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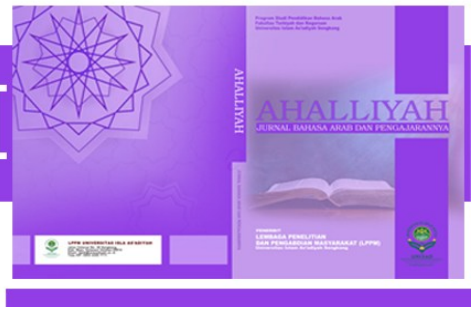

Teacher Strategies in Enhancing Arabic Language Learning Interest in the Digital Era: Study at SD Muhammadiyah 1 Jombang

Strategi Guru dalam Meningkatkan Minat Belajar Bahasa Arab di Era Digital: Studi di SD Muhammadiyah 1 Jombang

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ABSTRACT

This research examines teacher strategies in enhancing students' interest in learning Arabic in the digital era at SD Muhammadiyah 1 Jombang. The digital transformation has significantly impacted educational approaches, requiring teachers to adapt innovative methods to maintain student engagement. This qualitative study employed interviews, observations, and documentation to collect data from Arabic teachers and students. The findings reveal that teachers implement various strategies including gamification, multimedia integration, interactive applications, and blended learning approaches. Teachers utilize platforms such as educational games, Arabic learning applications, and digital storytelling to create engaging learning experiences. The research demonstrates that technology integration positively influences student motivation, participation, and Arabic language proficiency. However, challenges persist including limited infrastructure, varying digital literacy levels, and the need for continuous professional development. This study contributes to understanding effective pedagogical approaches in digital-age Arabic language education at elementary levels, providing insights for educators seeking to enhance language learning outcomes through technology-enhanced instruction.

Keywords: teacher strategies, Arabic language learning, digital era, elementary education, learning interest

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengkaji strategi guru dalam meningkatkan minat belajar bahasa Arab siswa di era digital di SD Muhammadiyah 1 Jombang. Transformasi digital telah memberikan dampak signifikan terhadap pendekatan pendidikan, mengharuskan guru mengadaptasi metode inovatif untuk mempertahankan keterlibatan siswa. Studi kualitatif ini menggunakan wawancara, observasi, dan dokumentasi untuk mengumpulkan data dari guru bahasa Arab dan siswa. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa guru menerapkan berbagai strategi termasuk gamifikasi, integrasi multimedia, aplikasi interaktif, dan pendekatan pembelajaran campuran. Guru memanfaatkan platform seperti permainan edukatif, aplikasi pembelajaran bahasa Arab, dan penceritaan digital untuk menciptakan pengalaman belajar yang menarik.

Penelitian menunjukkan bahwa integrasi teknologi berpengaruh positif terhadap motivasi, partisipasi, dan kemahiran bahasa Arab siswa. Namun, tantangan tetap ada termasuk keterbatasan infrastruktur, tingkat literasi digital yang beragam, dan kebutuhan pengembangan profesional berkelanjutan. Studi ini berkontribusi pada pemahaman pendekatan pedagogis efektif dalam pendidikan bahasa Arab era digital.
Kata-kata kunci: *strategi guru, pembelajaran bahasa Arab, era digital, pendidikan dasar, minat belajar*

A. INTRODUCTION

The digital revolution has fundamentally transformed educational landscapes worldwide, creating unprecedented opportunities and challenges for language instruction at elementary levels. As educational institutions navigate this technological shift, teachers face the critical task of redesigning pedagogical approaches to align with contemporary learners' characteristics and expectations. The integration of digital technologies in education has become not merely an option but a necessity, particularly in language learning contexts where engagement and motivation play pivotal roles in achieving learning outcomes (Klimova & Zamborova, 2020) and (Muhsyanur et al., 2021). Elementary school students, often termed digital natives, demonstrate natural affinity toward technology-mediated learning experiences, making it imperative for educators to harness these inclinations constructively. The challenge intensifies when teaching languages perceived as foreign or difficult, such as Arabic, which requires innovative strategies to sustain student interest and participation.

Arabic language instruction at elementary levels presents unique pedagogical considerations due to its linguistic complexity, distinct script system, and cultural components. Traditional teaching methods, predominantly teacher-centered and textbook-reliant, have shown limitations in maintaining young learners' enthusiasm and achieving desired proficiency levels. According to Alharbi (2019), conventional Arabic language teaching approaches often fail to address contemporary students' learning preferences, resulting in decreased motivation and suboptimal outcomes. The disconnect between traditional pedagogical methods and digital-age learners' expectations necessitates comprehensive reevaluation of instructional strategies. Teachers must develop competencies to effectively integrate technological tools while maintaining pedagogical soundness and cultural authenticity. This transformation requires not only technological literacy but also pedagogical innovation and adaptive mindset.

The Indonesian context adds particular complexity to Arabic language education at elementary levels, where Arabic serves multiple purposes including religious education, linguistic enrichment, and cultural connection. SD Muhammadiyah 1 Jombang, as an Islamic-affiliated elementary school, exemplifies institutions where Arabic language instruction constitutes an integral curriculum component. Students at this institution encounter Arabic both as a liturgical language for religious practices and as a foreign language requiring systematic study. The dual nature of Arabic learning in such contexts demands pedagogical approaches that address both practical communication skills and religious literacy objectives. Rachmawati and Anwar (2021) emphasize that Islamic schools face distinctive challenges in balancing traditional religious education values with contemporary pedagogical innovations. This balancing act becomes particularly delicate when introducing digital technologies, which must complement rather than compromise Islamic educational principles.

Teacher preparedness for digital-age instruction remains a significant concern across educational contexts globally and particularly in developing nations. Many educators received pre-service training predating widespread digital technology adoption, leaving gaps in technological pedagogical content knowledge essential for effective technology integration. Mishra and Koehler (2006) introduced the TPACK framework, highlighting the necessi-

ty of intersecting technological, pedagogical, and content knowledge for successful technology-enhanced instruction. Arabic language teachers at elementary levels often lack specialized training in educational technology applications specific to language teaching, creating implementation barriers despite available technological resources. Professional development initiatives frequently focus on generic technology skills rather than subject-specific and pedagogically-grounded applications. The gap between available technologies and teachers' capacity to utilize them effectively represents a critical challenge requiring systematic attention.

Student interest and motivation constitute fundamental factors determining language learning success, particularly at elementary levels where foundational attitudes toward subjects develop. Ryan and Deci (2000) established through self-determination theory that intrinsic motivation, fostered through autonomy, competence, and relatedness, produces superior learning outcomes compared to extrinsic motivation. Digital technologies offer unique affordances for cultivating intrinsic motivation through interactive, personalized, and gamified learning experiences that traditional methods cannot replicate. Elementary students demonstrate heightened engagement when learning activities incorporate multimedia elements, immediate feedback, and achievement recognition systems characteristic of digital platforms. However, technology integration must be pedagogically purposeful rather than merely superficial to genuinely enhance motivation and learning outcomes.

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated educational technology adoption globally, compelling teachers to rapidly develop digital teaching competencies and experiment with various technological tools. This forced digitalization revealed both opportunities and challenges in technology-mediated instruction, providing valuable lessons for post-pandemic education. According to Dhawan (2020), the pandemic highlighted significant disparities in technological access, digital literacy, and institutional support affecting educational quality and equity. For Arabic language instruction, the shift to online and hybrid learning modalities necessitated creative solutions to address challenges in teaching script writing, pronunciation, and interactive conversation practice through digital means. Teachers developed innovative strategies combining synchronous and asynchronous learning, multimedia resources, and collaborative platforms to maintain instructional continuity and student engagement.

Research on digital technology integration in Arabic language education at elementary levels remains relatively limited compared to other subjects and educational levels, creating knowledge gaps regarding effective practices and implementation strategies. Existing studies predominantly focus on secondary or tertiary education contexts, leaving elementary-specific challenges and opportunities underexplored. Dudeney et al. (2013) argue that language teaching at different educational levels requires distinct technological approaches reflecting learners' developmental characteristics and learning needs. Elementary students' shorter attention spans, developing metacognitive abilities, and need for concrete experiences demand carefully designed digital learning experiences differing significantly from approaches suitable for older learners. Understanding how teachers navigate these considerations while maintaining curricular objectives and fostering language proficiency represents an important research area.

This research investigates strategies employed by Arabic language teachers at SD Muhammadiyah 1 Jombang to enhance student learning interest in the digital era, examining both pedagogical approaches and technological implementations. The study addresses critical questions regarding effective technology integration practices, challenges teachers encounter, and observable impacts on student engagement and learning outcomes. By focusing on a specific institutional context, this research provides detailed insights into practical implementation realities, contextual factors influencing strategy selection, and localized adaptations of broader educational technology principles. The findings contribute to growing

knowledge regarding elementary-level Arabic language education in digital contexts, offering practical guidance for educators, administrators, and policymakers seeking to enhance language instruction quality through thoughtful technology integration while respecting cultural and religious educational values inherent

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

Digital technology integration in language education represents a paradigm shift from traditional instructional approaches, fundamentally altering how languages are taught, learned, and assessed. The theoretical foundation for technology-enhanced language learning draws from multiple disciplines including applied linguistics, educational psychology, and instructional design. Constructivist learning theory, particularly relevant to digital contexts, emphasizes active knowledge construction through interaction, collaboration, and authentic experiences that technology facilitates effectively. Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, highlighting the zone of proximal development and scaffolding, finds practical application in digital learning environments where adaptive systems provide personalized support and peer collaboration occurs through virtual platforms (Warschauer & Healey, 2018). Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) has evolved from behaviorist drill-and-practice programs to communicative and integrative approaches leveraging multimedia, internet connectivity, and artificial intelligence. Contemporary technology-enhanced language learning emphasizes authentic communication, cultural exploration, and meaning-making rather than mere form-focused practice, aligning with communicative language teaching principles.

Teacher strategies for enhancing learning interest in digital contexts encompass pedagogical, technological, and motivational dimensions requiring integrated consideration. Effective strategies transcend mere technology provision, instead focusing on purposeful integration that enhances rather than distracts from learning objectives. Kearney et al. (2012) identified personalization, authenticity, and collaboration as key pedagogical features distinguishing effective mobile learning implementations from ineffective ones. For Arabic language instruction specifically, strategies must address linguistic complexity, script literacy development, and cultural content integration while leveraging technology's interactive and multimedia capabilities. Gamification, incorporating game design elements in non-game contexts, has emerged as a powerful strategy for enhancing motivation and engagement in language learning. Deterding et al. (2011) distinguished gamification from serious games, emphasizing the strategic use of specific game elements rather than complete game environments. Research indicates that gamification elements including points, badges, leaderboards, and progress indicators can increase student engagement, persistence, and achievement when implemented thoughtfully alongside sound pedagogical practices.

Arabic language learning at elementary levels presents distinctive challenges requiring specialized pedagogical considerations and strategic interventions. The Arabic script, reading direction, phonological system, and morphological complexity differ substantially from languages using Latin scripts, creating cognitive and perceptual challenges for young learners. Saiegh-Haddad and Henkin-Roitfarb (2014) found that Arabic diglossia, where Modern Standard Arabic differs significantly from spoken dialects, complicates language acquisition processes and requires careful instructional sequencing. Elementary students must simultaneously develop script recognition, phonological awareness, vocabulary knowledge, and grammatical understanding while navigating linguistic features absent in their first language. Digital technologies offer unique affordances for addressing these challenges through multimodal presentations, interactive practice opportunities, and immediate corrective feedback. Applications incorporating visual-auditory associations, animated script formation demonstrations, and voice recognition for pronunciation practice can scaffold learning processes in ways traditional methods cannot replicate. However, technology selection must reflect developmentally appropriate design principles, avoiding cognitive over-

load while maintaining engagement through age-appropriate content and interaction patterns (Al-Seghayer, 2021).

C. METHOD

This research employed a qualitative descriptive approach to investigate teacher strategies in enhancing Arabic language learning interest in the digital era at SD Muhammadiyah 1 Jombang. Qualitative methodology was selected for its capacity to provide rich, contextual understanding of complex educational phenomena through detailed examination of participants' experiences, perspectives, and practices. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), qualitative research enables researchers to explore how individuals construct meaning from their experiences within specific contexts, making it particularly suitable for investigating educational strategies and their implementation. The descriptive orientation focused on systematically documenting and analyzing current practices rather than implementing interventions or testing hypotheses. This approach allowed comprehensive exploration of the multifaceted nature of teacher strategies, technological implementations, and contextual factors influencing practice. Data collection occurred during the 2024-2025 academic year, involving two Arabic language teachers and 30 fifth-grade students as research participants selected through purposive sampling based on their direct involvement in digital-era Arabic language instruction.

Multiple data collection methods were employed to achieve triangulation and enhance research trustworthiness, including semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis. Semi-structured interviews with teachers explored their pedagogical philosophies, strategy selection rationales, technology integration practices, perceived challenges, and observed student responses. Student focus group discussions elicited learners' perspectives regarding their Arabic learning experiences, digital tool preferences, and perceived impacts on their interest and achievement. Classroom observations documented actual instructional practices, technology utilization patterns, student engagement indicators, and teacher-student interactions across multiple lessons. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2015), multiple data sources enable researchers to develop comprehensive understanding while verifying findings through cross-validation. Document analysis examined lesson plans, digital learning materials, student work samples, and institutional technology policies to contextualize observed practices within broader curricular and institutional frameworks. Data analysis followed thematic analysis procedures involving coding, pattern identification, and theme development, utilizing NVivo software to manage and organize qualitative data systematically while maintaining analytical rigor through consistent application of established qualitative research standards.

D. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The investigation into teacher strategies at SD Muhammadiyah 1 Jombang revealed multifaceted approaches to enhancing Arabic language learning interest in the digital era. Teachers demonstrated adaptive practices combining pedagogical innovation with technological integration while navigating contextual constraints and opportunities. The findings illuminate both successful implementations and persistent challenges, providing insights into the complex realities of digital-age language education at elementary levels. Three primary themes emerged from data analysis: gamification and interactive learning strategies, multimedia integration and digital storytelling approaches, and blended learning implementation with adaptive technologies. These themes represent interconnected rather than discrete strategy categories, with teachers frequently combining elements across categories to create comprehensive learning experiences.

Gamification and Interactive Learning Strategies

Teachers at SD Muhammadiyah 1 Jombang systematically incorporated game elements into Arabic language instruction to enhance student motivation and engagement. The implementation included digital platforms such as Quizizz and Kahoot for vocabulary review, point-based reward systems for lesson participation, and competitive team activities addressing reading and writing skills. Classroom observations revealed heightened student enthusiasm during gamified activities, with participation rates exceeding 90% compared to approximately 60% during traditional instruction. One teacher explained that gamification transformed Arabic learning from a perceived obligation into an enjoyable challenge where students actively sought opportunities to demonstrate knowledge and earn recognition. The competitive yet supportive environment fostered by leaderboards and team achievements created positive peer dynamics where students encouraged each other's learning rather than merely competing individually.

The pedagogical foundation for these gamification strategies reflected understanding that elementary students respond strongly to immediate feedback, visible progress indicators, and achievement recognition. Teachers designed leveled challenges progressing from basic script recognition to complex sentence construction, allowing students to experience incremental success and develop self-efficacy. Digital badges recognizing specific accomplishments such as mastering alphabet letters, completing vocabulary sets, or achieving pronunciation accuracy provided tangible markers of progress. Students particularly valued the visual representation of their learning journey through progress bars and achievement collections, which made abstract language proficiency concrete and motivating. Teachers reported that gamification reduced anxiety often associated with foreign language learning, as the game context reframed errors as learning opportunities rather than failures.

However, implementation challenges emerged regarding maintaining pedagogical focus amid entertainment elements and ensuring equitable access to gamified learning experiences. Some students became overly focused on point accumulation rather than genuine language learning, requiring teachers to carefully balance competitive elements with collaborative learning goals. Teachers addressed this by incorporating team-based challenges where collective success depended on all members' contributions, reducing individual competition while maintaining engagement. Technical issues including unstable internet connectivity and limited device availability occasionally disrupted gamified activities, necessitating backup plans and flexible implementation approaches. Teachers developed offline gamification alternatives using physical manipulatives and board games that translated digital game mechanics into non-digital formats, ensuring continuity when technology proved unreliable.

The long-term impact of gamification on Arabic language interest appeared promising based on teacher observations and student feedback. Students demonstrated increased voluntary engagement with Arabic content outside required instruction, with several students independently exploring Arabic learning applications at home. Parents reported that children discussed Arabic lessons with enthusiasm previously absent from their language learning experiences. The transformation from extrinsic motivation driven by grades to more intrinsic interest fostered by enjoyable, challenging, and rewarding learning experiences represented a significant pedagogical achievement. Teachers noted, however, that sustaining engagement required continuous innovation in game design and content to prevent novelty effects from diminishing over time, indicating the need for ongoing professional development in educational gaming strategies.

Multimedia Integration and Digital Storytelling Approaches

The integration of multimedia resources constituted a central strategy for enhancing Arabic language instruction at SD Muhammadiyah 1 Jombang, with teachers utilizing videos, animations, audio recordings, and interactive visuals to create rich learning experiences.

Teachers curated content from platforms including YouTube educational channels, dedicated Arabic learning websites, and Islamic educational resources featuring animated stories with Arabic narration and subtitles. The multimodal presentation of language content addressed diverse learning preferences while providing multiple representations that supported comprehension and retention. Visual animations demonstrating Arabic letter formation proved particularly effective for teaching proper writing techniques, with students able to observe stroke order and directionality repeatedly at their own pace.

Digital storytelling emerged as an especially powerful approach for combining language learning with cultural education and creative expression. Teachers selected stories from Islamic traditions and Arab culture, presenting them through animated videos with Arabic audio and gradually introducing text elements as students' reading proficiency developed. Students subsequently created their own simple digital stories in Arabic using applications like Book Creator and StoryJumper, incorporating drawings, voice recordings, and text to narrate personal experiences or retell learned stories. This production-oriented activity transformed students from passive content consumers to active language users, necessitating vocabulary selection, sentence construction, and pronunciation practice in meaningful communicative contexts. The digital format enabled easy revision and refinement, reducing the permanence anxiety often associated with written work while producing polished final products students felt proud to share.

The cognitive benefits of multimedia integration extended beyond motivation to include enhanced comprehension and retention through dual coding effects. Students demonstrated superior vocabulary recall for words learned through videos combining visual imagery, auditory presentation, and textual representation compared to words encountered only in textbook format. The audiovisual content provided authentic pronunciation models and cultural context difficult to convey through static materials, helping students develop more accurate phonological representations and cultural understanding. Teachers noted that multimedia resources particularly benefited students with reading difficulties or those requiring additional support, as the visual and auditory scaffolds compensated for text-based challenges while maintaining access to content. However, careful curation was essential to ensure content appropriateness, linguistic accessibility, and alignment with curricular objectives rather than merely selecting visually appealing but pedagogically weak materials.

The Multimedia Integration Framework illustrates a structured pedagogical approach designed to enhance language learning through four distinct stages. It begins with the Input Phase, where curated Arabic digital content is selected to provide authentic linguistic exposure. This transitions into the Processing Phase, which employs guided instruction—including viewing activities and discussion—to ensure comprehension. In the final stages, students move from passive consumption to active creation in the Output Phase, producing their own digital stories, before concluding with a comprehensive Assessment Phase that incorporates peer feedback and self-reflection.The effectiveness of this framework is empirically supported by the student engagement metrics presented in the lower section of the diagram. With a sample size of 30 students, the data reveals a substantial increase in active participation when moving from traditional teaching methods (60%) to multimedia-driven strategies. Most notably, the Combined Approach achieves the highest engagement rate at 95%, suggesting that the synergy of digital storytelling and integrated multimedia tools creates a significantly more motivating and interactive environment for learners than conventional classroom techniques.

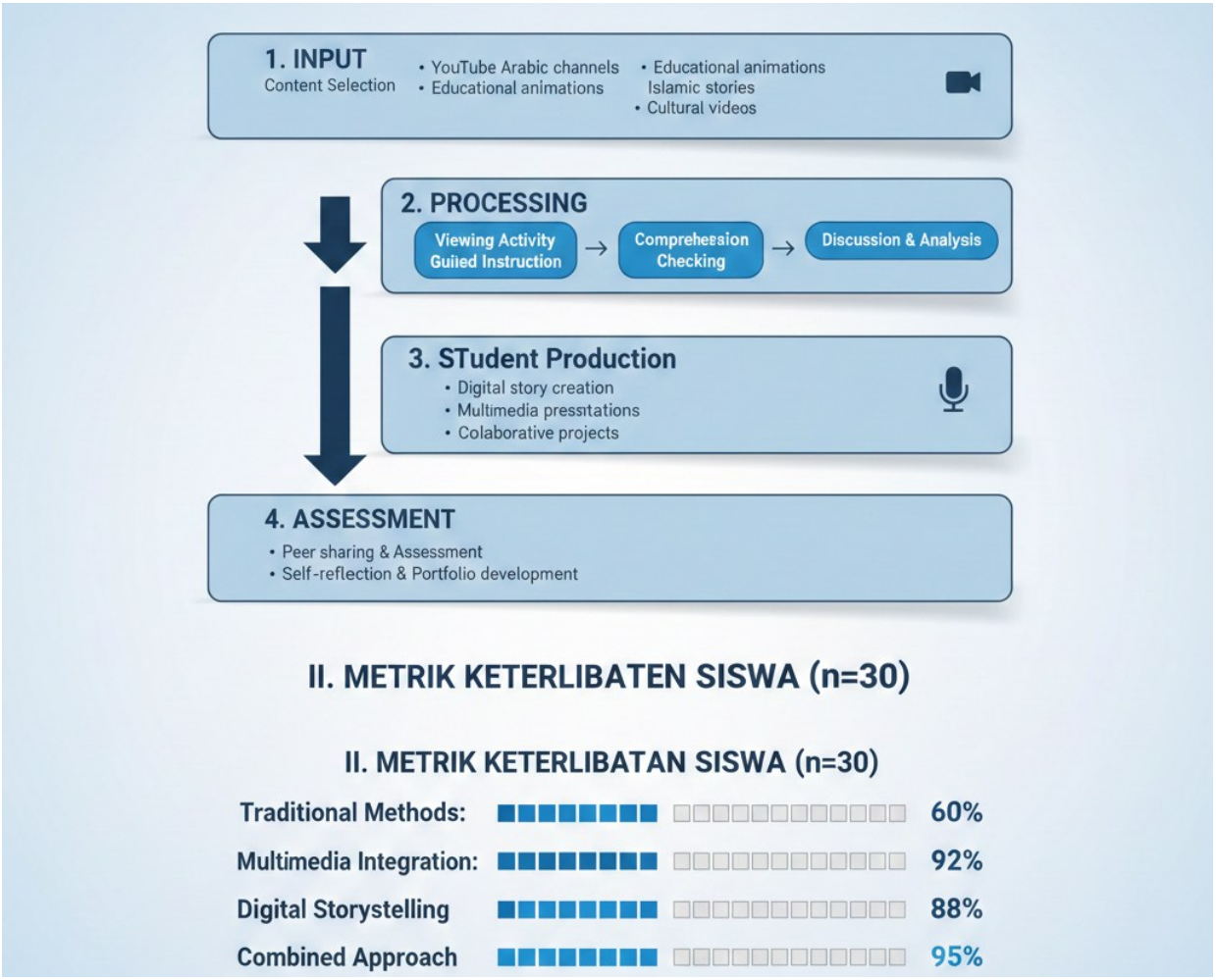

Figure 1. Strategic Framework for Multimedia Integration and Student Engagement Outcomes

Technical and pedagogical challenges in multimedia integration included managing screen time appropriately, preventing passive consumption, and developing students' critical media literacy. Teachers implemented structured viewing guides with focused questions requiring active engagement rather than passive watching, transforming video viewing into analytical activities. Time management proved challenging as multimedia activities often required more instructional time than anticipated, necessitating careful selection of essential content and efficient activity design. Some students initially demonstrated difficulty transitioning from entertainment-oriented media consumption to educationally-focused viewing, requiring explicit instruction in active learning strategies and purpose-driven engagement with digital content. Teachers addressed this through modeling analytical viewing behaviors and gradually increasing expectations for independent critical engagement with multimedia resources.

Blended Learning Implementation and Adaptive Technologies

The implementation of blended learning approaches combining face-to-face instruction with digital learning components represented a sophisticated strategy for personalizing Arabic language education while maximizing instructional efficiency. Teachers at SD Muhammadiyah 1 Jombang utilized learning management systems to distribute materials, assign practice activities, and track student progress outside classroom time, enabling more interactive and communicative use of synchronous instructional periods. Digital platforms

provided opportunities for differentiated instruction difficult to achieve in traditional whole-class formats, with students accessing content and practice activities matched to their proficiency levels and learning pace. This personalization proved particularly valuable given the significant variation in Arabic language background knowledge among students, ranging from those with minimal exposure to children from Arabic-speaking families or those receiving supplementary religious education.

Adaptive learning applications incorporating artificial intelligence to adjust difficulty based on student performance offered powerful tools for individualized practice and skill development. Teachers integrated applications such as Duolingo Arabic and specialized Arabic alphabet learning programs providing immediate feedback and adaptive progression through increasingly challenging content. Students appreciated the self-paced nature of these platforms, which reduced performance anxiety and allowed multiple attempts without teacher observation or peer comparison. The applications' data analytics capabilities enabled teachers to monitor individual and class-wide progress patterns, identifying common difficulties requiring additional instruction and recognizing students needing intervention or acceleration. This data-informed instruction represented a significant advantage over traditional approaches where teachers relied primarily on periodic assessments and subjective observations to gauge learning progress.

The blended learning model facilitated flipped classroom implementations where students engaged with introductory content through videos and readings at home, reserving classroom time for interactive practice, clarification, and application activities. This approach proved effective for topics like grammar rules and vocabulary introduction, which students could encounter initially through multimedia presentations with pause and replay capabilities, then practice and refine understanding through teacher-facilitated activities. However, successful implementation required consistent student completion of pre-class activities, which proved challenging given varying home technology access and parental support levels. Teachers addressed this by providing in-school time for students lacking home technology access and developing parent communication strategies emphasizing the importance of supporting independent learning activities.

The integration of collaborative technologies transformed Arabic language learning from primarily individual activity to more socially-constructed process aligning with sociocultural learning theories. Google Classroom facilitated group projects where students collaboratively created Arabic vocabulary resources, cultural presentations, and language learning materials for younger students. Online discussion forums enabled asynchronous conversation practice where students posted simple Arabic sentences describing daily experiences, responded to peers' posts, and received teacher feedback focused on communication effectiveness rather than mere error correction. These digital collaborative spaces provided low-stakes practice opportunities where students experimented with language use without the immediate performance pressure of real-time conversation, building confidence and fluency gradually. Teachers observed that students who initially demonstrated reluctance to speak Arabic in class became more willing to attempt oral communication after gaining confidence through written digital interactions, suggesting that blended approaches can effectively address affective factors inhibiting language production.

E. CONCLUSION

This research demonstrates that teachers at SD Muhammadiyah 1 Jombang have developed multifaceted strategies effectively enhancing Arabic language learning interest in the digital era through thoughtful integration of gamification, multimedia resources, digital storytelling, and blended learning approaches. The findings reveal that successful technology integration requires more than merely providing digital tools, instead demanding pedagogically-grounded implementation addressing both cognitive and affective learning dimen-

sions while remaining responsive to contextual realities including infrastructure limitations, varying digital literacy levels, and institutional values. The observed positive impacts on student engagement, motivation, and learning outcomes validate the potential of digital technologies to transform foreign language education at elementary levels when implemented strategically. However, persistent challenges regarding equitable access, teacher professional development needs, and maintaining pedagogical focus amid technological possibilities require ongoing attention from educators, administrators, and policymakers committed to quality language education in increasingly digital educational landscapes.

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