



DIGITAL MEDIA IN ARABIC LANGUAGE LEARNING: STRENGTHENING COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE IN INDONESIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract

This study investigates the role of digital media in Arabic language learning, particularly examining how digital literacy transitions into communicative competence. In the contemporary digital era, technology integration is essential for enhancing instructional effectiveness and efficiency. Despite its potential, challenges in implementing digital media within Arabic language education remain underexplored. Using a descriptive qualitative method with a case study approach, the research was conducted at the Language Development Center (PPB) of Maulana Malik Ibrahim State Islamic University (UIN) Malang. Participants included lecturers from the Arabic Language Education Study Program (PKPBA) and students from classes SY 1, HM 1, and TR 1. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and direct classroom observations guided by structured interview and observation instruments. The data were then analyzed thematically to identify patterns related to digital media usage in Arabic instruction. Findings reveal that digital media significantly increases student interactivity, participation, and motivation. Technology-supported learning environments encourage more dynamic communication practices, supporting the development of communicative competence. However, challenges persist, particularly regarding unequal access to technology and lecturers' readiness to integrate digital tools effectively. The study concludes that digital media holds substantial potential to enhance Arabic communicative competence when supported by proper infrastructure and professional development. It recommends systematic lecturer training and improved technological facilities to optimize digital media-based Arabic learning.

Keywords: Arabic Language Learning, Communicative Competence, Digital Media, Digital Literacy, Higher Education, Indonesia

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INTRODUCTION | مقدمة

Advances in information and communication technology in the 21st century have led to significant transformations in the world of education. One of the major shifts is the emergence of digital media as a teaching tool that transcends the limitations of space and time in traditional classrooms (Faedurrohan & Hakim, 2023). In Arabic language learning, digital media opens up interactive and multimodal opportunities, where students not only receive material passively by listening and reading, but can also see, interact, and actively practice their communication skills (Fikri et al., 2025). Digital literacy, which includes the ability to understand, access, use, and evaluate technology, is an essential prerequisite for the effective use of digital media in Arabic language learning (Miswari et al., 2025). Without adequate digital literacy for both students and

teachers, the application of digital media may only be a formality or have a minimal impact on communicative skills.

Communicative competence in Arabic language teaching now goes beyond simply mastering nahwu (grammar), mufradat (vocabulary), and reading and writing skills. Speaking and listening skills in real-life situations are also necessary for learning to be more meaningful and applicable. Digital media opens up opportunities for dialogue and interaction practice through audio-visuals, video conferencing, and online platforms that support discussion and direct communication activities (Muhtarom et al., 2025). Students can simulate real communication situations, receive immediate feedback, and practice more authentic pronunciation, intonation, and articulation. The integration of digital media is expected to not only increase learning motivation but also accelerate the internalization of Arabic in daily communicative interactions. However, the effectiveness of the shift to digital literacy, namely the ability to access, understand, and use digital media to achieve communicative competence, requires systematic review and empirical evidence (Rahmat, R et al., 2025). Without careful study, the use of digital media may be less than optimal in strengthening authentic speaking and listening skills. Therefore, this study was designed to investigate how digital media can be used effectively so that digital literacy becomes a strong foundation for achieving communicative competence.

Communicative competence in Arabic language learning is no longer limited to mastery of linguistic aspects such as grammar and vocabulary, but also requires the ability to actively use the language in real-world contexts, particularly through speaking and listening skills. Digital media opens up opportunities for interactive and authentic learning through the use of audio-visual materials, video conferencing, and online platforms that support direct communication practice (Muhtarom et al., 2025). Through these media, students can simulate real-life communication situations, receive immediate feedback, and practice pronunciation and speaking fluency in a contextual manner. This aligns with the development of bilingual communication-based materials that emphasize language use in everyday situations to enhance communicative competence (Jumriyah & Rusuly, 2021). However, the effectiveness of digital media heavily depends on users' digital literacy. Without the ability to access, understand, and critically utilize media, the use of technology tends to be technical in nature and has limited impact on communicative skills. Therefore, this study offers a novel approach by emphasizing the transformation of digital literacy into communicative competence. Unlike previous studies that focused on the use of technology, this study examines the role of digital literacy as a cognitive and pedagogical bridge in achieving authentic and meaningful communication skills.

In this modern era, many Arabic language education institutions have adopted digital media such as online learning platforms, mobile applications, digital video and audio materials, social media, and other multimedia resources (Rifad et al., 2023). Along with this implementation, college lecturers and students are now required to have adequate digital and communication skills. Arabic language learning needs to be more responsive to the times, especially in preparing students to be able to communicate effectively in Arabic, both verbally and in writing, as well as understand the cultural context and pragmatic aspects attached to it (Khabibul Umam et al., 2025). Previous research shows that obstacles such as inadequate infrastructure, teacher readiness, and internet access barriers are often major obstacles. Therefore, research on the use of digital media in Arabic language learning must take these variables into account so that the learning strategies developed are truly effective and relevant.

Digital literacy encompasses not only technical proficiency, but also critical skills in selecting appropriate digital media, evaluating the authenticity and quality of content, and avoiding

distractions or irrelevant material (Lisyawati et al., 2023). For Arabic language teachers, digital literacy involves expertise in designing digital media-based learning, determining the right applications or platforms, preparing audio-visual materials, and managing interactions between students (Rochmat et al., 2023). For students, digital literacy is useful in strengthening independent learning, utilizing learning resources outside the classroom, and expanding exposure to various ways of using Arabic (Susiawati et al., 2025). This type of digital literacy is expected to be the foundation for improving communicative competence, namely the ability to speak, listen, read, and write Arabic effectively and confidently in real situations.

The method used is descriptive qualitative with a case study approach, suitable for exploring the experiences and perceptions of lecturers and students in the use of digital media (Hidayat et al., 2025). Through in-depth interviews, direct observation, and documentation, this study seeks to reveal how digital media is applied, the obstacles that arise, how students interpret its use, and the effects it has on their communicative abilities (Jamil & Agung, 2022). The research location was at the Language Development Center (PPB), Maulana Malik Ibrahim State Islamic University, Malang, with participants involving lecturers from PKPBA and students from classes SY 1, HM 1, and TR 1. In-depth interviews and direct observation of the learning process were used for data collection. All data were examined through thematic analysis to find patterns, themes, and relationships between digital literacy and communicative competence. With a thematic approach, the analysis was directed at assessing the meanings that emerged from the participants' perspectives. This study also considered the local learning context, including institutional conditions, resource readiness, and academic cultural aspects (Aprianti et al., 2024). The results of the analysis were intended not only to describe the phenomenon but also to understand the dynamics between digital media, literacy, and communication in Arabic language learning.

This study is expected to provide an empirical description of the benefits and obstacles of using digital media in Arabic language learning, as well as to describe how digital literacy can be developed to support the achievement of communicative competence (Mufti Rahman & Abdul Hamzah, 2025). The findings will include the level of student interaction, their responses to the use of digital media, the readiness of lecturers in its utilization, the condition and quality of the available technological infrastructure, and the suitability of digital media for communication learning objectives (Wardana, 2025). Furthermore, this study also aims to produce applicable recommendations for educational institutions, especially PKPBA, to strengthen the effective and targeted use of digital media in Arabic language learning.

This study employs a qualitative descriptive method with a case study design to conduct an in-depth examination of the use of digital media in Arabic language learning within a real-world context without researcher intervention (Azhar et al., 2025). The research case is located at the Language Development Center (PPB) of Maulana Malik Ibrahim State Islamic University in Malang, specifically within the Special Arabic Language Lecture Program (PKPBA). The focus of the research is to understand how lecturers and students develop digital literacy and how this literacy is actualized into communicative competencies that include speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills (Syagif, 2023).

The research participants consisted of PKPBA lecturers and students from classes SY1, HM 1, and TR 1, selected through purposive sampling based on the following criteria: (1) active involvement in digital media-based Arabic language learning; (2) at least one semester of experience in using digital media; (3) willingness to serve as informants and provide data openly; and (4) representation of the range of students' academic abilities. Faculty members were

selected due to their role in designing and implementing instruction, while students were selected due to their direct involvement as users of digital media.

The research instruments comprised a semi-structured interview guide and a structured observation sheet. The interview guide was developed based on five indicators of digital literacy and communicative competence: (1) ability to access and use digital media; (2) ability to understand and evaluate digital content; (3) ability to produce or utilize digital content in learning; (4) instructors' strategies for integrating digital media; and (5) perceptions of digital media's impact on language skills. The observation sheet systematically recorded: (1) types of digital media used; (2) patterns of learning interaction; (3) student participation and engagement levels; (4) implementation of digital literacy in practice; and (5) manifestation of communicative skills during learning. The research procedure included preparation (instrument development and expert validation), implementation (in-depth interviews and direct observation), and documentation (recording, field notes, and transcription). Data analysis followed a thematic approach: data reduction, coding, theme categorization, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Al Amin & Sutrisno, 2025).

To ensure trustworthiness, the study implemented four strategies: (1) credibility through source triangulation (faculty and students), technique triangulation (interviews and observations), and member checking; (2) transferability through thick description of contextual details; (3) dependability through an audit trail documenting the entire research process; and (4) confirmability through researcher reflexivity and empirically based data. This approach ensures that the findings possess sufficient validity and analytical depth in describing digital media use in Arabic language learning.

METHOD

منهج

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study design to explore in depth the use of digital media in Arabic language learning in an authentic context, without manipulation of variables by the researcher. This approach allows the reality of learning practices to be observed naturally as they occur in the field (Saad, 2024; Uluum & Syamsiyah, 2025). The case study was conducted at the Language Development Center (PPB) of Maulana Malik Ibrahim State Islamic University in Malang, specifically in the Special Arabic Language Lecture Program (PKPBA). The case study was selected to obtain a comprehensive contextual understanding of the integration of digital media in Arabic language learning, including the institutional dynamics that influence its implementation (Safii et al., 2025; Al Qorin & Mahliatussikah, 2025).

Data collection in this study was conducted through in-depth interviews and participatory observation using a systematically designed interview guide based on the research focus. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with PKPBA lecturers and students to explore their experiences, perceptions, and practices regarding the use of digital media in Arabic language learning. The interview guidelines covered several key aspects, namely: (1) the types and frequency of digital media use in learning; (2) digital literacy skills possessed (accessing, understanding, evaluating, and producing digital content); (3) faculty strategies for integrating digital media to develop language skills; and (4) students' perceptions of the impact of digital media on improving communicative skills (speaking, listening, reading, writing). The interviews were flexible to allow for deeper data exploration in accordance with the field context.

Meanwhile, observations were conducted directly during classroom instruction using a structured observation sheet. The observation sheet was designed to systematically record: (1)

the forms of digital media used (e.g., LMS, interactive videos, learning apps); (2) patterns of interaction between instructors and students during instruction; (3) student activities in using digital media, including engagement and active participation; (4) the implementation of digital literacy in teaching practices; and (5) indicators of communicative skills that emerged during the learning process, such as speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills.

Additionally, the researcher documented supporting and hindering factors that emerged during the learning process, both those related to technical aspects (technology access, network connectivity) and non-technical aspects (digital competencies, readiness of instructors and students). Data from interviews and observations were then documented in the form of field notes and recordings, which were subsequently analyzed thematically to gain a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under study.

The research instruments consisted of in-depth interview guides and classroom observation sheets. The interview guides were designed to explore the perceptions, experiences, practices, and strategies of lecturers and students in the use of digital media, including challenges and expectations related to the development of communicative competence (Ismi Rohimatun Ni'mah & Bashori, 2025). Meanwhile, direct observation was conducted in classrooms or learning activities that used digital media, with the aim of obtaining data on interactions, student responses, and the extent to which the media was in line with communication objectives. The research procedure began with the preparation and validation of instruments, research location permits, and notification to all participants. After that, data collection was carried out through interviews and direct observation; all sessions were recorded, documented, and transcribed. The collected data was then analyzed using a thematic approach: the process included data reduction, data presentation, coding of main themes, and drawing conclusions (Al Amin & Sutrisno Sutrisno, 2025). Cross-verification between data sources was also applied to enhance the validity of the research, thereby providing a richer and more in-depth description of the phenomenon of digital media use in the context of real learning (thick description).

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The research participants consisted of PKPBA lecturers and students from classes SY1, HM 1, and TR 1, selected through purposive sampling based on the following criteria: (1) actively involved in digital media-based Arabic language learning; (2) having at least one semester of experience in using digital media; (3) willing to serve as informants and provide data openly; and (4) representing a range of students' academic ability levels. Faculty members were selected for their role in designing and implementing instruction, while students were selected for their direct involvement as users of digital media.

The research instruments consist of a semi-structured interview guide and a structured observation sheet. The interview guide was developed based on digital literacy indicators and communicative competencies, which include: (1) the ability to access and use digital media; (2) the ability to understand and evaluate digital content; (3) the ability to produce or utilize digital

content in learning; (4) lecturers' strategies in integrating digital media; and (5) perceptions of the impact of digital media on language skills. Observation sheets were used to systematically record: (1) the types of digital media used; (2) patterns of learning interactions; (3) levels of student participation and engagement; (4) the implementation of digital literacy in practice; and (5) manifestations of communicative skills during the learning process.

The research procedure included a preparation stage (instrument development and validation through expert judgment), an implementation stage (in-depth interviews and direct observation), and a documentation stage (recording, field notes, and data transcription). Data analysis was conducted using a thematic approach through the stages of data reduction, coding, theme categorization, data presentation, and drawing conclusions (Al Amin & Sutrisno, 2025).

To ensure the validity of the data (trustworthiness), this study employs several strategies, namely: (1) credibility through triangulation of sources (faculty and students) and methods (interviews and observation), as well as member checking with participants; (2) transferability through the presentation of detailed contextual descriptions (thick description); (3) dependability through an audit trail that systematically documents the entire research process; and (4) confirmability through researcher reflexivity and the use of empirically based data. With this approach, the research results are expected to possess sufficient validity and analytical depth in describing the phenomenon of digital media use in Arabic language learning.

The main focus of this study is to examine how lecturers and students build and develop digital literacy in the learning process, and how this literacy is transformed into communicative competence that encompasses four language skills: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. A number of studies show that the integration of digital media, such as podcasts, vlogs, and digital storytelling, contributes significantly to improving communicative skills and strengthening digital literacy practices in language learning (Hadawiyah & Haromain, 2025; Effendy & Haeruddin, 2026; Salih & Omar, 2024).

With a case study design, this research allows for a comprehensive exploration of the supporting factors and obstacles in the application of digital media, including the pedagogical readiness of lecturers, access to technology, and the academic culture that has developed within the institution (Bilotserkovets et al., 2021; Alakrash & Razak, 2021). Through this approach, a more complete picture of the transformation of digital literacy into communicative competence in the context of Arabic language learning in higher education is obtained.

The participants in this study consisted of lecturers from the Special Arabic Language Program (PKPBA) at the Language Development Center (PPB) and PKPBA students from classes SY 1, HM 1, and TR 1. Participants were selected using purposive sampling, which is the deliberate selection of informants based on their direct involvement and experience in the use of digital media in Arabic language learning. This technique is commonly used in qualitative research to obtain in-depth and contextual data from individuals who have relevant competence in the phenomenon being studied (Etikan et al., 2016; Palinkas et al., 2015).

Lecturers serve as key informants who understand academic policies, pedagogical strategies, and the challenges of integrating technology into Arabic language learning. Meanwhile, students provide empirical perspectives on their learning experiences, particularly in the development of digital literacy and communicative competence through the use of digital media. A number of international studies show that the integration of technology in Arabic language learning and foreign language learning in general has a significant impact on improving

students' communicative skills and learning engagement (Al-Ahdal, 2020; Alakrash & Abdul Razak, 2021; Al-Sobhi & Preece, 2018).

This research, conducted at the Language Development Center (PPB) of Maulana Malik Ibrahim State Islamic University in Malang, employed a case study approach where institutional context—academic culture, technological infrastructure, lecturer characteristics, and student backgrounds—was treated as integral to the analysis (Yin, 2018). The site was selected because its structured, intensive Arabic learning system makes it representative for examining technology integration in Islamic universities. Instruments included semi-structured interviews to explore perceptions, strategies, and challenges (Creswell & Poth, 2018), and classroom observations to capture interaction patterns and pedagogical practices not always revealed through interviews (Hampel & Stickler, 2015).

The procedure involved instrument validation, research permits, and ethical disclosure, with data from recorded interviews and observations transcribed verbatim. Reflective thematic analysis was applied, encompassing initial coding, pattern identification, theme development, and in-depth interpretation (Braun & Clarke, 2019). To ensure credibility and validity, source triangulation and thick description were employed (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

RESULT | نتائج

The use of digital media in Arabic language learning has been proven to generally increase student interactivity and motivation. The results of the study indicate that the use of digital media in Arabic language instruction generally enhances student engagement and motivation. These findings are consistent with various studies that confirm that digital media can create a more participatory and engaging learning environment through a combination of visual, audio, and interactive elements (Saad, 2024; Aloraini & Cardoso, 2022). Students report that material delivered through media such as videos, interactive quizzes, applications, and social media is far more interesting than traditional lecture methods. One student said, “When we use videos or interactive quizzes, I get more motivated. It’s not like a regular lecture, which can sometimes get boring pretty quickly.” (Student SY1). The relationship between students and lecturers has become more dynamic with increased frequency of interaction through online forums, instant messaging, and multimedia discussions. In terms of interaction, the relationship between instructors and students has become more dynamic through the use of online forums, chat, and multimedia discussions. One instructor explained: “With digital media, students who are usually passive become more willing to ask questions via chat or forums.” (PKPBA Instructor). This finding reinforces the argument that digital media expands the space for interaction, particularly for students who are less comfortable speaking in person (Al-Hail et al., 2024). Learning motivation arises because they feel more actively involved and have more choices in determining their own learning methods. Visual and audio-interactive materials facilitate understanding, especially for concepts that are difficult to explain verbally. This increase in motivation is also linked to the development of a sense of learning autonomy, in which students feel they have greater control over their learning process. This is consistent with Self-Determination Theory, which emphasizes the importance of autonomy in enhancing intrinsic motivation. However, some students expressed difficulties when the material was very abstract or when their digital background was not supportive. “If the material is too difficult and we only go through it via the app, sometimes I actually get confused.” (TR1 student). From the lecturers' perspective, the interview results show that the regular use of digital media increases student participation, especially in speaking and listening activities. Thus, digital media not only enriches learning methods but also

encourages greater involvement and improves the process of understanding the material, provided that technical barriers and differences in students' initial abilities are taken into account. This indicates that the effectiveness of digital media depends heavily on the alignment between the complexity of the content and the users' readiness, both cognitively and digitally.

The main issues that emerged were related to the availability of technology and the readiness of teachers. In terms of accessibility, this included ownership of devices such as laptops, tablets, and mobile phones, internet connection stability, and access to digital resources such as electronic libraries or educational applications. Some students in areas with weak networks complained of delays in downloading materials or frequent disconnections during classes. The main challenges that have arisen relate to access to technology and faculty readiness. From the students' perspective, the main challenges are internet connectivity and limited devices: "The connection often drops during online classes because the network is unstable." (Student HM1). Meanwhile, from the instructors' perspective, the challenges are more pedagogical and technical in nature: "Creating digital materials takes more time, especially if you're not used to it." (Instructor PKPBA). Meanwhile, from the lecturers' perspective, technical readiness was a concern: the ability to use digital media, create suitable digital materials, and allocate more time for material preparation. In interviews, lecturers cited a lack of training and institutional support as the main obstacles. In addition, there was resistance to changes in teaching methods, mainly due to traditional habits and concerns that the use of digital media could reduce face-to-face interaction. Thus, these findings align with previous research indicating that the success of technology integration depends not only on the availability of devices but also on instructors' digital pedagogical competencies (Abdelrhem, 2026). Furthermore, there is resistance to changes in teaching methods, primarily due to concerns about a reduction in face-to-face interaction. This indicates a tension between traditional and digital pedagogy, which often arises during the transition phase of educational technology.

Table 1. Lecturers' and students' statements regarding the advantages and obstacles in the use of digital media

Informant	Observed Improvement	Barriers Reported
PKPBA Lecturer	Student motivation increases, the use of interactive video/audio is very helpful	Technical difficulties, lack of training; time to prepare digital materials
SY1 student	More interested in learning; more active in asking questions and participating in discussions	Poor internet connection; inadequate device
HM1 student	Online interaction increases, making it easier to understand interactive material	Technical issues, sometimes digital content is irrelevant or outdated
TR1 student	Improved listening and speaking skills, social media as a supplement	Saves internet data, lacks support from lecturers in digital features

This table summarizes the statements of lecturers and students regarding the advantages and obstacles in the use of digital media. In terms of advantages, students who actively use digital media report that their motivation to learn has increased, interaction with lecturers and fellow students has become more intense, and their understanding of the material has improved. Conversely, the main obstacles that arise include technical issues such as unstable internet connectivity, limitations of the hardware used by students, and the readiness of lecturers in designing and implementing digital materials. HM1 and TR1 generation students often emphasized technical aspects and material relevance, while lecturers focused more on the need for training and institutional support. The availability of supporting facilities and digital content adaptation were also a concern for both. Thus, the benefits of using digital media were more felt by participants who had adequate access and technological competence. However, technical and non-technical obstacles affected the consistency of digital media use in learning. The differences

in perception between students and lecturers reflect areas that need improvement so that digital media can be integrated effectively. This analysis shows that in addition to the aspects of motivation and interactivity, the elements of readiness and institutional support greatly influence the successful use of digital media in an academic context.

Table 2. Positive responses from students regarding Arabic language learning through the use of digital media

Observation Aspects	Positive Findings	Observed Obstacles
Digital interaction between lecturers and students	Lecturers utilize forum applications, chat groups, and visual media; students actively ask questions via chat.	Some students appear passive if the material is not interesting or too long.
Student response to digital materials	Many students showed enthusiasm during interactive quizzes and educational videos.	Some students are not yet familiar with digital media; some are often late joining online classes.
The suitability of media for Arabic language communication objectives (speaking, listening, writing, reading)	Audio-visual media, especially videos and recorded dialogues, are used for listening and speaking; digital text materials are used for reading and writing.	Lack of variety in speaking material in digital classes; online writing lacks immediate feedback
Availability of technological infrastructure	Classrooms are equipped with projectors and WiFi; several educational applications are officially used.	Some study spaces outside of campus or student homes have minimal access to stable internet; students' devices are not the same.

Through observations in both face-to-face and online classes, it was revealed that digital media successfully supported active interaction between students and lecturers and encouraged increased student participation, especially in interactive tasks. Students responded very positively to materials that combined audio and visual elements; they found it easier to maintain focus and felt that the material was livelier and more interesting. However, observations also showed that some students lacked initiative when the digital media used was less varied or monotonous. The alignment of media with communicative objectives such as speaking, listening, reading, and writing was generally adequate, especially in the aspects of listening and reading. However, for digital-based speaking and writing, performance is relatively weaker due to the lack of direct feedback and opportunities for real oral practice in a digital environment. In terms of technological infrastructure, facilities at the main institution are adequate, but students studying from home face significant challenges related to internet connectivity and hardware consistency. An analysis of Table 1 and Table 2 shows that: Students with good digital access and competencies demonstrate increased motivation and interaction, as evidenced by higher participation, more active engagement, and better understanding of the material. This is supported by research indicating that interactive media enhances cognitive and social engagement in language learning (Mekheimer, 2025). Conversely, regarding the access and readiness gap, students with limited technology experience disruptions in the learning process, a decline in consistent participation, and a reliance on instructor assistance. These differences indicate the existence of a digital divide, which is a crucial factor in the success of technology-based learning.

Overall, the results of the study show that digital media can act as an important trigger in the development of Arabic language students' communicative competence, especially in the aspects of listening and speaking, if its use is well planned and interactive. The presentation of learning materials involving videos, audio dialogues, interactive tasks, and discussions through digital media allows students to practice speaking and listening in situations that are closer to real life. In general, digital media has proven to be more effective in improving listening (through audio/video) and speaking (through discussion and interaction). However, for writing, there is still a lack of feedback, and for reading, the variety remains limited. One student stated:

“Speaking is easier because you can practice through videos, but with writing, there’s sometimes no immediate feedback.” These findings indicate that while digital media supports communication practice, the role of instructors remains crucial as providers of feedback, particularly regarding productive skills. However, for the aspects of writing and reading competitively, there is still a need for improvement in terms of feedback from lecturers, variety of task types, and frequency of digital writing practice. The most important obstacles encountered are uneven access to technology and the readiness of lecturers to integrate digital media effectively. This condition is most felt by students who are in areas with unstable internet connections or who only have devices with simple specifications.

The interview results show that students reported an increase in confidence when speaking in small groups, both online and face-to-face, after frequent use of digital media. They also mentioned that social media platforms, interactive quizzes, and videos allowed them to review the material at their own learning pace. From the lecturers' perspective, it was suggested that the effectiveness of digital media utilization improves when lecturers receive adequate training, access to sufficient resources, and institutional support in the form of policies and facilities. Field observations reinforced these findings: classes optimized with digital media showed more active student participation, a number of previously passive students became more involved, and interactive discussions became more varied and dynamic.

However, the study found differences between students based on their classes: students from SY1 and HM1 classes showed faster progress in adapting to digital media because they were more familiar with digital technology. Meanwhile, some TR1 class students felt uncomfortable when they had to use new media or relatively more complex devices. On the lecturer side, there are reports that the burden of preparing digital materials has increased significantly; they need more time to design materials that are suitable for digital media and ensure that the materials remain relevant to the objectives of Arabic language learning. In addition, lecturers face technical and pedagogical challenges in creating interesting and interactive materials, as not all digital materials can be easily adapted to student needs. Higher-level students tend to require more complex material, but this also demands greater technical readiness from them as well as support from lecturers. Difficulties in terms of hardware usage, internet speed, or digital media compatibility also emerge as real obstacles. These constraints affect the quality of interaction and the effectiveness of digital learning. Thus, research shows that although digital media brings many benefits, its successful implementation is highly dependent on user comfort, faculty readiness, and supporting infrastructure.

Ultimately, this study shows that in order to achieve comprehensive communicative competence, the use of digital media must be supported by institutions that have strong policies, lecturer training programs, the provision of technological infrastructure, and the fostering of a digital culture among students. Effective use of digital media makes digital literacy not just an additional skill, but an important foundation that enables students to master the four aspects of Arabic: speaking, listening, writing, and reading. This approach, when applied consistently and sustainably, can enrich students' learning experiences and better prepare them in a professional and global cultural context. With support from various parties and the appropriate use of media, technical and non-technical barriers will be easier to overcome. Sustainability in the use, training, and development of digital materials is also important so that changes are not merely temporary. Institutions need to ensure equitable access for all students so that no one is left behind due to geographical or economic conditions. Lecturers need technical and pedagogical support to effectively integrate digital media into the teaching process. Meanwhile, students need guidance

in using digital media productively and critically, not just as content consumers. Thus, the success of digital media use depends on three key factors: Access to technology (devices and the internet) Faculty readiness (digital and pedagogical competencies) Student digital literacy Without these three aspects, the benefits of digital media will not be fully realized. So that strong digital literacy will become a bridge to holistic and relevant communicative competence in the global era.

DISCUSSION

مناقشة

Enhancing Interactivity in the Use of Digital Media in Arabic Language Instruction

The results of the study indicate that the use of digital media in Arabic language instruction can enhance interactivity both between students and instructors and among students teaching has been proven to boost interactivity between students and lecturers as well as among students. For example, online discussion forums, chat groups, and interactive video and audio materials allow students to ask questions more freely and receive feedback more quickly than traditional face-to-face methods (Hely et al., 2024). Activities such as digital quizzes (e.g., via Kahoot or Quizizz), listening assignments using audio recordings, and digital dialogues provide students with opportunities to practice speaking in more realistic and frequent contexts. Research findings indicate that the use of digital media in Arabic language instruction can enhance interactivity both between students and instructors and among students themselves. The use of online discussion forums, chat groups, interactive video and audio materials, and digital applications such as Kahoot and Quizizz provides a more flexible communication space compared to conventional learning, allowing students to ask questions more freely and receive feedback more quickly than with traditional face-to-face methods (Hely et al., 2024). Students become more active in asking questions, providing responses, and engaging in virtual group discussions. These findings align with Vygotsky's research on social constructivism, which emphasizes that learning develops through social interaction and collaboration. In the context of digital learning, media serves not only as a tool for delivering content but also as a social space that enables students to construct knowledge collaboratively.

Based on observations, there has been an increase in the number of students who actively ask questions, speak, and discuss, both in physical and online classes. Interaction is no longer just from lecturers to students, but also involves students through online assignments and virtual group discussions (Rambe, 2019). This enriches the Arabic language learning process, especially in the aspects of listening and speaking, because students hear authentic dialogues more often and respond directly through digital media. Cognitively, digital media helps students process information through a simultaneous combination of visual, audio, and textual elements. This aligns with the Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning developed by Richard Mayer, which explains that the integration of multimedia elements can enhance understanding because information is processed through visual and verbal channels simultaneously. In Arabic language learning, dialogue videos, native speaker audio, and digital communication simulations help students understand pronunciation, language usage contexts, and communicative expressions more concretely. Therefore, increased interactivity occurs not only in the social aspect but also in students' cognitive understanding of the language material.

Digital activities such as audio-based listening exercises, virtual dialogues, and online discussions also strengthen communicative competence. Students have more frequent opportunities to practice speaking and listening in contexts that resemble real-life communication. This is important because language learning fundamentally requires language exposure and repeated interaction for communicative competence to develop optimally.

Observations show that students who were previously passive become more confident in speaking when interactions take place through digital media, particularly via chat features or small group discussions. This indicates that digital media can reduce communication anxiety, which frequently arises in foreign language learning.

However, the effectiveness of digital media is not always optimal. Some students experience a decline in participation when the materials used lack variety or are too monotonous. In addition, infrastructure limitations—such as unstable internet connections and inadequate devices—are major obstacles to the implementation of digital learning. From the instructors' perspective, challenges arise regarding pedagogical readiness and technical skills in designing interactive digital materials. These findings indicate that the success of digital media use is heavily influenced by the readiness of the learning ecosystem, not merely by the presence of the technology itself. In other words, digital media will be effective only if supported by appropriate instructional design, faculty digital competencies, and adequate access to technology.

Although the benefits are clear, not all interactive sessions run optimally due to several inhibiting factors (Karengga & Suti'ah, 2025). Material that is uninteresting or not tailored to students' learning styles sometimes causes interaction to decline. Infrastructure limitations, such as unstable internet connections and inadequate hardware, also hinder the smooth use of digital media in the classroom (Nurchasanah & Fahmi, 2024). In addition, lecturers' readiness in terms of technology use and digital material design is often an obstacle, so that digital media is sometimes only used sporadically or less than optimally. Thus, although digital media contributes significantly to increasing interactivity in Arabic language learning, its successful implementation is highly dependent on the technical readiness of the institution and the relevance of the material used to meet student needs.

Increasing Motivation for the Use of Digital Media in Arabic Language Learning

The results of interviews and observations indicate that digital media in Arabic language learning has been shown to have a significant positive impact on students' motivation to learn Arabic (Yadi et al., 2024). Digital media creates a more dynamic and engaging learning environment, allowing students to feel more emotionally and intellectually involved in the learning process. This level of engagement is particularly evident when the media allows students to learn independently, review material at their own pace, and receive immediate digital feedback. Students also noted that the use of contemporary media—such as modern videos, apps with engaging interfaces, and authentic audio dialogues—helps them see a more tangible connection between the Arabic they are learning and real-life communication situations (Uluum et al., 2025). Observations reinforce these findings: classes that use interactive media tend to have a lively learning atmosphere; students appear more enthusiastic, actively participate in lessons, and demonstrate positive responses compared to conventional, more one-way methods. From a theoretical perspective, this increase in motivation can be explained through Self-Determination Theory, developed by Edward Deci and Richard Ryan. This theory explains that intrinsic motivation develops when individuals have a sense of autonomy, competence, and social connection. In the context of this study, digital media provides students with the opportunity to learn more independently, set their own learning pace, and access materials at any time. Students also receive immediate feedback through quizzes or digital applications, fostering a sense of competence when they successfully complete learning tasks.

However, the level of motivation is not always consistent across all students. Students living in areas with limited access to technology, or those with inadequate devices, report that technical barriers such as slow internet connections or disruptions when using digital applications or tools can reduce their motivation to learn. Some digital content that is monotonous or lacks variety also contributes to a lack of interest among some students (Indriana & Ubaidillah, 2023). Instructors note that student motivation increases significantly when there is adequate institutional support, including faculty training, the provision of high-quality digital materials, and supportive technological facilities. Thus, digital media can serve as a powerful driver of motivation for learning Arabic, depending not only on technology but also on the quality of instructional design, content variety, and available institutional support.

This study has several limitations that should be noted. First, the study was conducted in only one institutional context, namely the PKPBA Program at PPB UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang; therefore, the findings cannot be broadly generalized to all contexts of Arabic language learning at other universities. Second, the number of participants was relatively limited, and purposive sampling was used; consequently, the findings are more contextual and in-depth rather than statistically representative. Third, this study focused on participants' experiences and perceptions during a specific period; thus, it cannot yet describe the long-term impact of digital media use on students' communicative competence.

Furthermore, this study relies on interview and observational data, so the possibility of subjectivity on the part of both participants and researchers remains. Therefore, future research is recommended to involve more institutions, employ a mixed-methods approach, and explore the impact of digital media on language skills through a longitudinal study to gain a more comprehensive understanding.

CONCLUSION

خاتمة

This study demonstrates that digital media significantly supports the development of students' communicative competencies in Arabic language learning, particularly in listening and speaking skills. Interactive tools such as videos, audio, discussion forums, and applications enhance participation, motivation, and access to authentic language practice, while also promoting independent and collaborative learning. However, the effectiveness of digital media depends not only on technological availability but also on instructors' pedagogical readiness, quality instructional design, and institutional support (policies, training, infrastructure). The study emphasizes that digital literacy in Arabic instruction must be understood as a skill integrated with communicative practice, not merely technical proficiency. Findings also reveal a gap in learning experiences between students with adequate technological access and those facing connectivity or device limitations, underscoring the need for systematic, inclusive, and sustainable integration.

Based on the findings, several recommendations are proposed: institutions should strengthen policies supporting digital learning by providing robust infrastructure, stable internet, and technical support; ongoing faculty training is essential for developing interactive digital materials aligned with communicative goals; and a digital literacy culture among students should foster critical, creative, and productive use of technology. For future research, comparative studies across universities and longitudinal research on long-term impacts are recommended, alongside mixed-methods approaches for a more comprehensive understanding.

The study concludes that digital media has great potential to strengthen Arabic communicative competence, serving not merely as a supplement but as a foundational element for speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Success depends heavily on institutional readiness—clear policies, adequate resources, and faculty training—without which digital media’s potential remains unrealized. Students with optimal access and support show significantly greater development. Thus, digital media must be systematically integrated into curricula and teaching methods. When incorporated as an integral part of the learning system, it enriches the learning experience and better prepares students for professional and global cultural contexts.

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