

CHALLENGES OF ARABIC LANGUAGE TEACHERS IN THE DIGITAL ERA: A CASE STUDY AT MUHAMMADIYAH 2 SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

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Abstract

This study examines the challenges faced by Arabic language teachers in the digital era at SMA Muhammadiyah 2 Palembang. Employing a qualitative approach with a case study design, data were collected through in-depth interviews with an Arabic language teacher and analyzed using descriptive qualitative analysis. The findings reveal three primary challenges: low student motivation driven by online gaming and unregulated social media use, limited Arabic literacy particularly among students from non-pesantren backgrounds, and the demands of adaptive classroom management. In response, the teacher has implemented varied pedagogical strategies including mufrodat songs, ice-breaking activities, Canva-based visual media, interactive quizzes via Quizizz, and the Arabic Club application. The school also provides robust digital infrastructure such as Wi-Fi, Smart TVs, tablets, and the Pijar evaluation application. Notably, students' digital competencies, when strategically channeled into creative projects, can be transformed from distractions into valuable learning assets. The study concludes that technological advancement functions as a double-edged sword in Arabic language education, offering innovative opportunities while introducing new complexities that demand sustained pedagogical creativity and professional adaptation from teachers.

Keywords: Arabic language teacher; digital era; digital learning.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji berbagai tantangan yang dihadapi guru bahasa Arab di era digital pada SMA Muhammadiyah 2 Palembang. Menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus, data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam dengan guru bahasa Arab dan dianalisis menggunakan analisis deskriptif kualitatif. Temuan penelitian mengungkapkan tiga tantangan utama: rendahnya motivasi belajar siswa akibat pengaruh game online dan media sosial, rendahnya literasi bahasa Arab khususnya pada siswa berlatar belakang non-pesantren, serta tuntutan pengelolaan kelas yang adaptif dan inovatif. Sebagai respons, guru telah menerapkan berbagai strategi pedagogis seperti nyanyian mufrodat, kegiatan ice-breaking, media visual berbasis Canva, kuis interaktif melalui Quizizz, serta aplikasi Arabic Club. Sekolah juga menyediakan infrastruktur digital yang memadai berupa Wi-Fi, Smart TV, tablet, dan aplikasi evaluasi Pijar. Temuan penting menunjukkan bahwa kompetensi digital siswa, ketika diarahkan secara strategis ke dalam proyek kreatif, dapat ditransformasikan dari sumber distraksi menjadi aset pembelajaran yang berharga. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa kemajuan teknologi berfungsi sebagai pedang bermata dua dalam pendidikan bahasa Arab, menawarkan peluang inovatif sekaligus menghadirkan kompleksitas baru yang menuntut kreativitas pedagogis dan adaptasi profesional berkelanjutan dari guru.

Kata kunci: Arabic language teacher; digital era; digital learning.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of digital technology and artificial intelligence (AI) in the 21st century has significantly transformed the global educational landscape. This technological evolution has catalyzed a paradigm shift from traditional instructional methods to modern, interactive, and technology-integrated approaches. (Scorfiana, 2024) Consequently, educators are compelled to continuously adapt and innovate their pedagogical strategies to meet the dynamic needs and characteristics of digital-native learners, ensuring that the learning experience remains relevant, effective, and meaningful.

Within the context of Islamic education in Indonesia, Arabic language instruction holds a paramount position. As the language of the Qur'an and Hadith, mastering Arabic is fundamental for students to comprehensively understand Islamic teachings and literature. (Ahmadi & Saad, 2024; Aman & Amin, 2024; Rosikh et al., 2025; Sapitri et al., 2025) In Islamic-based institutions such as Muhammadiyah schools, Arabic is not merely taught as a compulsory subject but also serves as a vital medium for character building, identity formation, and the development of Islamic competencies among students.

The digital era presents unprecedented opportunities to enhance Arabic language learning through innovative media. The integration of digital platforms, interactive quizzes, and AI-driven tools allows teachers to personalize learning and create engaging, contextual experiences. (Jabir et al., 2026; Setiadi, 2025) These technological advancements facilitate the delivery of complex linguistic concepts through visual and auditory stimuli, thereby making the acquisition of Arabic vocabulary and grammar more accessible and appealing to contemporary students.

Despite these advantages, the digital era introduces complex challenges, most notably digital distraction. The ubiquitous access to the internet often leads students to prioritize non-academic activities, such as online gaming and excessive social media use, over their studies. (Li & Liang, 2022) This unregulated use of digital devices significantly diminishes students' intrinsic motivation and concentration during Arabic language lessons, creating a formidable obstacle for teachers striving to maintain an effective learning environment.

Furthermore, teachers face the dual challenge of addressing low Arabic literacy and managing diverse classroom dynamics. (Zaman et al., 2025) Many students, particularly those from non-*pesantren* (traditional Islamic boarding school) backgrounds, exhibit foundational deficits in reading Arabic script and comprehending basic vocabulary. (Aini & Septi, 2023) This heterogeneity in students' prior knowledge necessitates highly adaptive and creative classroom management strategies to accommodate varying learning paces and sustain student engagement in a digital context.

Recent literature has extensively explored the intersection of Arabic language education and digital technology. Scholars have investigated the challenges of Society 5.0, (Jamil & Agung, 2022) digital media development, (Haq, 2023) and the pedagogical barriers to technology integration. (Mahmudi et al., 2022; Sutinalvi et al., 2025) However, empirical studies focusing specifically on the unique context of Muhammadiyah high schools in urban areas like Palembang, particularly concerning students with non-*pesantren* backgrounds, remain notably scarce. This study aims to bridge this critical gap in the current literature.

Therefore, this study aims to comprehensively examine the challenges faced by Arabic

language teachers in the digital era at SMA Muhammadiyah 2 Palembang. Specifically, this research seeks to: (1) elucidate the transformations in Arabic learning paradigms; (2) identify the primary pedagogical and motivational challenges encountered by teachers; (3) analyze the innovative instructional strategies employed to overcome these obstacles; and (4) evaluate the institutional support provided by the school. The findings are expected to contribute to the enhancement of professional competencies for Arabic teachers and enrich the literature on digital Arabic language education.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach utilizing a case study design to comprehensively explore and describe the multifaceted challenges encountered by Arabic language teachers amidst the rapid advancement of digital technology. The research was situated within the specific context of SMA Muhammadiyah 2 Palembang, focusing on the dynamics of Arabic language instruction in a digitally integrated educational environment. The primary participant was an Arabic language teacher at the school, purposively selected due to her extensive pedagogical background and firsthand experience in navigating the technological transformations and paradigm shifts within contemporary Arabic language education. This targeted selection ensured the acquisition of rich, context-specific insights into the practical realities, instructional adaptations, and complex classroom dynamics required for teaching Arabic to digital-native students.

Data collection was conducted through in-depth, semi-structured interviews, which facilitated a flexible yet focused exploration of the teacher's experiences, pedagogical strategies, and the institutional support systems in place. The interview protocol was meticulously designed to uncover critical themes, including the integration of digital platforms, classroom management challenges, student motivation, and disparities in foundational Arabic literacy. The collected data were subsequently analyzed using qualitative descriptive analysis, a rigorous process that involved systematic data organization, thematic categorization, and in-depth interpretation. Furthermore, the empirical findings were critically contextualized and triangulated with relevant theoretical frameworks and contemporary literature to provide a robust, comprehensive understanding of the pedagogical complexities inherent in modern Arabic language education.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Digital Transformation in Arabic Language Learning

The landscape of Arabic language instruction at SMA Muhammadiyah 2 Palembang has undergone a remarkable transformation since 2022, evolving from conventional PowerPoint-based presentations to a multifaceted digital ecosystem enriched by artificial intelligence platforms such as Gemini, Canva, and Arabic Club. This metamorphosis extends beyond mere technological adoption, fundamentally reshaping instructional strategies, pedagogical models, and the overall learning experience. The teacher now orchestrates a dynamic classroom environment where digital tools serve as catalysts for interactive and student-centered learning.

The teacher's role has shifted dramatically from being the primary source of knowledge

to becoming a facilitator and designer of immersive learning experiences. As articulated by the Arabic language teacher during the interview: *"When I first started teaching in 2022, I relied heavily on PowerPoint slides. Now, with AI tools and interactive platforms, I can create varied and engaging lessons that truly capture students' attention."* This statement underscores the profound evolution in pedagogical identity, where educators must continuously adapt their competencies to harness emerging technologies effectively. The transformation reflects a broader paradigm shift toward professional adaptability in response to educational technology advancements.

Furthermore, this digital evolution has significantly influenced student perceptions and engagement patterns. When technology is integrated contextually and purposefully, students demonstrate positive responses and heightened participation in Arabic language activities. The integration of visual-digital media not only supports vocabulary acquisition but also creates meaningful connections between abstract linguistic concepts and concrete representations. This alignment between technological innovation and pedagogical objectives exemplifies the potential of digital transformation to enhance language learning outcomes.

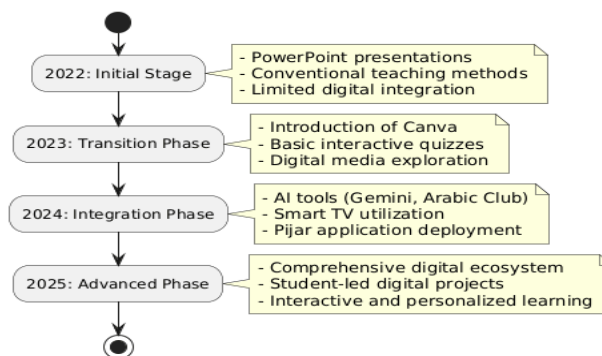


Figure 1. Timeline of Digital Transformation in Arabic Language Learning at SMA Muhammadiyah 2 Palembang

Figure 1 illustrates the chronological progression of digital integration in Arabic language instruction, highlighting key milestones from traditional PowerPoint-based methods in 2022 to the comprehensive adoption of AI-driven platforms and interactive applications by 2025.

Primary Challenges in Arabic Language Instruction

Despite the technological advancements, Arabic language teachers at SMA Muhammadiyah 2 Palembang confront multifaceted challenges that significantly impede instructional effectiveness. The most prominent obstacle involves diminished student motivation stemming from excessive engagement with online gaming and unrestricted social interactions. Many students struggle to maintain concentration during lessons, as their attention gravitates toward digital entertainment rather than academic pursuits, a situation complicated by school policies restricting mobile phone usage during instructional hours.

The teacher highlighted this predicament during the interview: *"Students who are accustomed to constant digital stimulation find it difficult to adjust when they cannot access their phones. Their motivation drops significantly, and maintaining focus becomes a major challenge."* This digital distraction

phenomenon creates a paradoxical situation where technology, while offering innovative learning opportunities, simultaneously serves as a formidable barrier to academic engagement. The restriction of device access, though well-intentioned, inadvertently disrupts the learning rhythm for students deeply embedded in digital culture.

Another critical challenge pertains to the heterogeneous levels of Arabic literacy among students, particularly those from non-pesantren backgrounds. Students who previously attended general junior high schools exhibit foundational deficiencies in reading Arabic script, comprehending basic vocabulary, and constructing coherent Arabic sentences. This disparity necessitates differentiated instructional approaches to accommodate varying proficiency levels within a single classroom, placing additional demands on teachers' pedagogical creativity and classroom management capabilities.

Table 1. Classification of Primary Challenges in Arabic Language Instruction

Challenge Category	Specific Issues	Impact on Learning	Affected Student Groups
Motivation Deficit	Online gaming addiction, social media distraction	Reduced concentration, low engagement	All students, especially digital natives
Literacy Disparity	Weak Arabic script reading, limited vocabulary	Difficulty following lessons, slow progress	Non-pesantren graduates
Classroom Management	Diverse learning paces, varying attention spans	Ineffective instruction delivery, frustration	Mixed-ability classrooms
Digital Dependency	Inability to learn without devices	Resistance to traditional methods	Technology-dependent students

Table 1 presents a systematic categorization of the primary challenges encountered in Arabic language instruction, delineating specific issues, their impacts on learning outcomes, and the student groups most affected by each challenge.

Integration of Digital Technology in Learning

In response to these challenges, the Arabic language teacher at SMA Muhammadiyah 2 Palembang has demonstrated commendable initiative in integrating diverse digital technologies into the instructional process. Various applications and platforms are actively utilized to support teaching and learning activities, including Arabic language learning applications featuring educational games, vocabulary exercises, and interactive materials. The teacher employs Canva to design visually appealing instructional materials, Quizizz for conducting interactive quizzes that enhance student participation, and Arabic Club as an alternative supplementary medium for language practice.

The strategic use of visual-digital media has proven particularly effective in facilitating vocabulary acquisition and retention. The teacher explained: *"When I show students a visual representation of someone hitting, they remember the word 'daraba' much more effectively than through rote memorization alone. The visual connection makes the learning stick."* This approach enables students to associate vocabulary meanings with concrete visual representations, thereby enhancing comprehension and recall. The integration of Canva-based materials not only supports content delivery but also contributes to creating an engaging, interactive, and meaningful learning environment.

Beyond classroom applications, the school has strategically deployed Smart TVs in advanced classrooms, known as Kelas Muflih Tech, to optimize Arabic language instruction, particularly for developing listening (*istima'*) skills. Through these devices, teachers can present audio-visual materials that help students understand pronunciation, vocabulary, and contextual usage of Arabic in authentic and engaging ways. Additionally, the Pijar application serves as a comprehensive platform for learning evaluation, enabling teachers to measure and monitor student achievement systematically and effectively.

Table 2. Digital Technology Integration in Arabic Language Learning

Technology/Platform	Primary Function	Learning Objective Supported	Frequency of Use
Canva	Visual material design	Vocabulary acquisition, visual learning	Weekly
Quizizz	Interactive quizzes	Formative assessment, engagement	Bi-weekly
Arabic Club App	Supplementary practice	Vocabulary reinforcement, interactive learning	Daily
Smart TV	Audio-visual presentation	Listening skills (<i>istima'</i>), pronunciation	Daily
Pijar Application	Learning evaluation	Summative assessment, progress monitoring	Monthly
Gemini AI	Content generation, lesson planning	Instructional design, personalized learning	As needed

Table 2 outlines the various digital technologies integrated into Arabic language learning at SMA Muhammadiyah 2 Palembang, detailing their primary functions, supported learning objectives, and frequency of utilization in instructional practice.

Students' Digital Competence and Creative Integration

An intriguing finding of this research concerns the sophisticated digital competencies possessed by students, which, when properly directed, can significantly enhance Arabic language learning outcomes. Contrary to the prevailing narrative that technology serves solely as a source of distraction, the teacher revealed that students, as members of the digital generation, exhibit considerable technological proficiency that can be harnessed for academic purposes. This is evidenced by students' abilities to create Arabic introduction videos, process and present vocabulary using various digital applications, and creatively adapt Indonesian song lyrics into Arabic as part of creative assignments.

The teacher observed: *"Students are surprisingly adept at using platforms like TikTok, YouTube, and Canva. In some aspects, their digital skills surpass even my own. When we channel this creativity into Arabic projects, the results are remarkable."* This observation highlights the potential of students' digital literacy as a valuable asset for creating innovative, participatory, and generationally appropriate Arabic language learning experiences. The challenge for educators lies not in introducing technology to students, but in redirecting their existing digital competencies toward academically productive activities.

The creative integration of digital platforms into Arabic learning manifests through various student-led initiatives, including the production of educational content, language-based projects, and creative learning media. By transforming technology from a mere entertainment tool into an effective instrument for enhancing Arabic language competence, students develop both linguistic proficiency and digital citizenship skills. This approach aligns with contemporary pedagogical perspectives that emphasize the teacher's role as a facilitator in guiding technology utilization toward more educational and meaningful outcomes.

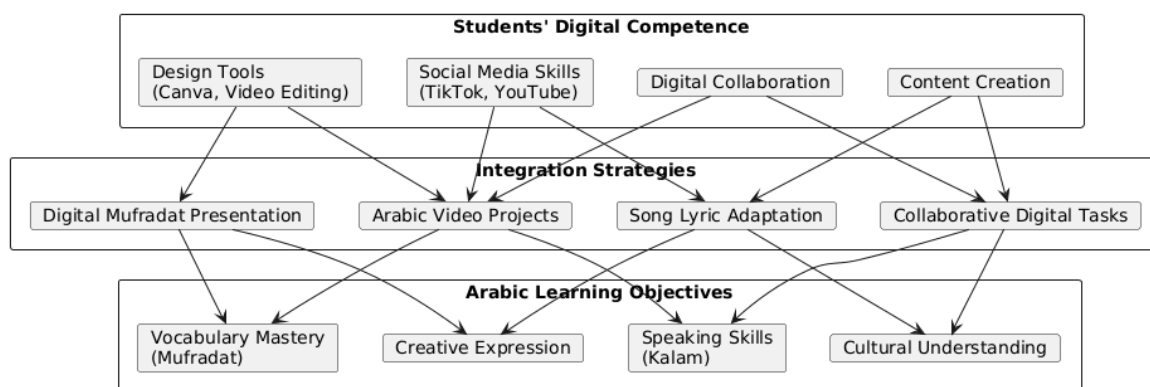


Figure 2. Framework of Student Digital Competence Integration in Arabic Language Learning

Figure 2 presents a conceptual framework illustrating how students' existing digital competencies can be strategically channeled into productive Arabic language learning activities, transforming potential distractions into valuable educational resources.

Pedagogical Strategies to Address Challenges

In confronting the myriad challenges of digital-era Arabic language instruction, the teacher at SMA Muhammadiyah 2 Palembang has developed innovative and adaptive pedagogical strategies that demonstrate remarkable creativity and responsiveness. The first strategy involves dynamic classroom management through the implementation of learning contracts, ice-breaking activities, and varied instructional models designed to sustain student engagement and concentration throughout the learning process. These approaches create a structured yet flexible learning environment that accommodates diverse student needs while maintaining academic rigor.

The second strategy centers on optimizing digital media utilization, particularly Canva and the Arabic Club application, to present materials in ways that are more attractive, interactive, and aligned with student characteristics. The teacher emphasized: *"I always try to mix traditional methods with digital tools. One day we might use songs and games, the next day we work with Canva presentations or interactive apps. Variety keeps them engaged."* This multimodal approach ensures that instructional delivery remains fresh and responsive to evolving student preferences, while the consistent implementation of visual-digital media positively impacts both motivation and learning outcomes.

The third distinctive strategy involves the systematic integration of theory and practice in every instructional session. Arabic language learning is not confined to textual content

delivery but is enriched with practical activities that enable students to use Arabic directly in meaningful contexts. (Sapawi & Yusoff, 2025) This approach combines conceptual exposition with practical exercises, enhancing comprehension, language skills, and active student involvement. Additionally, the morning Arabic Club program requires students to learn three to five new vocabulary words daily and use them in everyday interactions, fostering continuous language habituation through spaced repetition and authentic communication.

Table 3. Pedagogical Strategies Implemented in Arabic Language Instruction

Strategy Category	Specific Implementation	Target Challenge	Expected Outcome
Dynamic Classroom Management	Learning contracts, ice-breaking, varied models	Low motivation, attention deficit	Increased engagement, better focus
Digital Media Optimization	Canva, Arabic Club, Quizizz integration	Digital distraction, passive learning	Enhanced interactivity, visual learning
Theory-Practice Integration	Practical activities, real-world application	Abstract learning, low retention	Meaningful learning, skill development
Language Habituation	Daily Arabic Club, spaced repetition	Limited vocabulary, weak retention	Continuous exposure, natural acquisition
Creative Student Projects	Video creation, song adaptation, digital portfolios	Low creativity, digital misuse	Productive technology use, ownership

Table 3 details the pedagogical strategies implemented by the Arabic language teacher, mapping each strategy to specific challenges addressed and the expected learning outcomes, providing a comprehensive overview of the instructional approach.

Institutional Support and Digital Ecosystem

SMA Muhammadiyah 2 Palembang demonstrates strong institutional commitment to supporting digital-era Arabic language instruction through comprehensive infrastructure provision and ecosystem development. The school's facilities encompass computer laboratories, Wi-Fi networks, Arabic language textbooks (Durusul Lughah Arabiyah), Smart TVs integrated with learning content, tablets, and the Pijar application for learning evaluation. This robust infrastructure provides significant support for implementing innovative, interactive, and technology-based Arabic language learning, creating a conducive ecosystem where both teachers and students can optimally leverage technology to achieve learning objectives.

However, the teacher cautioned that comprehensive facility availability does not automatically guarantee learning success. The more fundamental challenges lie in student-related aspects, such as low intrinsic motivation, limited Arabic literacy, and suboptimal independent learning capabilities. The teacher noted: *"We have all the technology we need, but technology alone cannot solve everything. The real challenge is motivating students to use these tools productively and developing their intrinsic desire to learn Arabic."* This observation reveals a paradox in digital education: as technology becomes more sophisticated, the demands on teacher competence to integrate it appropriately, contextually, and meaningfully increase

proportionally.

To address these complexities, the school has recognized the strategic importance of digital media training and mentoring programs for Arabic language teachers. Such initiatives are crucial for enhancing teachers' competencies in utilizing technology effectively, creatively, and in alignment with contemporary learning needs. Professionalism in the digital era extends beyond technical device operation to encompass the ability to design meaningful digital learning ecologies oriented toward holistic student development. Through strengthened digital capacity, teachers become better equipped to design, manage, and integrate technology-based learning media, ensuring that Arabic language instruction remains innovative, interactive, and relevant to contemporary student characteristics.

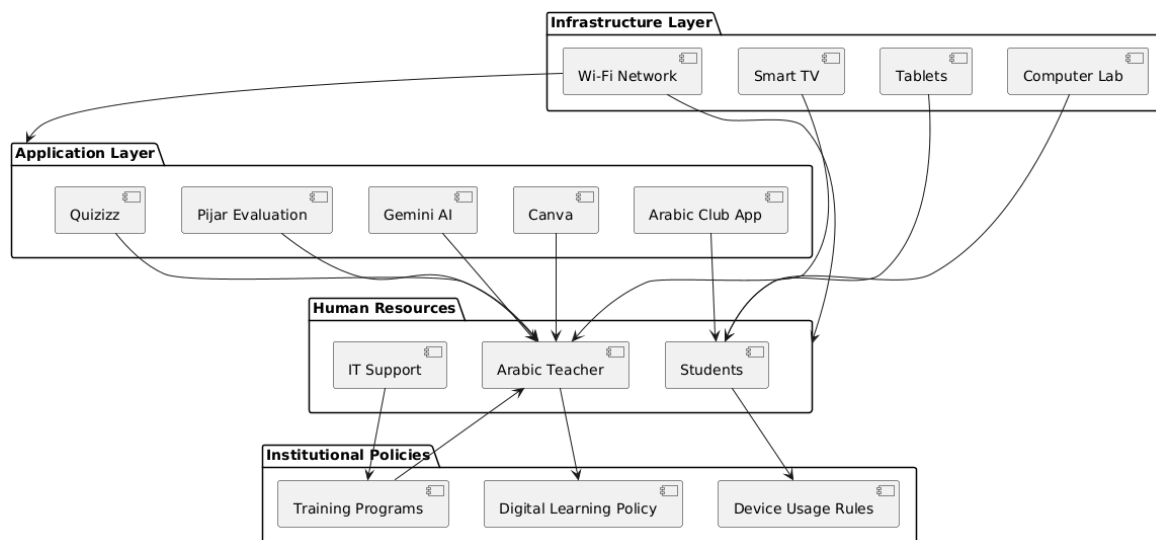


Figure 3. Digital Ecosystem Components at SMA Muhammadiyah 2 Palembang

Figure 3 illustrates the interconnected components of the digital ecosystem at SMA Muhammadiyah 2 Palembang, showing how infrastructure, applications, human resources, and institutional policies interact to support Arabic language learning.

The findings of this study reveal a significant transformation in Arabic language learning at SMA Muhammadiyah 2 Palembang, evolving from conventional PowerPoint-based instruction to a dynamic digital ecosystem incorporating AI platforms such as Gemini, Canva, and Arabic Club. This transformation aligns strongly with the findings of several previous studies, who emphasize that digital-era Arabic learning is characterized by a fundamental shift in the teacher's role from a primary information source to a facilitator who designs interactive, student-centered learning experiences. (Afrianingsih et al., 2025; Hamidah et al., 2024; Zuhirawati, 2025) Similarly, several previous studies corroborate these findings, asserting that digital integration enables teachers to develop varied, creative media that produce more contextual and meaningful learning experiences for digital-native students. (Ahmadi, 2025; Suriana et al., 2025) Furthermore, the positive student perception toward contextual technology integration observed in this study supports the findings of Desrani et al., argument that teachers must continuously develop professional competencies to navigate

evolving educational technologies. (Ayu Desrani et al., 2022)

However, the study also uncovers a paradoxical challenge where digital technology simultaneously serves as both an instructional enabler and a source of distraction, particularly through online gaming and unregulated social media use that diminish student motivation. This finding strongly corroborates the research of AlSalouli, who demonstrate that unstructured technology use negatively impacts student motivation in Arabic language learning. (AlSalouli et al., 2024) Interestingly, this challenge is nuanced by the findings of Rani et al., who argue that when digital media is used in a directed and purposeful manner, it can actually enhance motivation and student engagement. (A. Rani et al., 2023) This contrast suggests that the issue is not the technology itself, but rather the pedagogical approach to its implementation. Manoppo et al., further support this perspective by highlighting that relevant digital applications can serve as effective alternatives to reduce boredom and increase student involvement, thereby transforming potential distractions into productive learning opportunities. (Manoppo et al., 2023)

Another critical finding concerns the heterogeneous levels of Arabic literacy among students, particularly those from non-pesantren backgrounds who exhibit foundational deficiencies in reading Arabic script and comprehending basic vocabulary. This finding resonates with the universal challenge identified by Manoppo et al., who note that disparities in students' prior knowledge of Arabic represent a persistent obstacle across diverse educational contexts. (Manoppo et al., 2023) To address this challenge, the teacher's implementation of adaptive classroom management strategies, including ice-breaking activities and educational games, aligns with Zebua's assertion that adaptive and innovative classroom management is essential for successful digital-era Arabic instruction. (Zebua, 2023) Additionally, the use of varied engagement strategies to sustain student attention supports the findings of Afaria et al., who demonstrate that game-based digital learning media significantly enhances student interest and participation in Arabic language classes, particularly among diverse learner groups. (Afaria et al., 2022)

The strategic integration of visual-digital media through Canva, Smart TVs, and interactive applications represents another significant finding that demonstrates the teacher's pedagogical creativity in enhancing vocabulary acquisition and listening skills. This finding is strongly supported by Kurniati, who emphasizes that visual-digital media significantly enhances student interest and participation in Arabic learning by connecting abstract vocabulary with concrete visual representations. (Kurniati, 2022) Furthermore, the effective use of Smart TVs for developing listening (*istima'*) skills aligns with Helty et al.'s research on digital literacy development, which confirms that audio-visual media effectively enhances listening abilities by integrating visual and auditory elements simultaneously. (Helty et al., 2024) The comprehensive integration of multiple digital platforms also corroborates Zikri et al., who argue that combining various digital platforms creates a more dynamic. (Zikri et al., 2024) and participatory learning ecosystem while Rizqoh & Taufik highlight the innovative potential of media applications in facilitating Arabic learning within madrasah contexts. (Rizqoh & Taufik, 2024)

Finally, the study reveals that students' sophisticated digital competencies, when properly channeled, can become valuable assets for Arabic language learning rather than

mere sources of distraction. This finding aligns with Priantiwi & Abdurrahman, who demonstrate that platforms such as TikTok and YouTube possess significant potential as effective Arabic learning media for younger generations, often surpassing even teachers' digital capabilities. (Priantiwi & Abdurrahman, 2023) Nur et al., further support this perspective by emphasizing that Generation Z's digital creativity holds substantial potential for optimizing Arabic language mastery through engaging digital content formats. (Nur et al., 2023) The pedagogical strategies implemented by the teacher, including the integration of theory and practice and the morning Arabic Club program utilizing spaced repetition, are consistent with Jamil & Agung's findings on interactive application-based learning in the Society 5.0 era. (Jamil & Agung, 2022) Moreover, these strategies reflect the TPACK framework described by Haniefa & Samsudin, while the institutional support through comprehensive digital infrastructure (Haniefa & Samsudin, 2023) aligns with Wansit et al.'s assertion that digital infrastructure quality fundamentally determines the success of innovative learning implementation, ultimately requiring teachers to develop holistic digital learning ecologies as emphasized. (Wansit et al., 2024)

CONCLUSION

This study reveals that Arabic language instruction at SMA Muhammadiyah 2 Palembang has undergone a significant transformation in the digital era, evolving from conventional PowerPoint-based teaching to a dynamic, technology-integrated learning ecosystem incorporating AI platforms such as Gemini, Canva, Arabic Club, Quizizz, and Smart TVs. Despite the availability of robust digital infrastructure and supportive institutional policies, Arabic language teachers continue to confront multifaceted challenges, including diminished student motivation driven by online gaming and unregulated social media use, heterogeneous levels of Arabic literacy particularly among students from non-pesantren backgrounds, and the complex demands of adaptive classroom management. In response, teachers have demonstrated remarkable pedagogical creativity by implementing varied instructional strategies such as mufrodat songs, ice-breaking activities, visual-digital media presentations, theory-practice integration, and the morning Arabic Club program utilizing spaced repetition. Notably, the study also uncovers that students' sophisticated digital competencies, when strategically channeled through creative projects like Arabic video production and song lyric adaptation, can be transformed from potential distractions into valuable assets for language learning.

The findings underscore that technological advancement in Arabic language education functions as a double-edged sword, simultaneously offering unprecedented opportunities for innovation while introducing new complexities that demand sustained pedagogical adaptation and creativity. The success of digital-era Arabic learning extends beyond the mere availability of technological infrastructure; it fundamentally depends on teachers' competencies in designing meaningful digital learning ecologies, integrating technology contextually and purposefully, and redirecting students' digital creativity toward academically productive outcomes. Therefore, it is imperative for Arabic language teachers to continuously enhance their digital and pedagogical competencies, while educational institutions must provide sustained professional development programs and maintain

comprehensive digital infrastructure. Future research should expand the scope of this study by involving multiple participants across diverse educational contexts and employing varied data collection techniques to generate more comprehensive insights into the evolving landscape of Arabic language education in the digital era.

Author Contributions Statement

Nur Aini conceptualized the research framework, designed the methodology, and supervised the overall study. SCA and NE conducted the in-depth interviews and performed data collection at the research site. YAP and AH were responsible for data analysis, coding, and interpretation of the qualitative findings. NH and FH contributed to the literature review, manuscript drafting, and reference management. All authors participated in the writing process, reviewed the manuscript critically for intellectual content, and approved the final version prior to submission.

Declaration of Generative AI

The author used Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools as an auxiliary tool during the preparation of the manuscript mainly for the review of sentence structure and to improve the flow of the text. All artificial intelligence generated outputs were rigorously reviewed, edited and verified by the author for their accuracy and academic standards. AI was not used to develop research concepts, data processing, analytical procedures, and interpretation of findings. Author's integrity of data, the data analysis, the study design, the conclusions and recommendations.

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