Integration of Digital Media in Maharah Istima' Instruction for Strengthening Students' Basic Arabic Literacy at Ash-Shiddiqi Islamic Boarding School

Nurul Atikah[1], Helty[2], Rofiazka Fahmi Huda[3], Anwar Sanusi[4]
[1,2,3,4]Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Jambi, Indonesia

Abstract: This study aims to examine the integration of digital media in the teaching of istima' skills to strengthen the basic language Arabic literacy of students at Pondok Pesantren Ash-Shiddiqi. In the globalized era, using digital technology in language learning has become a growing trend. However, its application in a pesantren setting requires adjustments to remain aligned with traditional values such as talaqqi, adab, discipline, and the development of religious character. This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design to explore the process of implementing digital media tools such as YouTube, ChatGPT, and Quizizz in the teaching of istima' skills. Data collection techniques involve observation, interviews, and documentation. Research shows that integrating digital media in a focused and context-appropriate way can boost students' learning motivation, improve word understanding, enhance meaning comprehension, and increase their active participation in the learning process. In addition, the support for teachers' digital skills and the availability of facilities like tablets are key factors that support the success of the implementation. This study concludes that integrating digital media while still valuing the unique traditions of pesantren can serve as a bridge between traditional learning methods and modern approaches, making it effective in strengthening the basic Arabic language skills of santri, especially in the area of istima' skills.
Keywords: digital media integration, listening skills, Arabic literacy, Islamic boarding school, Arabic language learning

INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of digital technology has transformed learning practices, including the acquisition of foreign languages. The use of digital media such as mobile applications, interactive videos, and online learning platforms is increasingly implemented to enhance language proficiency. In Arabic language learning, digital technology serves as an effective approach to improving linguistic competence, particularly listening skills (maharah istima'), which constitute the fundamental basis for understanding Arabic [1]. Listening skills are essential because they form the foundation for comprehending vocabulary, sentence structures, intonation, and meaning embedded in spoken communication. Therefore, strengthening istima' competence represents the initial step in developing comprehensive basic Arabic literacy [2].

Although technology has been widely applied in language learning, its implementation in traditional educational institutions such as Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) requires further consideration. Pesantren employ distinctive pedagogical approaches, particularly the talaqqi method and direct interaction between teachers and students. This learning model not only focuses on knowledge transmission but also fosters attitudes, discipline, and the internalization of religious and moral values. Consequently, the integration of digital media in pesantren cannot be applied identically to formal schools; instead, it must be adapted to preserve the traditional values that characterize pesantren education.

In Indonesia, Arabic plays a crucial role as part of religious and cultural identity. However, several challenges remain in improving Arabic language proficiency in pesantren, including limited technological

resources and inadequate supporting facilities [3]. Approaches that focus solely on technical aspects without considering teachers' readiness are considered ineffective in integrating technology into the teaching–learning process. Therefore, teachers' digital competence and their attitudes toward educational innovation are critical factors determining the success of digital media utilization.

In Arabic language learning, maharah istima' is one of four primary language skills, alongside speaking (kalam), reading (qira'ah), and writing (kitabah) [2]. This skill requires an active process involving the comprehension of vocabulary, grammatical structures, intonation, and communicative context [4]. Effective istima' instruction should be structured progressively, beginning with the introduction of basic sounds and vocabulary and gradually advancing toward deeper comprehension of implicit meanings in spoken communication. The integration of digital media such as YouTube, podcasts, ChatGPT, and Quizizz can facilitate this process by providing interactive audio-visual materials aligned with contextual learning needs [5].

Previous studies indicate that digital media can positively impact Arabic language learning. Research by Al-Seghayer demonstrates that interactive technology enhances learners' motivation, retention, and comprehension of audio materials [6]. Furthermore, Warschauer and Li emphasize the importance of contextual approaches in technology integration to ensure alignment with learners' environments [7]. The theoretical foundation for this integration is rooted in Mayer's Multimedia Learning Theory, which posits that combining text, visuals, and audio improves understanding by leveraging dual-channel cognitive processing [8]. Hence, a multimedia-based approach is essential for evaluating how effectively digital media can be integrated into maharah istima' instruction to strengthen students' basic Arabic literacy within the pesantren context.

Based on theoretical and empirical studies, a research gap remains that warrants further investigation. Most studies on digital media use in Arabic learning focus on formal schools and madrasah rather than pesantren, which maintain traditional talaqqi-based pedagogies. Additionally, limited research specifically examines how digital media can enhance listening skills and foundational Arabic comprehension while preserving pesantren values.

Preliminary observations reveal that the use of digital media in Arabic learning within the Pemayung Batanghari region remains uneven. Most pesantren still rely on conventional methods and have not optimally utilized digital technology. Ash-Shiddiqi Islamic Boarding School represents one institution that, since 2023, has regularly introduced digital media such as YouTube, ChatGPT, and Quizizz into maharah istima' instruction, supported by tablet devices as learning aids. This condition provides an opportunity to further explore how digital media can enhance students' listening competence and foundational Arabic literacy.

Based on this background, the present study aims to analyze how the integration of digital media can improve students' istima' skills, thereby strengthening their basic Arabic language literacy at Ash-Shiddiqi Islamic Boarding School. This research is expected to contribute to both theoretical understanding and practical implementation of Arabic language instruction that adapts to technological advancements while remaining aligned with pesantren educational values.

RESEARCHMETHOD

This study was conducted at Ash-Shiddiqi Islamic Boarding School (Pondok Pesantren Ash-Shiddiqi), located in Pemayung Subdistrict, Batanghari Regency, Jambi Province, Indonesia. The site was selected because it has integrated digital media into Arabic language instruction, particularly in maharah istima' (listening). In addition, the pesantren represents a distinctive educational setting that combines traditional values with modern, technology-assisted learning approaches. The research was carried out over two months, from July to August 2025.

A qualitative approach with a case study design was employed. Qualitative research aims to develop an in-depth understanding of phenomena within their natural contexts [6]. A case study design was used to examine a bounded system intensively within a specific time and place [7]. Data were analyzed through the stages of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing as proposed by Miles and Huberman [8].

Data sources comprised primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained directly from Arabic language teachers and students through classroom observations and interviews. Secondary data were collected from instructional documents, activity archives, and relevant literature related to digital media integration and maharah istima' learning [9].

Data collection techniques included observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. Observations were conducted to examine the learning process and the use of digital media in classroom settings. Interviews were conducted to explore the experiences and perceptions of teachers and students. Documentation was used to complement and substantiate the collected data [6], [7].

Qualitative descriptive analysis was applied by following the stages of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing [8]. To ensure data trustworthiness, this study employed source and technique triangulation. Through these procedures, the study aimed to produce a clear account of how digital media integration in maharah istima' learning strengthens students' basic Arabic literacy in the pesantren context.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the research findings obtained through observations, interviews, and documentation regarding the integration of digital media in maharah istima' (Arabic listening) instruction at Ash-Shiddiqi Islamic Boarding School. The collected data were analyzed using qualitative descriptive procedures to portray the processes of planning, implementation, and evaluation within digital media–based instruction. In the discussion, the findings are interpreted by connecting them to relevant theoretical perspectives, particularly Multimedia Learning Theory and the concept of basic Arabic literacy. Accordingly, this section not only reports field-based evidence but also provides a scholarly analysis of the effectiveness of digital media integration in strengthening maharah istima' and students' foundational literacy in the pesantren context.

Digital Media Integration in Maharah Istima' Instruction

Based on observations and interviews, digital media integration in maharah istima' learning at Ash-Shiddiqi Islamic Boarding School was implemented through three main stages: planning, implementation, and evaluation. During the planning stage, teachers prepared Arabic audio and video materials aligned with learning objectives and students' proficiency levels. The media used included YouTube, podcasts, ChatGPT, Quizizz, Canva, Kahoot, Google Classroom, Duolingo, and several supporting applications. Teachers introduced key vocabulary before students listened to the materials, enabling more guided and purposeful listening. Planning was conducted systematically to ensure that the use of digital media remained consistent with the intended learning outcomes of maharah istima'.

During implementation, instruction was conducted interactively. Students listened to Arabic audio or video materials and then engaged in discussion, question-and-answer activities, and comprehension exercises. Observational data indicated that audio-visual media increased students' focus, participation, and enthusiasm. Students reported that learning became more engaging, less monotonous, and easier to understand compared to conventional methods. Teachers also played an active role in facilitating learning and clarifying content that students found difficult.

In the evaluation stage, teachers employed digital quizzes (e.g., Quizizz) to assess students' comprehension. Evaluation activities used audio-based items to ensure that listening competence continued to be trained. The results were displayed immediately, allowing teachers to provide timely and accurate feedback. Students perceived digital assessment as more relaxed and enjoyable, thereby reducing anxiety during evaluation.

Nevertheless, this study also found that the use of digital media was not yet fully optimized. Although facilities such as iPad devices (Abel) and internet access were available, not all teachers used the media consistently. This suggests that successful integration depends not only on infrastructure but also on teachers' readiness and commitment to implement technology-supported instruction.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors

The findings indicate several factors influencing digital media integration in maharah istima' learning. Supporting factors included: (1) the availability of iPad devices (Abel) as learning tools, (2) adequate

internet access, (3) students' strong interest in audio-visual media, and (4) students' basic technological competence. These factors promoted a more interactive and flexible listening-learning environment aligned with the characteristics of the digital generation.

Inhibiting factors included: (1) electricity outages that disrupted internet connectivity, (2) differences in students' educational backgrounds, particularly those without prior Arabic foundations, (3) limited vocabulary mastery, and (4) psychological barriers such as fear and embarrassment when answering questions. In addition, inconsistent use of digital media by some teachers remained a key challenge in sustaining technology-based instruction.

Discussion
The findings demonstrate that digital media integration in maharah istima' instruction aligns with Mayer's Multimedia Learning Theory, which argues that learning becomes more effective when information is delivered through a combination of audio and visual channels [5]. The use of videos, podcasts, and audio-based quizzes enabled students to process information through both auditory and visual pathways, thereby strengthening their comprehension of the listening materials.

Furthermore, students' active engagement through post-listening discussions and practice indicates that learning involved active processing rather than passive reception. Digital media functioned not only as instructional delivery tools but also as mechanisms to increase motivation and participation. This contributes to strengthening basic Arabic literacy, particularly the ability to comprehend spoken information, recognize vocabulary, and capture the general meaning of conversations.

However, the effectiveness of digital media integration is strongly influenced by teachers' readiness and consistency in implementation. Although facilities were available, optimizing media use still requires improving pedagogical competence and reinforcing teachers' commitment. Therefore, digital integration should be accompanied by continuous professional development and systematic vocabulary strengthening for students, so that the objectives of maharah istima' learning and basic Arabic literacy enhancement can be achieved more optimally.

CONCLUSION
Based on observations, interviews, and documentation, this study concludes that the integration of digital media in maharah istima' instruction at Ash-Shiddiqi Islamic Boarding School was implemented through three main stages: planning, implementation, and evaluation. Teachers prepared and utilized digital resources such as YouTube, podcasts, ChatGPT, and Quizizz in accordance with instructional objectives and students' proficiency levels.

The use of audio-visual media was found to enhance students' motivation and participation, while also improving their vocabulary comprehension and general understanding of spoken Arabic. Digital-based assessment further enabled teachers to identify students' comprehension levels immediately and supported a more conducive learning atmosphere. These outcomes are consistent with the principles of multimedia learning, which emphasize that combining auditory and visual information can improve comprehension.

The successful integration of digital media was supported by the availability of learning facilities, adequate internet access, and students' enthusiasm. However, challenges remain, including technical disruptions, variations in students' foundational Arabic competence, psychological barriers (e.g., anxiety or reluctance to respond), and inconsistent technology use among some teachers. Overall, digital media demonstrates strong potential to improve listening skills and basic Arabic literacy when implemented in a planned and consistent manner.

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