



LISTENING COMPREHENSION AND TEXT REPRESENTATION OF ANIMATED VIDEOS IN ARABIC COURSES: A CASE STUDY IN INDONESIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract

This study aims to describe the quality of literal comprehension that measured through transcript accuracy and reflective comprehension that measured through *istinbāt* or *magzā* among first-semester Arabic Language Education students at Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University Yogyakarta after watching animated videos in the *Al-Istimā'* course. Using a qualitative case study approach, data were collected from 37 students through written assignments via Google Form (30 of which were complete and analyzed), followed by semi-structured interviews with five selected participants. The findings reveal that students' literal comprehension remains low, 57% struggled with literal transcription, falling into the "adequate" category due to difficulties in content accuracy, narrative completeness, and Arabic grammar. In contrast, students' reflective comprehension was significantly higher, with 50% demonstrated strong reflective comprehension, achieving a 'very accurate' score in formulating *magzā*, indicating that universal values and prior knowledge support inferential understanding. Notably, the relationship between literal and reflective comprehension was non-linear: some students with low transcript accuracy produced high-quality *istinbāt*, and vice versa. These findings suggest that listening comprehension is multidimensional and that evaluating *Istimā'* purely through literal measures provides an incomplete picture of student ability. The study contributes theoretically to Arabic listening pedagogy and practically to the design of integrated listening writing reflective tasks.

Keywords: Animated Video, Arabic Listening Comprehension, Text Representation, Maharah Istimā', Qualitative Case Study, Higher Education

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INTRODUCTION

مقدمة

Learning *Mahārah Istimā'* in the context of higher education, especially in Arabic language education study programs, occupies a fundamental position for mastering the other four Arabic language skills. Students are not only required to understand oral discourse literally, but also to be able to capture the nuances of meaning, cultural context, and moral messages contained in the text being listened to. On the other hand, mastery of *Mahārah Istimā'* is also one aspect of developing students' communicative competence, both for academic purposes and future teaching practices. However, it cannot be denied that in practice, learning maharah istima' still encounters various quite serious challenges.

Various studies show that *Istimā'* learning still faces serious challenges, both in terms of learning media and the form of student feedback during learning. Referring to research (Putri et

al., 2024; Kholila et al., 2025; Agustin & Bakri, 2026) and (Arta et al., 2025) mention several obstacles in *Istimā'* learning, including the lack of integrated teaching materials, limited technological infrastructure, limited vocabulary, speaking speed of speakers, and lack of consistent listening practice. Moreover, Arabic has complex morphological and syntactic structures as well as various dialects (Alahmadi et al., 2024), which affect students' listening comprehension process, especially when audio or video materials use unfamiliar dialect variations or sentence structures. As a result, students often only act as passive recipients of information without having the opportunity to demonstrate their understanding in writing. Meanwhile, according to (مدكور, 1991), the ability to represent what has been listened to in written form is an important indicator for achieving deep and meaningful understanding.

One learning medium that is considered to have potential to be developed to address these challenges is learning video (Sholihah et al., 2022). Video media has been proven to be able to help students understand the meaning and context of the material, especially animated videos (Safitri, 2024). Animated videos have the advantage of presenting a simultaneous combination of auditory and visual input that reinforce each other. This combination not only increases student engagement and motivation but also provides a rich context to aid comprehension (Assariy, 2025).

Several previous studies have proven the effectiveness of animated videos in improving vocabulary mastery, literal comprehension, and student learning motivation. However, most of these studies still focus on the learning outcome aspect in the form of test scores or quantitative improvements (Lintang Jahwani Masdawati¹, 2024; Dillah Nur Syafanah et al., 2024), not many have delved into the cognitive processes behind student understanding, especially how students represent their understanding of animated videos in written form. Meanwhile, written representation is a direct reflection of the information processing process that occurs in students' memories (Field, 2009). Without an understanding of the quality of these representations, the use of animated videos in *Istimā'* learning risks being suboptimal.

Unlike previous studies that focused purely on the reception aspect, without addressing the retelling aspect as an integral part of listening comprehension, this study focused on the literal and inferential levels of comprehension of animated video, as well as the forms of oral and written text representation as indicators of listening success. This integrative approach allows researchers to determine not only how much information students understand, but also how they organize, paraphrase, and recommunicate that information. Furthermore, this study also pays attention to the differences between oral and written representations, considering that these two forms of representation involve different cognitive and motor processes and have varying levels of difficulty.

This study aims to describe the level of accuracy of transcripts written by Arabic Language Education Department students, analyze the ability of Arabic Language Education Department students in writing moral messages after watching animated videos, and find a pattern of relationship between transcript accuracy and the quality of the resulting *magzā*. In addition this study is expected to provide theoretical contributions to the development of Arabic listening learning, as well as practical contributions for lecturers in designing listening assignments that are integrated with students' writing and reflective thinking skills.

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study type. The qualitative approach was chosen because this study aims to understand and describe in depth students' understanding and representation of animated video media, which cannot be measured solely through numbers or scores (Hasan et al., 2023). (Creswell & Creswell, 2023) stated that qualitative research is appropriate when researchers want to understand phenomena holistically from the subject's perspective. In this context, the phenomenon in question is the process and results of students' understanding of animated videos, which are then represented in written form of transcripts and *magzā*.

The subjects of this study were first-semester students in the Arabic Language Education Study Program who were taking the *Al-Istimā'* course. The subjects were selected using a purposive sampling technique (Handayani, 2020), with the following criteria: students actively attending lectures in the *Al-Istimā'* course, students willing to follow the assignment of watching animated videos independently, and students submitting complete assignments in the form of transcripts and *magzā*. The number of subjects in this study was 37 students, however only 30 data sets were included in the final analysis. This exclusion was due to incomplete submissions, particularly missing transcript or *magzā* responses, which did not meet the criteria for full data analysis. Therefore, only complete and analyzable responses were processed to ensure data validity and consistency.

Data was collected using three techniques. First, a written assignment via Google Form consisting of three open-ended questions, including:

1. The title of the animated video.
2. Video text transcript (students are asked to rewrite the text from the video exactly as they heard it)
3. *Istinbāt* or *magzā* (moral message/conclusion obtained from the video)

The animated video used in this study was a short moral story with a duration of approximately 3–5 minutes, featuring a simple narrative structure (orientation, complication, resolution) and focusing on the theme of honesty versus lying. Linguistically, the video employed Modern Standard Arabic with relatively slow speech rate and high-frequency vocabulary suitable for beginner. The visual elements were designed to support comprehension through clear character actions and contextual cues, allowing students to infer meaning even when linguistic understanding was limited.

Second, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 5 participants selected based on varying levels of transcript accuracy to explore listening strategies and difficulties encountered. Third, documentation consisted of student writing and field notes during the research process. The research procedures included two screenings of the animated video, individual transcript and *magzā* writing assignments, and semi-structured interviews.

Data validity was maintained through source triangulation, which involved comparing interview data with student writing; technical triangulation, which involved comparing data from written assignments, interviews, and documentation; and member checking, which involved confirming findings with participants. An audit trail was conducted by systematically documenting the entire research process. Ethical research principles were applied by ensuring voluntary participation through informed consent, maintaining the confidentiality of participant identities, and using data solely for academic purposes.

RESULT | نتائج

The research results are presented based on an analysis of three components of PBA student assignments. The following are the main findings. Data were initially collected from 37 first-semester Arabic Language Education students. However, only 30 complete data sets were included in the final analysis due to incomplete submissions. The following findings are therefore based on these 30 valid responses.

Animation Video Text Transcript Quality

In general, student's ability to rewrite Arabic animated video transcripts showed considerable variation. Some students were able to rewrite the text quite well, but others still experienced difficulties, particularly in terms of content accuracy, completeness, sequence, and Arabic language usage.

Table 1. Distribution of Student Transcript Quality Scores

Score	Category	Number of Students	Percentage
4	Very good	6	20%
3	Good (minor errors)	5	17%
2	Enough (lots of mistakes)	17	57%
1	Less (not suitable)	2	6%
Total		30	100%

Based on Table 1, the majority of students (57%) were in the fair category with many errors, while only 20% achieved the excellent category. This indicates that, in general, first-semester students still experience difficulty in accurately rewriting Arabic texts.

In terms of content accuracy, students with a transcript score of 4 were able to rewrite text that matched the original storyline of the video, from character introduction and conflict to resolution. In contrast, students with a transcript score of 2 only wrote one or two sentences that did not reflect the entire video content. In terms of completeness, students with transcript scores of 4 and 3 wrote nearly complete transcripts, including details such as characters, conflict, climax, and resolution. Students with a transcript score of 2 tended to omit important parts of the video narrative.

Furthermore, in terms of sequence, students with a transcript score of 4 structured the narrative chronologically, while students with a transcript score of 2 tended to jump around or reverse the order of events. In terms of Arabic language use, students with a transcript score of 4 showed minimal errors. In contrast, students with a transcript score of 2 had many significant structural errors, and students with a transcript score of 1 showed inappropriate Arabic language use that was difficult to understand.

This variation is further reflected in students' actual responses. Students with high transcript accuracy were able to reconstruct the narrative in a relatively complete and coherent manner, as seen in excerpts such as "وفي صباح اليوم التالي شعر ميمون بجوع شديد، فهو لا يحب العمل"، which shows appropriate content coverage and logical sequencing of events. In contrast, students in the lower category produced less structured outputs with noticeable grammatical and lexical inaccuracies, such as "ثم جاء الوقت عندما شعر الجوع الشديد لكن هو يريد النوم...", indicating difficulty in organizing ideas and reconstructing the storyline coherently.

Quality of Moral Message (*Magā* or *Istinbāt*)

The second aspect analyzed was students' ability to write moral messages, or *istinbāt*, from animated videos they had watched. Table 2 presents the distribution of students' *magzā* quality scores.

Table 2. Distribution of Moral Message Quality Scores (*Magzā / Istinbāt*)

Score	Category	Number of Students	Percentage
4	Very precise	15	50%
3	Quite right	8	27%
2	Less precise	6	20%
1	Wrong / irrelevant	1	3%
Total		30	100%

In general, the quality of students' *magzā* was better than the quality of their transcripts. Fifty percent of students scored 4 (very accurate) and 27% scored 3 (fairly accurate).

This variation appears in students' written responses. High-performing students produced elaborated responses such as “لا تكذب لأن الكذب يجعل الناس لا يثقون بك”, showing an understanding of social consequences. Another student wrote “لا يجوز الكذب حتى لو كان بسيطاً”, indicating the ability to generalize moral values.

These responses demonstrate that students with a *magzā* score of 4 were able to formulate accurate, generalized, and meaningful moral messages. Some students even supported their answers with relevant references, such as the hadith “إِيَّاكُمْ وَالْكَذِبَ فَإِنَّ الْكَذِبَ يَهْدِي إِلَى الْفُجُورِ”, or constructed more elaborated statements like “مَنْ يَكْذِبُ كَثِيرًا لَنْ يُصَدِّقَهُ النَّاسُ حَتَّى لَوْ قَالَ ...الْصِّدْقَ”. In contrast, students with lower scores tended to produce brief and less developed responses such as “لا تكذب” or “الصدق مهم”, indicating limited depth and lack of elaboration in expressing moral understanding.

Comparison of Transcript and *Magzā* Scores

Table 3 presents a comparison of transcript and *magzā* scores for several students representing the variation in scores.

Table 3. Comparison of Transcript and *Magzā* Scores per Student

Code Participants	Score Transcript	Category	Score <i>Magzā</i>	Category
P12	4	Very Good	3	Enough appropriate
P18	4	Very Good	4	Very appropriate
P21	4	Very Good	4	Very appropriate
P25	4	Very Good	4	Very appropriate
P28	4	Very Good	3	Enough appropriate
P08	2	Enough	4	Very appropriate
P11	3	Good	4	Very appropriate
P05	2	Enough	4	Very appropriate
P30	2	Enough	2	Not enough appropriate

Table 4 presents the average *magzā* scores by transcript category to see the relationship patterns more systematically.

Table 4. Relationship Pattern between Transcript Accuracy and *Magzā* Quality

Transcript Category	Average <i>Magzā</i> Score	Information
Very Good (score 4)	3.7	Tends to be high
Good (score 3)	3.8	Tends to be high
Enough (score 2)	3.1	Varied, some high
Less (score 1)	2.5	Tends to be low

Tables 3 and 4 show that students with a transcript score of 4 tend to have a high *magzā* score. However, students with a transcript score of 2 were also able to achieve a *magzā* score of 4. Conversely, there were students with a transcript score of 4 who only achieved a *magzā* score of 3. These findings indicate that transcript accuracy does not consistently predict the quality of *magzā*. For instance, several students with moderate transcript scores were still able to produce highly accurate *magzā*, suggesting that inferential comprehension may develop independently from literal decoding ability.

DISCUSSION | مناقشة

Low Transcript Accuracy as an Indicator of Literal Comprehension Challenges

According to Ali Ahmad Madkur (1991, مذكور), one of the highest goals of *Istimā'* learning is students' ability to organize data from listening material and identify meaningful relationships between sentences, data, and comprehension. The findings of this study indicate that most students are still in the adequate category when rewriting transcripts, thus it can be said that their ability to organize auditory data into a systematic written form is not optimal. Furthermore, when compared with the results of research (Adha et al., 2025), which actually found a significant increase in interest in learning Arabic after using animated videos, this difference indicates that students tend to be more interested and motivated by animated videos, but do not yet have good literal skills in accurately reproducing text.

There are three aspects that pose challenges for students in practicing literal skills. First, in terms of content accuracy, many students are only able to grasp a small portion of the storyline. Second, in terms of completeness, students tend to omit important details such as character names, setting, or sequence of events. Third, in terms of Arabic language usage, structural errors are still very dominant, especially in terms of *mufradāt* and *tarkīb*.

This finding is in line with research (Setianingsih & Robbani, 2024) revealed that the challenges of learning Arabic in Malaysia, including listening, are often due to the complexity of Arabic grammar, which is difficult for beginner learners to master. In the context of *Istimā'*, this difficulty is further exacerbated by the speed of speech in animated videos and students' limited ability to process auditory input in real time.

This difficulty can be explained by the limitations of working memory in processing auditory input simultaneously. When watching Arabic animated videos, students must perform several cognitive processes simultaneously: phonological decoding which means recognizing sounds as meaningful words, lexical segmentation by separating words in a rapid flow of speech, and temporary storage called phonological loop before transcribing them (Luu, 2024). These three processes compete for the limited capacity of working memory, so that when the speech rate exceeds the student's processing speed, cognitive overload occurs. As a result, students are only able to grasp a small portion of the storyline that indicate the low content accuracy and miss details such as character names or settings that indicated the low completeness.

Furthermore, these findings reinforce the argument that literal comprehension is a foundation that has not yet been fully developed in first-semester students. This is understandable considering that the *Al-Istimā'* course has only been running for one semester, resulting in limited exposure to spoken Arabic texts. Therefore, the low accuracy of transcripts does not solely reflect a lack of student ability, but also indicates the need to increase the intensity and variety of literal listening exercises in the early stages of learning.

The Better Quality of *magzā*: Reflections on Existing Moral Knowledge

Ali Ahmad Madkur emphasized that *Istimā'* learning aims to enable students to take the main idea from the thoughts, data, and understanding in a material that is listened to, as well as to conclude the meaning conveyed (Trenggono et al., 2023). The findings of this study indicate that students are quite successful in this aspect, as evidenced by 50% of students achieving a very accurate score in formulating moral messages (*magzā*). The ability of students to draw conclusions from fables about lies and honesty shows that the reflective goals of *Istimā'* learning are easier to achieve than literal goals, especially when the material listened to is related to familiar universal values.

This phenomenon can be explained from two perspectives. First, the video theme used in this study was a moral story about lying and honesty, which are universal values and familiar in students' daily lives. And based on schema theory, which states that comprehension is strongly influenced by the learner's prior knowledge (Arta et al., 2025), so that students' did not rely purely on the Arabic text to understand the moral message; they also drew on their background knowledge and personal experiences.

Students' ability to draw moral conclusions without perfect literal mastery demonstrates the functioning of top-down schemata processing. Cognitively, when students hear a fable about lying and honesty, they do not process each word from the bottom up, but rather activate a moral schema already stored in long-term memory (Sulistiyowati, 2019). This schema allows them to make inferences automatically: even though the word "يَكْذِبُ" is not captured correctly, students can still conclude that the character is lying because of the narrative context and prior knowledge about the negative consequences of lying. In other words, *magzā* relies more on conceptual processing and the activation of declarative knowledge about universal values, rather than on the verbatim accuracy of the text.

Second, the ability to grasp moral messages may require different cognitive processes than rewriting transcripts. While transcripts require careful memorization and literal reproduction, *istinbāt* relies more on the ability to draw conclusions and connect information to familiar values (Amin & Ilmiani, 2025). Thus, even students who are not yet proficient in linguistic aspects can still produce high-quality *istinbāt*, provided they possess moral sensitivity and reflective thinking skills.

The Non-Linear Relationship between Transcripts and *magzā*

One of the most interesting findings of this study is the lack of a completely linear relationship between transcript accuracy and *magzā* quality. Based on Table 4, the average *magzā* score in the "Good" transcript category is actually higher than the "Very Good" category. Furthermore, several students with sufficient transcript scores were found to achieve very accurate *magzā* scores.

Students with "Very Good" transcript accuracy tend to allocate most of their cognitive resources to internal monitoring and editing ensuring that every word sounds written correctly. This overallocation at the surface level leaves little capacity for the elaborative rehearsal and deep semantic processing required for *magzā* (Looti, 2025). In contrast, students with "Fair" transcript accuracy may unconsciously employ a gist based processing strategy: they focus on the story's global meaning, ignoring linguistic details, thus freeing up resources for drawing moral conclusions. This phenomenon strengthens the evidence for a trade-off between literal accuracy and reflective depth in listening processing.

These findings indicate that perfect literal comprehension is not an absolute prerequisite for reflective ability. Conversely, some students may be less precise in capturing linguistic details but possess strong analytical skills in drawing moral messages from stories. Conversely, some students are highly accurate in rewriting texts but only produce adequate *magzā*. This suggests that excessive focus on literal aspects can distract from deeper meaning (Royani & Mahyudin, 2020).

These findings enrich studies on *Istimā'* learning, which have tended to emphasize both literal and reflective aspects. This research demonstrates that listening comprehension is multidimensional; there are both literal and reflective dimensions that do not always develop simultaneously. Therefore, evaluating *Istimā'* learning that relies solely on literal comprehension (such as answering factual questions) will not provide a complete picture of students' listening skills.

Pedagogical Implications for *Mahārah Istimā'* Learning

The findings of this study have a number of important implications for the learning of *Mahārah Istimā'* in the PBA Study Program.

First, lecturers need to recognize that literal and reflective comprehension are two distinct skills and require different training. To improve transcription accuracy, students should be given dictation or *imlā'* practice and structured sentence rewriting. Meanwhile, to improve the quality of *istinbāṭ*, students need to be trained to identify moral messages, summarize content, and connect stories to personal experiences.

Second, animated videos have proven effective in training both aspects of comprehension, provided they are accompanied by appropriate assignments. Lecturers can design tiered post-viewing activities: first, students are asked to write down key words or important sentences (literal comprehension); second, students are asked to write down the moral message or conclusion of the story (reflective comprehension). Thus, animated videos serve not only as entertainment but also as a structured learning medium.

Third, this study also serves as a reminder that evaluation of *Istimā'* learning should not rely solely on multiple-choice or short answer questions that measure literal comprehension. Instruments such as transcription writing and *istinbāṭ* formulation tasks need to be integrated into the assessment system to obtain a more holistic picture of students' listening skills.

These implications align with recommendation that the successful implementation of an Arabic language curriculum depends heavily on the alignment between learning design, student characteristics, and institutional support. In this context, Arabic language curriculum lecturers need to actively design learning strategies that accommodate the diversity of student abilities, both in literal and reflective aspects.

CONCLUSION

خاتمة

This study aims to describe the quality of literal comprehension by transcript accuracy and reflective comprehension *istinbāṭ* of animated video in learning *Mahārah Istimā'* among first-semester of Arabic Language Education students at Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University Yogyakarta. The findings reveal that reflective comprehension is significantly better than literal comprehension, with the majority of students able to extract moral messages despite struggling with accurate transcript reproduction. More importantly, the relationship between the two comprehension dimensions is not linear, as some students with low literal accuracy produced

high-quality *istinbāt*, and vice versa.

These findings advance the current state of knowledge by demonstrating that literal and reflective comprehension in *Istimā'* are distinct cognitive skills that do not develop in parallel a nuance largely overlooked in previous studies that focused predominantly on literal comprehension through selected-response assessments. Despite this contribution, the present study has several limitations, including a single video genre and a small sample size. Therefore, future research is recommended to expand participant samples across proficiency levels, incorporate varied video genres, and employ experimental designs to test specific pedagogical interventions. In addition, ongoing research is currently examining the effects of different subtitle formats on both literal and reflective comprehension.

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