faiz & Afrita, 2024). For example, many students report confusion when they try to practice formal Arabic outside of social media, as they are used to the more relaxed and non-standard dialect.

2. Lack of Organized Learning Structure

Another challenge is the lack of a clear structure in the learning content available on social media. In contrast to traditional teaching methods that usually follow a systematic curriculum, Arabic language learning content on social media is often fragmented and does not follow a structured learning sequence (Sulaiman, 2023). Many students complain that they have to search and gather materials from various sources that are not always well organized, which can be time-consuming and lead to confusion.

On the one hand, the diversity of resources on social media allows students to learn in a more flexible way, but on the other hand, it also creates challenges in terms of arranging the order of materials that fit the formal education curriculum. Students often have to rely on their intuition in choosing relevant and useful material, while they don't always have clear guidelines on the ideal sequence of learning. Therefore, closer collaboration between teachers and digital content creators is essential to ensure that learning materials on social media can be adapted to the existing curriculum and provide a more systematic and directed learning experience.

3. Distractions that Interfere with the Learning Process

One of the inevitable challenges in the use of social media is its nature full of distractions. Social media is designed to attract the attention of users with a wide variety of entertainment content and diverse information. This often distracts students from their primary goal in learning Arabic. Students revealed that watching youtube videos is only entertainment, not to study intensely. This kind of distraction can interfere with students' concentration and make them lose focus in the learning process (ElRohmah, 2024). What's more, many students find it difficult to maintain their concentration while using social media due to the temptation to explore other content that is irrelevant to their learning goals. This shows the importance of self-awareness and discipline in using social media as a learning tool, as well as the need for better timing and prioritization so that students can make the most of social media for learning purposes.

CONCLUSIONS

This research reveals that social media has a very important role in the development of Arabic language skills in students at Madrasah Al-Furqan, Medan. Social media provides students with easy and flexible access to acquire more engaging and interactive Arabic learning materials, which in turn improves their language skills, such as vocabulary comprehension,

grammar, and speaking skills. Through platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, and WhatsApp, students can access different types of content that support their learning process. There are several challenges that need to be overcome. One of them is the dominance of non-standard Arabic or the use of dialects in many social media contents, which can be confusing for students who want to master formal Arabic or fushah. In addition, the amount of content that is not well organized and does not follow a clear curriculum is an obstacle for students in obtaining systematic learning. The absence of a clear structure in such content can lead to confusion and spend students' time searching for relevant material. Another challenge is the high potential for distraction on social media, which makes students sometimes distracted from their learning goals. For this reason, this study suggests the importance of collaboration between teachers and digital content creators to create materials that are more structured, relevant, and in accordance with formal curriculum standards. Further research with a larger sample and longitudinal approach is urgently needed to better understand the long-term impact of social media use in Arabic language learning, as well as to explore the factors that can improve the effectiveness of its use.

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