



Navigating Digital Shifts in Arabic Language Education: A Contextual Inquiry in Indonesian Islamic Primary Schools

Tasniya Fadhila Yusup

Universitas Islam Negeri Sayyid Ali
Rahmatullah Tulungagung
INDONESIA

Muhammad Afthon Ulin Nuha

Universitas Islam Negeri
Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung
INDONESIA

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Abstract

Background of study: Arabic instruction in Indonesian Madrasah Ibtidaiyah often struggles with low student engagement and conventional methods.

Aims: This research sets out to explore how digital technology is applied in Arabic language teaching at the elementary Islamic school level. It focuses on identifying the types of tools used, their influence on students' learning experiences, and the obstacles faced during implementation.

Methods: Using a qualitative descriptive approach, this study was carried out in a selected MI in Central Java. Data were collected through class observations, interviews with both teachers and students, and document reviews including lesson plans and instructional content. The analysis followed thematic coding to draw meaningful insights.

Result: The findings reveal that digital platforms like Duolingo, Quizizz, and interactive videos positively affect students' interest and understanding, especially in vocabulary and pronunciation. Many students reported enjoying the learning process more when technology was involved. Nevertheless, issues such as limited access to devices, unstable internet connections, and varying digital competencies among teachers remained significant challenges.

Conclusion: Integrating digital tools into Arabic language education at the MI level contributes positively to students' motivation and learning outcomes. However, its success relies heavily on continuous teacher training, improved infrastructure, and ensuring equal access to technology. A blended model that combines digital and traditional instruction appears to be a practical way forward.

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INTRODUCTION

In today's era of rapid digital advancement, education systems are under increasing pressure to innovate—especially at the primary level where foundational skills are formed. Arabic, as a core subject in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI), plays a crucial role in shaping students' ability to understand Islamic texts. However, the way Arabic is taught often relies on outdated strategies such as rote memorization and isolated grammar drills, leaving students disengaged and struggling to apply the language meaningfully. The gap between curriculum goals and classroom practices has become more visible, prompting educators to question the effectiveness of traditional methods. With minimal student participation and limited access to dynamic resources, Arabic instruction tends to fall short of its potential (Allaithy & Zaki, n.d.; Assalihee et al., 2024). This concern becomes more pressing when considering that Arabic literacy is not just a linguistic aim but a religious necessity. Therefore, addressing this issue is not simply a pedagogical choice, it is an educational imperative.

In light of this, digital technology emerges as a powerful tool that could reshape how students learn Arabic. Over the past few years, language learning applications, interactive videos, and online quizzes have become more accessible, even to primary learners (Manegre & Sabiri, 2022; Sofi-Karim

* Corresponding author:

Tasniya Fadhila Yusup, Universitas Islam Negeri Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah, INDONESIA
tfadhiyus18@gmail.com

et al., 2023). These tools offer a variety of formats that help learners connect with content through visuals, sound, and interactive practice. For a subject like Arabic, which requires mastery of pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary, such tools offer a new layer of support. While digital learning platforms have become increasingly popular in mainstream education, their adoption in Islamic schools remains inconsistent (Ahmad et al., 2023). Many educators still depend on printed books and teacher-centered lectures. As a result, opportunities to enrich the Arabic learning experience through technology are often missed. This highlights a gap not only in resources but in mindset and readiness.

Young learners today are growing up surrounded by technology, which naturally influences how they engage with information (Kickbusch et al., 2021; Schriever, 2021). Classrooms that remain static and traditional risk alienating students who are accustomed to more dynamic digital environments. In language learning, especially, students benefit from frequent practice, audio exposure, and engaging repetition—all of which are better facilitated by digital media. In Arabic classrooms, however, these tools are rarely integrated in a way that feels seamless or strategic. Some schools may introduce educational apps, but without guidance or purpose, their impact is minimal. This reality suggests a deeper problem: technology alone is not the solution; it must be thoughtfully implemented (Earle & Leyva-de la Hiz, 2021; Urlaub & Dessein, 2022). Understanding how to do so within the specific context of MI is what this study aims to uncover.

Yet, this transformation is far from simple, particularly within the structure of Islamic primary education in Indonesia. Madrasah Ibtidaiyah often face logistical and infrastructural barriers that make digital adoption difficult. In many regions, internet access remains unreliable and technology is scarce or outdated. Even where devices are available, teachers may not feel confident using them as instructional tools. Some may see digital technology as incompatible with religious learning traditions, adding further resistance. Moreover, support from school leadership or local policy is not always present (Brauckmann et al., 2023; Constantinides, 2021). Without consistent backing, individual efforts to innovate may falter. These challenges emphasize the need for systemic change, not just isolated improvements.

Compounding these issues is the nature of Arabic as a language that differs significantly from Bahasa Indonesia. Unlike English, which appears frequently in entertainment and advertising, Arabic is largely confined to religious education. Students often encounter the language only in formal settings and rarely use it beyond the classroom. This lack of immersion makes it harder for learners to retain vocabulary or internalize grammatical rules. Digital resources can help bridge this gap by offering exposure outside of class hours, through mobile apps or learning games. These tools also give students the opportunity to learn at their own pace, which is critical for mastering complex language structures (Rezai et al., 2024; Xia et al., 2024). However, the availability of such tools in Arabic—and their alignment with MI curricula—remains limited. Exploring how they are used, and whether they are effective, is one of the key reasons this study was conducted.

The COVID-19 pandemic added urgency to these issues by exposing how unprepared many schools were for digital learning. When in-person classes were suspended, teachers had to quickly adapt their materials and methods to virtual formats. For Arabic instruction, this transition was particularly difficult due to the lack of digital content and teachers' unfamiliarity with online tools (Alharbi, 2025; Baroudi & Shaya, 2022). Students, too, experienced unequal access to learning depending on whether they had internet and devices at home. Yet, some educators discovered new possibilities during this period—tools that allowed students to listen to Arabic more often or complete interactive exercises. These small breakthroughs hinted at what could be possible with proper support and planning (Kasneci et al., 2023; Mattar & Lengyel, 2022). As education recovers and evolves, it is crucial not to return entirely to old ways but to build on the lessons learned.

Furthermore, the urgency of integrating technology in Arabic education is tied to broader educational goals at the national level. The Indonesian government has repeatedly emphasized the importance of digital literacy and innovation in schools (Asmayawati et al., 2024; Ika Sari et al., 2024). However, without clear direction and targeted initiatives, implementation remains uneven. In the case of MI, this means that one school may have access to interactive Arabic apps while another struggles with basic infrastructure. These disparities can widen gaps in student performance and long-term academic outcomes (Hanushek et al., 2022; Lorenz, 2021). This makes it essential to understand what conditions enable or hinder successful digital integration. By examining this topic in depth, educators and policymakers can begin to develop solutions that are both realistic and scalable.

This study was designed with these concerns in mind—to investigate how digital tools are being used in Arabic instruction at one MI in Central Java. It seeks to understand the teacher's approach, the student's experience, and the contextual barriers involved (Lessy et al., 2024). In doing so, the research contributes to the broader discussion on how Islamic schools can evolve alongside technological progress. The findings are expected to offer practical recommendations that address not only the need for infrastructure, but also training, curriculum design, and policy alignment. Arabic instruction should not remain excluded from digital advancement simply because of tradition or limited exposure. With thoughtful application, technology can support rather than replace the spiritual and educational mission of madrasah. This study, therefore, aims to bridge the gap between tradition and innovation in a way that benefits learners and respects their context (Sliwka et al., 2023; Sokhanvar et al., 2021).

The use of digital technology in education has expanded rapidly in recent years, especially in efforts to increase student engagement. Herrera-Franco et al. (2025) emphasized the importance of evaluating students' digital competence to support more effective learning. A study by Dong (2025) presented a model for integrating educational content digitally, which is highly applicable in language education. Chen et al. (2025) explored how advanced teacher training links to innovation in classroom instruction. Similarly, Qin et al. (2025) argued that collaboration among teachers supports pedagogical creativity, especially when using new media. In the context of learning technologies, Cheng & Qian (2025) found that augmented reality tools helped improve student interest and interaction. Li et al. (2025) noted that students' access to educational capital, including digital resources, significantly affects learning outcomes. Semo & Eliyahu-Levi (2025) explored how religious education environments can adapt modern strategies without losing cultural identity. showed that digital infrastructure in many Islamic schools in Indonesia remains a serious limitation. Innovation-oriented leadership enhances learning performance among students. Meanwhile, Chen et al. (2025) and Sposato (2025) both highlighted that teacher readiness and ethical sensitivity must guide digital technology use in education.

In recent years, the landscape of education has undergone a noticeable shift as digital technology continues to influence how students learn and interact with information. Within this evolving context, there is a growing expectation for schools to embrace more dynamic and responsive teaching methods. However, subjects like Arabic language—especially in the context of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI)—have not kept pace with this transformation. Arabic, although central to Islamic education, is still frequently taught through repetitive drills and teacher-centered instruction. These methods often struggle to hold students' attention or foster meaningful engagement. Meanwhile, digital tools such as interactive videos and learning apps offer the potential to make language learning more accessible and enjoyable. Despite this promise, their integration into Arabic instruction at the MI level remains uneven and largely undocumented. The rationale behind this study lies in the urgent need to explore how digital resources can be more effectively utilized in Arabic language teaching within the framework of Indonesia's Islamic primary education system.

While discussions about digital learning have expanded rapidly in educational literature, studies focusing specifically on Arabic instruction in madrasah settings remain scarce. Much of the existing research either discusses Arabic curriculum design or examines student outcomes using conventional methods. There is still a lack of detailed exploration into how technology is being adopted by Arabic teachers at the elementary level—particularly within religious schools like MI. Moreover, few studies have investigated the practical barriers educators face when attempting to incorporate digital tools into daily instruction. Questions about access, teacher confidence, and infrastructure are often left unanswered in broader analyses. Additionally, the voices of students and teachers in under-resourced regions have not been sufficiently represented in previous research. This gap in the literature highlights the importance of conducting a localized, in-depth inquiry into how digital technology is influencing Arabic learning in real classroom settings.

This research was designed to take a closer look at how digital technology is being used to support Arabic language instruction at one Madrasah Ibtidaiyah in Central Java. The study sets out to identify the kinds of digital tools that teachers use, how these tools are integrated into lessons, and what effects they have on students' learning experiences. It also aims to uncover the difficulties faced by both teachers and students when using technology, whether due to lack of equipment, limited skills, or inadequate support. By capturing these practical realities, the study hopes to provide insights that are useful not only for teachers, but also for policymakers and educational planners who want to improve Arabic instruction in Islamic schools. More broadly, the goal is to show how technology can be introduced in a way that respects the traditional values of MI while also enhancing the quality and effectiveness of Arabic language education.

METHOD

Research Design

This research applied a qualitative descriptive design to closely examine how digital technology is being used in Arabic language instruction at a Madrasah Ibtidaiyah in Central Java. The purpose of this design was not to test a hypothesis, but to explore real experiences, processes, and challenges in a natural setting. A case study was chosen because it allows the researcher to focus on a specific context in depth and to understand the subject matter from the point of view of those directly involved. In this case, the study aimed to document how teachers and students interact with digital tools during Arabic lessons. The descriptive nature of the study made it possible to present a clear and detailed picture of classroom practices. By observing actual teaching and learning activities, the researcher could capture insights that might not emerge through quantitative surveys alone. This approach also made room for flexibility during the data collection process, enabling a deeper understanding of the subject.

Participants

Participants in the study consisted of an Arabic language teacher and a class of fifth-grade students from a selected Madrasah Ibtidaiyah. The school was chosen because it had begun incorporating technology into classroom instruction, including Arabic lessons. The teacher involved had at least one year of experience using digital materials such as videos, mobile apps, and e-learning platforms. Meanwhile, the student participants were aged between 10 and 11 years old and had already been exposed to those digital tools as part of their regular Arabic learning. The selection of participants followed a purposive sampling strategy, ensuring that the people involved were relevant and directly connected to the research focus. The decision to concentrate on a single teacher and group of students allowed the researcher to observe consistent interactions over time. Prior to data collection, consent was obtained from the teacher and approval was granted by the school administration, ensuring ethical standards were maintained.

Instrument

To collect comprehensive data, the researcher used three main instruments: direct observation, interviews, and document review. Observation was carried out during Arabic lessons to see firsthand how digital tools were applied and how students responded in class. The researcher took careful notes, paying attention to the teacher's methods, the students' behavior, and the types of technology used. In addition to observation, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the Arabic teacher and several students. The interviews were designed to be conversational, allowing participants to share their experiences openly while still providing structure to guide the discussion. Finally, various documents were analyzed, including lesson plans, teaching materials, and samples of the digital content used in class. These documents helped validate and enrich the observational and interview data by offering additional context.

Data Analysis

After collecting the data, the researcher organized and analyzed it using thematic analysis. The first step involved reviewing all observation notes, interview transcripts, and documents to become familiar with the content. From there, important statements, phrases, and patterns were identified and grouped into categories. This coding process helped to sort and highlight recurring ideas, such as the advantages of digital tools, obstacles faced by teachers, and student reactions. The coded data were then examined for connections and contrasts, allowing the researcher to see how different pieces of information supported or differed from each other. To keep the findings grounded and reliable, triangulation was used—this means the data from observations, interviews, and documents were cross-checked. Through this process, the researcher was able to draw conclusions that reflected the realities of the classroom while maintaining analytical depth and coherence.

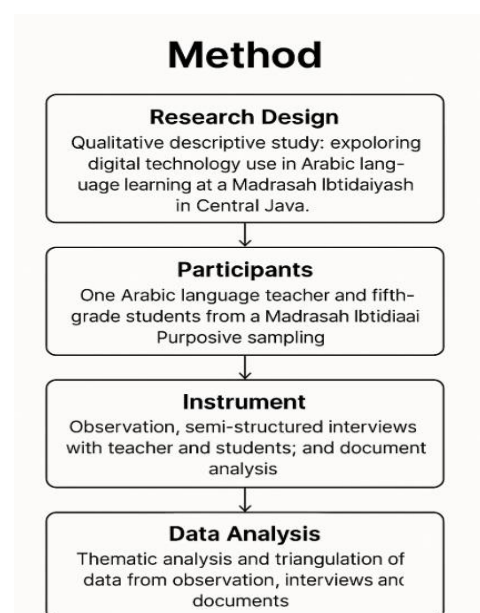


Figure 1. Methodological Framework of the Study

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The results of this study reveal meaningful insights into how digital technology has influenced the teaching and learning process in Arabic classes at a Madrasah Ibtidaiyah in Central Java. Based on a combination of direct classroom observation, teacher and student interviews, and document analysis, the research identified several key patterns and outcomes.

One of the clearest outcomes was the shift in student motivation after the introduction of digital tools. During traditional instruction, many students appeared less responsive and showed signs of passive engagement. However, after digital resources were introduced—such as language apps and interactive videos—students became visibly more involved in classroom activities. This trend is supported by the data in Figure 2, which compares students' motivation levels before and after the use of digital tools. The number of students who were considered highly motivated more than doubled, while the group with low motivation significantly decreased.

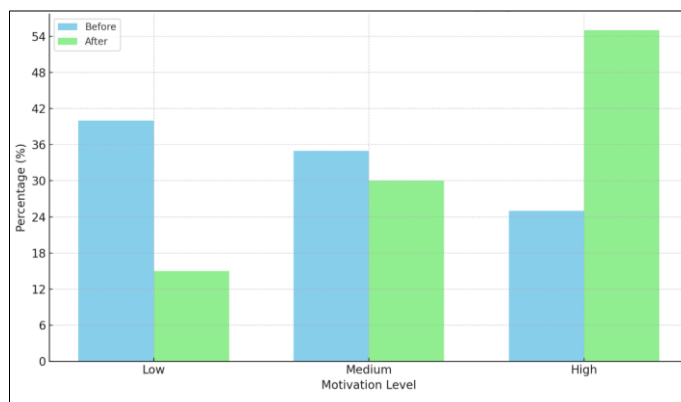


Figure 2. Changes in student motivation before and after using digital tools in Arabic classes.

This visual shows a shift in motivational patterns, suggesting that multimedia-based instruction had a tangible impact on student enthusiasm and participation. The teacher implemented a variety of digital resources, not only to diversify the instructional approach but also to reinforce student understanding of Arabic vocabulary and pronunciation. Among the tools observed, interactive videos were the most frequently used, followed by Duolingo and Quizizz. These tools were selected for their simplicity, accessibility, and ability to support both individual and class-wide learning. As shown in Figure 2, interactive videos were integrated into the lesson most often, likely because they allowed students to listen and watch examples repeatedly without becoming bored.

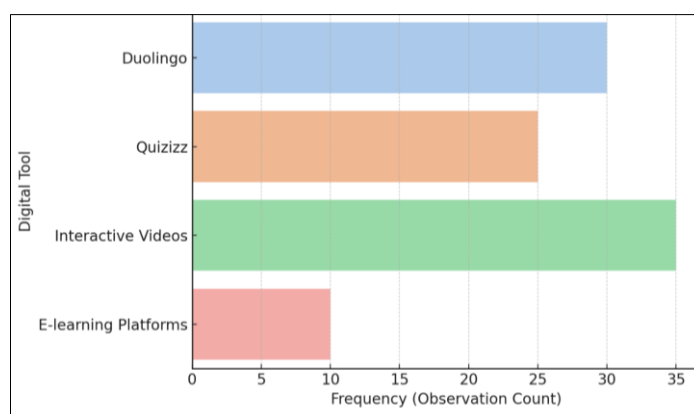


Figure 3. Types of digital tools used and their frequency of use in the classroom.

The chart highlights that interactive videos were favored, possibly due to their ease of use and visual appeal for young learners. Despite these positive developments, several implementation barriers were also identified. During interviews, the teacher mentioned several recurring issues that limited the consistency of technology use. These included unstable internet connections, insufficient classroom devices, and uneven student access to personal technology at home. Figure 3 illustrates the proportion of each challenge as reported in the study. In particular, limited internet access and lack of devices were the most commonly cited problems, affecting both the pace and planning of daily lessons.

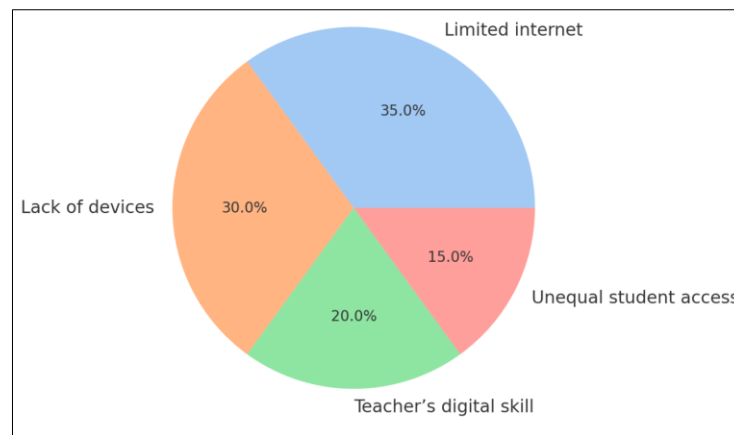


Figure 4. Primary challenges in integrating digital technology for Arabic learning.

This pie chart shows that infrastructure issues, especially internet and device availability, remain key obstacles to fully realizing the benefits of digital learning. Supporting documents, such as lesson plans and worksheets, reflected the teacher's intention to embed technology into instruction. Some RPPs included links to digital content, vocabulary apps, and visual materials aligned with the curriculum. These adaptations suggest a growing effort to transition from traditional, text-heavy instruction to a more balanced and interactive learning model, even within a relatively modest school setting.

Overall, the results of this study demonstrate that digital technology, when thoughtfully implemented, can make Arabic instruction more engaging and accessible for students at the elementary level. However, the success of such integration depends not only on the tools themselves but also on the availability of supporting infrastructure and teacher readiness. Without addressing these challenges, the benefits of digital learning may remain unevenly distributed among students.

Discussion

This study found that students in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah showed greater enthusiasm for Arabic lessons when digital tools were introduced into the classroom. Their engagement increased as they interacted with applications, videos, and gamified tasks that brought the language to life. These findings support Herrera-Lillo's (2025) view that digital competence contributes significantly to learning outcomes when combined with proper guidance. In the observed case, the shift from passive to active participation was particularly evident during pronunciation and vocabulary exercises. Students were more confident, and the learning process appeared more student-centered. However, engagement alone does not guarantee deep understanding, which still relies on structured teaching and teacher facilitation. The tools acted as a complement, not a replacement, for the teacher's role. Therefore, digital integration in language learning must remain grounded in pedagogical intention. One of the study's strengths was how digital resources were used strategically alongside the curriculum. Rather than adopting tools at random, the teacher selected applications that matched lesson goals and content. This supports Dong's (2025) model, which emphasizes the importance of integrating educational resources systematically. By aligning digital content with curriculum targets, the teacher maintained consistency in learning outcomes. Students received input through various modes—visual, auditory, and kinesthetic—which helped them absorb material more effectively. Repetition and interaction, facilitated by technology, reinforced memory and language use. These elements created a richer learning experience without discarding traditional instructional values. As a result, lessons became more dynamic without losing their educational substance.

The role of the teacher proved to be essential in shaping how technology was used in the classroom. While the tools were important, it was the teacher's confidence and familiarity that determined their effectiveness. This mirrors the findings of Chen (2025), who linked educational

innovation to the readiness and competence of teachers. Without proper training or digital literacy, even simple tools may not be used to their full potential. In this study, the teacher had prior exposure to digital media, but still faced technical and operational challenges. These included slow internet, inconsistent device access, and a lack of institutional support. Overcoming such barriers often required improvisation and patience on the teacher's part. Clearly, teacher preparedness is not optional but foundational in any technology-driven classroom.

Teacher collaboration was another element that emerged as an indirect need. The observed teacher worked in isolation, relying mostly on self-taught strategies and trial-and-error experiences. According to Qin (2025), professional collaboration can enhance teaching practices and promote innovation through shared experiences. In the absence of a support network, creative integration becomes harder to sustain. If educators were provided with time and space to collaborate—whether through training, workshops, or informal sharing—they might adopt digital tools more confidently. Peer learning helps reduce hesitation and allows for collective problem-solving. Moreover, collaboration builds a culture of innovation that is less dependent on individual initiative. For madrasah teachers, this could open up pathways to explore new media while remaining within the framework of Islamic education.

The student responses in this study aligned with broader observations from digital learning environments. Learners were motivated, more attentive, and willing to engage with activities when technology was involved. This supports Cheng's (2025) conclusions that students benefit from digital immersion, especially in subjects that traditionally rely on memorization. Interactive content offered students opportunities to repeat, listen, and practice at their own pace. Such experiences are rarely available in standard textbook-driven lessons. Additionally, students appreciated having some control over their learning process, even if modest. Motivation increased because the tasks felt less formal and more explorative. This shift toward active learning helped build confidence in language use. Clearly, technology introduced not just new content, but a new atmosphere for learning.

However, not all students had equal opportunities to access these tools beyond the classroom. Some lacked smartphones or stable internet at home, limiting their ability to revisit lessons or complete digital tasks. This reality echoes Li's (2025) argument that digital inequality contributes to gaps in academic performance. While the classroom setting can offer structured access, outside factors remain beyond the teacher's control. Without equitable infrastructure, digital learning may reinforce the very disparities it hopes to reduce. Therefore, schools need to consider shared device programs or offline access solutions. Equity should not be treated as a secondary issue but as an integral part of the planning process. By addressing access barriers directly, madrasahs can make digital learning more inclusive. In turn, this strengthens long-term educational impact.

Interestingly, the use of technology did not conflict with the religious identity of the madrasah. The teacher was able to use digital tools without compromising the values or tone of the curriculum. This resonates with Semo's (2025) analysis, which views religious education as capable of embracing modern methods when guided with care. Arabic learning, while tied to faith, also benefits from modern tools that make language acquisition easier. The teacher remained selective, ensuring that content remained appropriate and purposeful. This intentional blending of tradition and innovation allowed the class to grow without feeling disconnected from its foundations. It showed that faith-based education does not need to resist change but can evolve with integrity. Digital technology, when used responsibly, becomes a bridge between heritage and innovation.

Despite its potential, the school still faced technical limitations that interrupted implementation. Internet connections were weak, and devices were few, making it difficult to plan consistent digital lessons. Putri (2022) previously documented similar infrastructure issues in Islamic schools across Indonesia, where underfunding slows technological adoption. In this case, the teacher had to adapt on the spot, sometimes switching back to conventional methods when systems

failed. This unpredictability affected lesson pacing and student attention. If schools wish to make technology a regular part of instruction, these barriers must be addressed systematically. This includes not only upgrading equipment but also ensuring IT support and technical training. Infrastructure is not just a convenience—it is a prerequisite for sustained change. Without it, innovation risks becoming a one-time experiment.

Another influencing factor was the limited administrative support observed in the school. The teacher managed her own resources and planning without clear institutional guidance. Saleh (2025) emphasizes that leadership plays a crucial role in promoting classroom innovation, particularly in under-resourced settings. When school leaders actively support digital learning—through policy, training, and investment—teachers are more likely to innovate. In this case, however, the absence of direction left the teacher working independently. This places extra pressure on individuals and reduces the likelihood of school-wide progress. Encouraging leadership to participate in digital development is therefore essential. With proper alignment between vision and practice, digital transformation can become a shared goal. Otherwise, it risks being fragmented and unsustainable.

Lastly, any technological advancement in education must be approached with cultural awareness and ethical responsibility. This point is reinforced by Sposato (2025), who argues that educational technology must align with local values and learning norms. In a religious environment such as MI, the ethical use of digital tools becomes even more important. The teacher in this study carefully curated content to ensure it matched the educational and spiritual context. This kind of thoughtful integration sets a strong example for others. It also reminds us that innovation is not just about speed or scale—but about meaningful alignment with community values. When used in this way, technology does not disrupt tradition; it strengthens it. Therefore, the future of Arabic learning in madrasah will depend on how well technology is aligned with purpose.

Implications

The findings of this study show that digital tools can meaningfully support Arabic language learning when they are integrated thoughtfully into classroom instruction. Teachers who make use of simple digital media—such as videos and mobile apps—are able to increase student involvement and present material in ways that are more engaging. This suggests that digital learning should be considered as part of everyday teaching in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, not just as a supplement. The increase in student motivation observed in this study highlights the potential of interactive learning to make Arabic lessons more approachable and less intimidating. For school administrators, these results imply a need to recognize digital infrastructure as part of their long-term investment in education. Training teachers to use these tools effectively should also become part of the school's development plan. In addition, when digital methods are aligned with religious values, they can enrich rather than disrupt the character of Islamic education. This balance is important in maintaining the cultural identity of the school while adapting to new educational needs.

Limitations

This research was limited in scope and setting, as it focused on one school with a single teacher and one group of students. As such, the results cannot be used to draw conclusions about all Madrasah Ibtidaiyah in Indonesia. The teacher involved was already somewhat familiar with using technology, which may not reflect the skill levels of other educators in similar settings. Also, while observations and interviews were useful, the study did not include a formal assessment of students' academic progress over time. Another limitation was the variation in students' access to technology at home, which was acknowledged but not explored in depth. Some students might have had more opportunities to practice outside of school, while others did not, potentially influencing their experience. Moreover, technical issues like internet instability and equipment shortages may have affected the implementation. These challenges were present during the study but were not the

central focus. Lastly, the limited number of student voices captured in interviews may not fully represent the range of experiences in the classroom.

Suggestions

To build on the results of this study, there are several practical steps that schools and educators can consider. First, teachers should receive hands-on training that focuses on how to blend digital tools with lesson content in a way that supports student learning. Rather than relying on personal trial and error, training should be ongoing and connected to the curriculum. Schools also need to prioritize access, both in terms of devices and internet connectivity, so that all students can benefit equally. In addition, school leaders should be encouraged to take an active role in supporting digital transformation by setting goals and providing necessary support. Researchers interested in similar topics might expand the study across multiple schools to better understand broader trends. Future studies could also track changes over a longer period to see how digital tools influence language development over time. Another area to explore is how families support digital learning at home and how that affects student outcomes. These steps could help create a stronger foundation for integrating digital technology into Islamic primary education in a sustainable and meaningful way.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this research indicate that digital tools can meaningfully contribute to Arabic language instruction when applied with purpose and sensitivity to the learning environment. In the classroom observed, students became more engaged and confident, especially when interacting with videos, apps, and interactive materials. These tools made abstract concepts easier to understand and allowed students to participate more actively in their learning. However, the teacher's role remained essential in selecting resources, guiding their use, and maintaining alignment with curriculum goals. Despite the benefits, the study also identified several ongoing challenges, such as unequal access to devices, unstable internet, and limited institutional support. These issues can affect the consistency and fairness of digital learning experiences across different student groups. Nonetheless, the study shows that with thoughtful integration, digital methods can support—not replace—religious education traditions in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah. As such, future efforts should focus not only on expanding access to technology but also on preparing educators and school leaders to use it in ways that serve both educational goals and cultural values.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

Tasniya Fadhila Yusup conceptualized the research idea, conducted classroom observations and student interviews, and prepared the initial draft of the manuscript. She also contributed significantly to the analysis of qualitative data and synthesis of findings related to the impact of digital tools in Arabic instruction.

Muhammad Afthon Ulin Nuha supervised the research design, refined the methodological framework, and provided critical revisions to the manuscript. He was responsible for aligning the theoretical foundations with the study's objectives and ensured the academic rigor of the discussion and conclusion sections.

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