



Developing Arabic Language Content on TikTok and Instagram: Educational Opportunities for the Digital Native Generation

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Abstract: The rapid growth of social media has positioned it as an influential alternative learning space, particularly for the digital native generation that actively engages with visual and interactive content. This study seeks to examine the educational potential of Arabic language learning through short-form videos disseminated via popular platforms such as TikTok and Instagram. Employing a descriptive qualitative method, data were gathered through systematic content analysis of Arabic learning videos, in-depth interviews with digital educational content creators, and focused group discussions with students of Arabic Language Education (PBA). The findings indicate that short video formats, enhanced with appealing visual elements, interactive features, and communicative language styles, significantly capture learners' attention while simultaneously fostering motivation and sustained engagement. In addition, these platforms provide a more informal and dynamic interaction space between educators and learners, enabling flexible knowledge exchange within the digital ecosystem. The study underscores the strategic urgency of developing micro-content-based approaches in order to make Arabic language education more adaptive, innovative, and responsive to the learning patterns of Generation Z.

Keywords: *Arabic Language, Social Media, Tiktok, Instagram, Digital Native Generation, Educational Content.*

INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of information technology has significantly reshaped language learning dynamics, particularly for the Arabic language among Generation Z. As digital natives, this generation demonstrates distinct learning preferences-favoring immediate access to information, highly visual content, and interactive learning experiences. These characteristics align well with the affordances of social media platforms such as TikTok and Instagram, which have become deeply embedded in their daily lives (Greenhow & Lewin, 2016). Consequently, these platforms offer untapped potential for informal yet effective language instruction, particularly for enhancing vocabulary acquisition, listening comprehension, and practical usage (Tan et al., 2022). Recognizing these shifts, educators are beginning to explore how to strategically utilize such platforms to support Arabic language

education in ways that are both pedagogically sound and culturally relevant (Salah, 2023).

Several studies have highlighted the growing role of social media as a learning tool. That Arab youth express positive attitudes toward using platforms like Facebook, Snapchat, and Instagram for language learning, noting that social media fosters a comfortable environment for informal engagement with foreign languages. TikTok, with its interactive features such as short videos and duet challenges, facilitates collaborative and immersive learning experiences (Tan et al., 2022). Despite its popularity, TikTok's educational potential remains underexplored in academic literature, particularly in the field of Arabic pedagogy. Mobile-assisted language learning and gamified applications have further increased learner motivation and engagement, making language learning more accessible and enjoyable (Ishaq et al., 2021). While these technological integrations offer numerous

benefits, they must be accompanied by critical attention to challenges such as digital behavior, content quality, and infrastructure limitations in order to realize their full educational impact.

Arabic, long regarded as a sacred and formal language, faces both challenges and opportunities in engaging younger audiences in today's rapidly evolving digital culture. The integration of modern technology and innovative pedagogical strategies has opened new avenues for revitalizing Arabic language education, making it more accessible, relatable, and appealing to Generation Z learners (Salah, 2023). Contemporary platforms such as TikTok and Instagram offer formats that align with students' preferences for brief, visual, and interactive content (Greenhow & Lewin, 2016). These platforms, through digital storytelling, memes, short videos, and visual cues, can repackage Arabic in ways that preserve its linguistic essence while fostering student engagement. The use of popular culture elements such as music, trending audio, and social media challenges contributes to the recontextualization of Arabic learning within a youth-centric, multimedia environment.

The exploration of Arabic language content on TikTok and Instagram reveals meaningful insights into how such platforms facilitate the development, dissemination, and reception of language learning materials for Generation Z. These digital spaces employ innovative communication strategies and visual storytelling techniques that align with the cognitive and aesthetic preferences of young learners. Influencers and micro-educators on TikTok, for example, effectively use humor, relatable language, and short-form narratives to simplify complex linguistic structures and cultural concepts (Martínez-Sanz et al., 2023). The inclusion of audio-visual elements - such as background music, animations, and synchronized subtitles - promotes multisensory learning, which supports greater retention and comprehension, especially for visual and auditory learners (Turgut KOÇ, 2018).

The effectiveness and appeal of Arabic educational content on these platforms are also evident in user interaction patterns and engagement metrics. TikTok's native features, such as duet challenges, comment sections, and algorithmic recommendations, create a collaborative learning environment that encourages active participation (Tan et al., 2022). The use of persuasive techniques—such as emotionally engaging visuals, catchy phrases, and culturally relevant topics—enhances the content's ability to capture and sustain learners' attention (Morady Moghaddam & Esmaeilpour, 2023). Despite these promising developments, challenges remain. Issues such as inconsistent content quality, algorithm-driven visibility, digital distractions, and infrastructural limitations may undermine the educational value of these platforms. Addressing these obstacles is essential for maximizing the pedagogical impact of social media in Arabic language

instruction and ensuring that digital innovation serves as a tool for inclusivity and meaningful learning.

METHOD

This study adopts a descriptive qualitative approach to explore the development, dissemination, and educational effectiveness of Arabic language content on social media platforms, particularly TikTok and Instagram. The qualitative design allows for an in-depth understanding of the interaction between content formats and learner engagement among Generation Z, with a specific focus on students in Arabic Language Education programs (John W. Creswell, 2013). The research utilizes multiple data sources and analytical procedures to provide a comprehensive view of how digital content influences language learning behavior, motivation, and perception. By examining both the content and its reception, the study aims to generate rich, contextual insights into the pedagogical potential and challenges of Arabic learning in digital environments.

Sampling and Data Collection. Data for this research were collected through three primary methods. First, an observation and content analysis of 20 Arabic educational videos produced by five popular content creators on TikTok and Instagram was conducted. The selection of these videos followed specific criteria:

1. Relevance – videos explicitly aimed at Arabic language learning (e.g., vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation).
2. Popularity – videos with a minimum of 10,000 views and active audience interaction (likes, comments, shares).
3. Frequency – creators who consistently upload educational content at least twice per month.
4. Authenticity – videos produced within the last 12 months to reflect current trends and practices in digital learning.

Second, in-depth interviews were conducted with three content creators and ten undergraduate students enrolled in Arabic Language Education programs at two universities in Indonesia. Content creators were chosen based on their active role in producing Arabic-related content and their influence (measured by follower count exceeding 5,000). Student participants were selected through purposive sampling, ensuring diversity in gender, level of study, and prior exposure to Arabic learning through social media. These interviews explored their experiences, motivations, and perceptions regarding the role of social media in Arabic language acquisition.

Third, audience comments and interactions were documented and analyzed to supplement observational and interview data. Approximately 500 comments were randomly selected across the chosen videos, with attention to both positive and critical responses. This provided valuable feedback and contextual understanding of how content was received and interpreted by viewers.

Data Analysis Data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman (1994), which consists of three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification. This systematic approach ensured that data were organized, coded, and interpreted rigorously while maintaining their richness and complexity (Ming et al., 2023).

To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, methodological triangulation was employed by integrating video content, interview narratives, and audience responses. This strategy enhanced the internal validity and depth of the analysis by confirming emerging patterns across different data sources. Additionally, credibility was strengthened through peer debriefing and member-checking with two of the interviewed content creators and five students to validate interpretations.

While the study highlights the promising role of social media in Arabic language education, it also echoes concerns raised in previous research regarding misinformation, content inconsistency, and the need for critical media literacy among learners (Morady Moghaddam & Esmaeilpour, 2023).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Content Characteristics and Delivery Formats

The analysis of Arabic educational content on TikTok and Instagram reveals specific characteristics that align strongly with the cognitive and behavioral tendencies of Generation Z learners. This generation, known for its digital nativity and preference for fast, concise information, responds well to short-form video formats. Most Arabic language videos observed in the study were between 30 and 60 seconds long—deliberately crafted to hold attention spans and deliver key language inputs in small, manageable segments (Tan et al., 2022). This microlearning approach reflects an educational adaptation to the reality of fragmented digital attention and the preference for on-demand knowledge among younger audiences.

In addition to brevity, visual and auditory enhancements play a significant role in the effectiveness of Arabic content on these platforms. Subtitles in both Arabic and the local language, expressive emojis, dynamic transitions, and synchronized background music are commonly used to increase engagement and retention. These multimedia elements contribute to a multisensory learning environment, which has been shown to improve comprehension and motivation among language learners (Inan et al., 2023). The use of storytelling techniques—often accompanied by facial expressions and sound effects—transforms simple vocabulary or grammar lessons into immersive experiences that are both informative and entertaining.

Perhaps most impactful is the linguistic style adopted by content creators. Many videos incorporate informal or

dialectal forms of Arabic, including expressions from regional vernaculars, rather than strictly adhering to Modern Standard Arabic. This use of conversational Arabic fosters relatability, making the content feel authentic and approachable for learners who may find formal Arabic intimidating or disconnected from everyday usage. As Literat (2021) notes, informal digital communication often serves as a bridge between academic language and real-world linguistic practices, enabling learners to emotionally connect with the content. This personalization not only supports language acquisition but also helps learners build a sense of cultural affinity with Arabic (Literat, 2021).

1. Key Characteristics of Content

One of the defining characteristics of Arabic educational content on platforms like TikTok and Instagram is its brevity. Videos typically range between 30 to 60 seconds, aligning with Generation Z's preference for quick, digestible information. This short duration format enables microlearning, a pedagogical approach that breaks down content into manageable chunks to support immediate understanding and retention (Tan et al., 2022). The integration of visual elements such as emojis, animated transitions, colorful text overlays, and sound effects significantly enhances cognitive engagement. These visual cues are not merely decorative but serve as semiotic tools that reinforce meaning and assist in memory retention (Inan et al., 2023). Through multisensory input, learners are more likely to remain focused and process language patterns more effectively.

Another important feature of digital Arabic language content is the frequent use of informal and conversational Arabic, including regional dialects. Unlike traditional classroom instruction that often emphasizes *Fusha* (Modern Standard Arabic), content creators on social media platforms tend to adopt linguistic forms that reflect everyday speech. This approach not only mirrors how Arabic is actually used in real-life social interactions but also makes the content more relatable and less intimidating for novice learners (Alsuwaylimi, 2024). The use of dialects fosters emotional engagement and a sense of linguistic authenticity, helping students feel more connected to the language and its cultural nuances. Moreover, this communicative style resonates with the informal tone of social media platforms, making it easier for learners to transition from passive viewers to active participants in the learning process.

2. Delivery Formats

The delivery formats employed in Arabic language education on platforms such as TikTok and Instagram are distinctly shaped by the media habits of Generation Z. One of the most prominent strategies is the use of micro-content—short, highly focused videos designed for rapid consumption. This format aligns with learners' preference for fast-paced, on-the-go access to knowledge and

supports microlearning principles by delivering bite-sized information that is easier to retain and review (Tan et al., 2022). In addition to brevity, the inclusion of interactive elements—such as face-to-camera narration, dynamic gestures, and synchronized background music—further enhances learner engagement. These techniques foster a sense of connection between the content creator and the viewer, creating an informal yet immersive environment conducive to sustained attention (Morady Moghaddam & Esmaeilpour, 2023). As a result, learners are not merely passive recipients of information but become emotionally and cognitively involved in the learning experience.

While these delivery formats effectively accommodate the preferences and digital fluency of Generation Z, they also introduce pedagogical challenges. The fast-paced, entertainment-driven design of social media content often prioritizes engagement over depth, potentially compromising comprehensive understanding and critical reflection (Schellewald, 2023). Learners may internalize fragmented knowledge or focus on surface-level linguistic features without fully grasping grammatical structure or semantic nuance. Moreover, the constant visual and auditory stimulation—though engaging—can lead to cognitive overload or distraction, particularly in the absence of structured follow-up or contextual reinforcement. Therefore, although micro-content and interactive delivery are valuable tools for initial exposure and motivation, their integration into language education must be accompanied by scaffolding strategies that ensure deeper processing and long-term retention.

Engagement through Language and Visual Strategies

The integration of visual storytelling in Arabic educational content on TikTok significantly enhances learner engagement by transforming abstract language elements into concrete, meaningful experiences. Instead of isolating vocabulary or grammar rules, creators contextualize them through short narratives or skits that reflect daily life scenarios. These micro-narratives make linguistic structures more memorable by embedding them in emotionally resonant contexts. Visual components—such as gestures, expressions, and symbolic settings—contribute to multimodal meaning-making, which aids comprehension and long-term retention (John W. Schwieter, 2024). This approach not only aligns with the learning preferences of digital-native audiences but also supports cognitive processing through the combination of linguistic, visual, and social cues.

In parallel with storytelling, the use of humor and real-life situations plays a central role in strengthening emotional connection and motivation. Content creators often use relatable and humorous examples—such as classroom mishaps, cultural misunderstandings, or ironic dialogues—to reduce learner anxiety and foster a more

relaxed environment for language acquisition. Studies show that humor in instructional materials can improve learner attitude, increase attention, and enhance the recall of information (Erdoğan & Çakıroğlu, 2021). Real-life scenarios help learners transfer knowledge from digital input to authentic interactions, reinforcing communicative competence and cultural literacy (Looi et al., 2016). These strategies make Arabic content not only entertaining but also pedagogically effective, bridging the gap between formal instruction and informal, meaningful use.

1. Visual storytelling

Visual storytelling has emerged as a powerful pedagogical strategy in Arabic language content on social media platforms, particularly TikTok and Instagram. By embedding vocabulary and grammar into relatable everyday scenarios, creators effectively transform abstract linguistic concepts into concrete, lived experiences. Rather than teaching words or structures in isolation, they are presented through short skits, dialogues, or monologues that mirror authentic communicative contexts—such as shopping, family conversations, or navigating cultural etiquette. This narrative-driven approach facilitates contextual learning, which is essential for language retention and application. When learners see language used in familiar social situations, they are more likely to internalize it and understand its pragmatic functions (John W. Schwieter, 2024). The episodic nature of short video content supports gradual exposure to target forms without overwhelming the learner.

An illustrative example of effective visual storytelling is the use of comic scenarios to teach synonyms and idiomatic expressions. One content creator, for instance, reenacted humorous misunderstandings involving similar-sounding Arabic words, prompting laughter and reflection among viewers. This approach not only entertained but also reinforced semantic distinctions, resulting in high engagement as evidenced by comments, likes, and user interactions. The deliberate use of humor within storytelling amplifies cognitive and emotional processing, making the content more memorable and shareable (Erdoğan & Çakıroğlu, 2021). These scenarios often spark conversation threads where users contribute additional examples or ask clarifying questions, creating a participatory learning environment. Such engagement highlights the dual function of visual storytelling: it serves not only as a didactic tool but also as a catalyst for community-building and peer-supported learning in informal digital spaces.

2. Humor and Emotional Connection

Humor serves as a powerful communicative strategy in digital language content, particularly in enhancing viewer engagement and fostering a sense of community. On platforms like TikTok, Arabic language creators often

use humor to mirror the everyday struggles or experiences of their audience—such as learning pronunciation, grappling with grammar, or navigating cultural misunderstandings. This type of shared humor creates a feeling of solidarity and inclusivity, allowing learners to relate not only to the content but also to each other. Research by Schaadhardt et al. (2023) shows that TikTok users often rely on humor to connect over vulnerable and emotionally charged topics, such as mental health, illustrating how humor can function as a safe entry point into deeper conversations. In the context of Arabic language learning, humor helps reduce anxiety, encourages participation, and builds a digitally mediated learning community (Schaadhardt et al., 2023).

In addition to its social function, humor also plays a cognitive role in language learning by increasing attention, emotional arousal, and memory retention. Studies have shown that emotionally charged content—particularly that which evokes amusement or surprise—is more likely to be remembered than neutral information (Berger et al., 2023). Humor introduces elements of unpredictability and play, which disrupt passive consumption and demand active cognitive processing. In the case of short-form Arabic educational videos, jokes, puns, or humorous sketches often serve as mnemonic devices that enhance understanding of difficult vocabulary or idiomatic expressions. This emotional resonance contributes to deeper encoding in memory, making the learning process both effective and enjoyable. Thus, humor not only makes content appealing but also strategically amplifies its pedagogical value.

3. Interactive Features

The interactive functionalities of TikTok, particularly its duet and stitch features, have significantly transformed language learning dynamics on social media. These tools enable users to move beyond passive consumption by co-creating content, imitating speech patterns, or directly responding to language prompts presented by content creators. Such participatory learning aligns closely with Vygotsky's (1978) social learning theory, which emphasizes the role of social interaction and collaborative activity in cognitive development. In the context of Arabic language acquisition, duets and stitches provide learners with opportunities to practice pronunciation, test comprehension, and engage with authentic language use in real-time, all within a peer-supported digital community. This active involvement fosters a sense of agency and belonging, making the learning process more interactive, personalized, and socially meaningful (Greenhow & Lewin, 2016).

While these interactive and creative features can enhance learner engagement, they also present potential pitfalls, particularly when humor and visual strategies cross into the realm of trivialization. Certain TikTok

trends, designed to attract attention through irony or parody, may unintentionally minimize the seriousness of complex cultural or linguistic issues. As Matamoros-Fernández (2023) highlights, viral content that prioritizes entertainment over accuracy can contribute to the spread of harmful narratives or stereotypes, especially when nuanced topics are oversimplified for mass appeal (Matamoros-Fernández, 2023). In the context of Arabic language education, this poses a risk of reinforcing cultural misunderstandings or promoting superficial engagement, rather than fostering deep, respectful learning. Therefore, educators and content creators must navigate a delicate balance: leveraging interactive features to motivate learners, while ensuring that content maintains educational integrity and cultural sensitivity.

Perceptions and Responses from Learners

Students majoring in Arabic Language Education generally express highly favorable views toward the use of social media, particularly platforms like TikTok and Instagram, for language learning. Their responses reveal that such content is perceived as motivational, accessible, and engaging—qualities that are essential in maintaining interest and persistence in language acquisition. Many students indicated that they frequently saved, replayed, and shared Arabic learning videos as part of their informal study routines. These behaviors reportedly contributed to vocabulary expansion, improved pronunciation, and increased exposure to real-life spoken Arabic. The dynamic, audiovisual format of the content aligns well with auditory and visual learning preferences, enhancing listening comprehension and fostering a more intuitive grasp of conversational Arabic. Such findings are consistent with studies that emphasize the motivational role of multimodal and learner-centered content in digital language learning environments (Matamoros-Fernández, 2023).

Despite the overwhelmingly positive feedback, students also voiced valid concerns about the quality and credibility of the content they consumed. Specifically, issues were raised regarding the use of slang, informal expressions, and occasional grammatical inaccuracies, which may mislead learners who lack a strong foundational understanding of Arabic. Some students reported confusion when encountering conflicting explanations of rules or idioms, especially when content was produced by non-academic creators or influencers. These concerns highlight the pressing need for expert involvement in curating and producing digital educational materials. The pedagogical value of social media content increases significantly when it is supplemented or reviewed by qualified educators who can ensure linguistic accuracy and provide contextual clarification. Integrating expert validation into content creation not only safeguards instructional quality but also enhances learner trust and

long-term language development (Moh'd Zakarneh et al., 2021).

1. Positive Perceptions of Social Media Content

Arabic Language Education students widely recognize social media platforms—particularly TikTok and Instagram—as motivational spaces that enhance their enthusiasm for language learning. The short, visually rich, and often humorous content shared by creators is perceived as more appealing than traditional classroom materials, offering a refreshing break from conventional textbook-based instruction. This motivational effect is not incidental; it aligns with broader research indicating that social media, when used strategically, can significantly boost learner engagement and autonomy in informal learning environments (Lambton-Howard et al., 2021). These platforms offer a low-pressure environment that reduces language anxiety and promotes experimentation, thereby increasing learners' willingness to engage with the target language outside the classroom. The accessibility and familiarity of these tools further lower barriers to entry, allowing students to integrate language practice into their daily digital routines.

Beyond motivation, students highlighted the user-friendly nature of social media as a key factor contributing to language retention. The ability to easily replay videos, save favorite content, and return to specific vocabulary or pronunciation clips enables a personalized, on-demand learning experience. This casual repetitiveness—often driven by the platform's algorithmic suggestions—helps reinforce newly acquired language items through frequent exposure in varying contexts. Such repetition plays a vital role in vocabulary acquisition and pronunciation improvement, especially when learners are exposed to multiple visual and auditory cues. The brevity of the content allows learners to engage in short but meaningful bursts of practice, making it easier to sustain attention and build language habits incrementally. Thus, the design and usability of social media platforms support not just engagement but also tangible language development outcomes (Moh'd Zakarneh et al., 2021).

2. Concerns About Content Accuracy

Despite the engaging nature of social media in Arabic language learning, students have expressed growing concerns about the credibility and accuracy of the content they consume. These concerns are particularly pronounced in videos that include colloquial expressions, regional slang, or nonstandard grammar usage, which sometimes conflict with what is taught in formal academic settings. Some students reported confusion when encountering inconsistent or incorrect usage of vocabulary and syntactic forms, leading to apprehension about internalizing misleading information. This issue indicates a significant gap in quality control across user-generated content and highlights the challenges of relying

solely on informal digital resources for structured language learning (Lambton-Howard et al., 2021).

In light of these issues, there is a clear call for increased expert involvement in the development and curation of Arabic language content on social media. While creators often bring creativity and cultural relatability to their material, the absence of linguistic and pedagogical oversight can compromise educational standards. Involving qualified educators or linguistic consultants in content creation can ensure that videos align with curriculum objectives, maintain grammatical accuracy, and provide consistent exposure to both formal and informal registers of Arabic. Expert-guided digital content not only enhances credibility but also builds learner confidence, particularly among beginners who may struggle to distinguish between correct and incorrect usage in online materials (Moh'd Zakarneh et al., 2021).

These findings suggest the need for a more balanced approach that combines the motivational strengths of user-generated content with the rigor of expert supervision. Rather than dismissing social media as an unreliable learning platform, educators should explore ways to integrate it into formal language instruction through blended learning strategies. For instance, instructors could recommend curated TikTok or Instagram videos as supplementary materials, followed by classroom discussions that clarify informal usage or address linguistic discrepancies. Such an approach preserves the dynamic, student-centered appeal of social media while safeguarding educational quality and learning outcomes. By fostering collaboration between digital creators and academic professionals, the Arabic language learning ecosystem can evolve into a more effective, inclusive, and pedagogically sound environment.

Challenges in Quality and Pedagogical Alignment

The integration of TikTok and Instagram into educational practices confronts a fundamental challenge: the platforms' algorithmic emphasis on entertainment can overshadow educational rigor. Content designed to generate views often employs sensational visuals or hooks that may distort or oversimplify complex subjects like Arabic grammar, yielding inaccuracies and superficial explanations. A recent analysis of TikTok's influence in classroom settings emphasizes that while short-form content sparks curiosity, it also risks promoting fragmented knowledge and content that is visually pleasing but pedagogically weak. This trend highlights the tension between rapidly capturing attention and providing depth and accuracy—an essential balance for meaningful language instruction.

The transient nature of social media poses challenges to sustained learning: educational materials are often not systematically structured, risking shallow engagement with critical language components. Research using

English-learning videos on TikTok shows that students report platform-driven distractions and inconsistent explanations, emphasizing the need for guided use (Suryati et al., 2024). In Arabic language education contexts, similar risks warrant strategic intervention. Currently, formal education settings lack frameworks for integrating these platforms effectively—underscoring a need for educators to play a proactive mediating role. Teachers could curate content, contextualize it within the curriculum, and fill gaps in understanding, ensuring that digital tools complement rather than replace structured pedagogy.

1. Algorithmic Influence on Content Quality

The algorithmic structures that underpin platforms like TikTok and Instagram are designed to maximize user engagement by promoting content that generates high levels of interaction—likes, shares, and comments—rather than content based on accuracy or pedagogical value. This engagement-first model can conflict with the goals of language education, where clarity, accuracy, and gradual scaffolding are essential. In the case of Arabic language instruction, creators may opt for humorous or visually dramatic presentations that appeal to the algorithm but sacrifice linguistic precision or contextual depth. Deng and Yu (2023) argue that the design of recommendation systems inherently favors content optimized for virality, often at the expense of educational integrity, particularly in domains that require nuanced explanations, such as grammar and syntax (Deng & Yu, 2023).

This algorithmic prioritization introduces a systemic risk of misinformation in language learning environments. When creators prioritize virality, they may oversimplify complex linguistic rules or present slang and dialectal expressions as universally applicable, leading to learner confusion. Additionally, students who rely heavily on algorithm-curated feeds are exposed to inconsistent teaching styles and fragmented learning sequences, which can result in cognitive overload or the internalization of errors. Such patterns highlight the need for critical media literacy and educator-mediated selection of content. As Deng and Yu (2023) emphasize, algorithms are not neutral—they shape how knowledge is framed and delivered, and therefore, their influence must be addressed in any attempt to use social media as a viable language education tool.

2. Ephemeral Engagement

One of the central limitations of using social media platforms like TikTok and Instagram for language learning is the ephemeral nature of their content. Posts are typically short-lived, designed for immediate consumption rather than long-term engagement. This transience poses challenges for learners, particularly when dealing with complex linguistic topics such as Arabic grammar,

morphology, or syntax. The fast-paced scrolling culture discourages reflection and sustained cognitive investment, which are essential for deep learning and internalization of abstract language rules. That the brevity and rapid turnover of social media content can interrupt the cognitive processes required for critical thinking, comprehension, and knowledge retention (Koehler & Vilarinho-Pereira, 2023).

Effective language acquisition, especially for a structurally rich language like Arabic, requires scaffolded learning experiences—where new information is gradually built upon prior knowledge through sequencing, repetition, and feedback. However, the design logic of social media rarely supports this kind of structured progression. Learners are often exposed to fragmented lessons that lack continuity or cumulative design, making it difficult to track development or reinforce previous learning. Without intentional pedagogical planning, these microlearning moments can result in surface-level familiarity rather than deep linguistic competence. While social media may serve as a motivational supplement, it cannot substitute the deliberate scaffolding found in formal educational contexts.

3. Lack of Institutional Support

Despite the growing presence of social media in students' everyday lives, formal educational institutions have yet to establish comprehensive frameworks for effectively integrating these platforms into structured learning environments. The lack of policy guidelines, pedagogical models, and institutional training creates a disconnect between students' informal digital learning practices and formal academic expectations. As a result, educators are often left to independently navigate the complexities of digital content selection, relevance, and reliability. The importance of curating credible and pedagogically sound digital resources that align with intended learning outcomes (Shelton et al., 2022). Without such institutional scaffolding, the educational use of platforms like TikTok and Instagram remains inconsistent, potentially undermining the quality and equity of instruction across classrooms and contexts.

The challenges posed by social media integration do not negate its transformative potential in education. When thoughtfully managed, these platforms can offer innovative teaching methods that enhance student engagement, especially for visual and auditory learners. Features such as short videos, real-time feedback, and interactive storytelling can support differentiated instruction and promote greater accessibility for diverse learner populations. Social media's capacity to blur the boundaries between formal and informal learning also encourages autonomous exploration and peer-supported knowledge exchange. Thus, rather than dismissing social media as a distraction, educational institutions should

explore strategic frameworks that empower teachers to harness its potential responsibly and creatively. With appropriate guidance and institutional backing, social media can evolve from a peripheral tool into a meaningful component of twenty-first-century pedagogy.

Broader Implications and Opportunities

Integrating platforms like TikTok and Instagram into Arabic language education presents a powerful opportunity to enhance both learner engagement and autonomy. These platforms, known for their informal and interactive nature, resonate strongly with digital-native audiences. Theoretical perspectives such as Uses and Gratifications, Cognitive Load, and Social Learning suggest that TikTok's short-form, user-generated content aligns naturally with learners' desires for entertainment, effective chunking of information, and peer-supported interaction—fostering intrinsic motivation and self-directed learning (Zulkepli et al., 2025). Similarly, recent empirical studies demonstrate that TikTok and Instagram improve collaborative language practice and boost academic performance, with undergraduates significantly benefiting from group engagement activities like duets, challenges, and shared commenting (Lee, 2023).

These findings imply that when used intentionally and aligned with pedagogical goals, social media platforms can serve as transformative tools in Arabic language learning. Their visual and interactive features support nano- to microlearning experiences—offering just-in-time vocabulary exposure, pronunciation practice, and culturally embedded language use. These platforms facilitate peer collaboration and linguistic scaffolding beyond the classroom, as learners learn from each other via shared videos, comments, and duets—aligning with Vygotsky's principles of social learning (Lee, 2023). Collectively, the design and social affordances of TikTok and Instagram suggest a potent avenue for raising motivation, autonomy, and cultural fluency in Arabic learning—provided that educators strategically support student engagement and curate high-quality content in formal learning pathways.

1. Engagement and Interest

TikTok's immense popularity among youth in countries like Indonesia provides a timely opportunity to reimagine Arabic language learning through culturally relevant and platform-specific strategies. As a generation increasingly immersed in digital media, today's learners are more responsive to dynamic and interactive content formats than to traditional instructional methods. That when Arabic instruction leverages current social media trends—such as storytelling, visual aesthetics, or humor—it can substantially increase student interest and emotional connection to the language (Dinia et al., 2024). By aligning language instruction with the aesthetic and communicative norms of Gen Z, educators can cultivate

stronger learner motivation and create a bridge between formal curriculum goals and students' informal digital habits.

Content analyses show that short-form videos—ranging from 15 to 60 seconds—are particularly effective for teaching foundational elements of Arabic such as vocabulary, basic grammar structures, and everyday conversational phrases. This format caters to the cognitive preferences of modern learners who favor rapid, visually engaging learning experiences. That these microlearning techniques enhance retention and make complex linguistic content more digestible, especially when accompanied by subtitles, repetition, and contextual usage (Priantiwi & Abdurrahman, 2023). Through such formats, students are not only able to grasp new language elements more easily but are also encouraged to engage with the content repeatedly, reinforcing learning through algorithm-driven exposure. These features highlight TikTok's potential not just as a platform of entertainment, but as a strategic tool for accessible, enjoyable, and effective Arabic language education.

2. Extending Learning Beyond the Classroom

The integration of platforms like TikTok and Instagram into Arabic language education extends learning opportunities far beyond the confines of the classroom. These platforms promote peer-supported learning by enabling students to interact, comment, and share content in real time, fostering an informal yet productive language-learning environment. As students engage with user-generated content, they often form digital learning communities in which vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammatical insights are exchanged organically. That this kind of collaborative engagement encourages learners to support one another's progress, cultivating a sense of belonging and reducing the social barriers often present in formal classroom settings (Hilmi et al., 2024). This community-driven model not only increases motivation but also reinforces the idea of learning as a continuous, social, and accessible process.

TikTok and Instagram offer a range of interactive features—such as hashtags, duet videos, polls, and language challenges—that can be strategically utilized by educators to design immersive and engaging learning experiences. Hashtags allow for the categorization of learning themes (e.g., #ArabicPhrases, #DailyArabic), enabling students to explore related content with ease, while interactive challenges invite participation, repetition, and creativity—all of which are essential for language retention. That when educators curate or create such activities intentionally, they can bridge formal instruction with students' digital interests, making Arabic language learning feel both relevant and enjoyable (Febriani et al., 2024). These tools help create a blended learning environment where the boundaries between

formal education and informal digital exploration are effectively blurred, promoting a more holistic approach to language acquisition.

3. Pedagogical Considerations

The successful integration of social media platforms such as TikTok and Instagram into Arabic language instruction necessitates that educators go beyond traditional teaching roles. In addition to mastering the technical functions of these platforms—such as video editing, hashtag use, and audience engagement analytics—educators must also develop a pedagogical framework that aligns with the specific characteristics of social media, including brevity, interactivity, and visual storytelling. As Dinia et al. emphasize, educators who understand both the affordances and limitations of digital platforms are better equipped to create engaging learning experiences that resonate with students' digital habits and preferences (Dinia et al., 2024). Without this dual competency, attempts to integrate social media into the curriculum may result in superficial engagement or content that lacks instructional value.

Given the algorithm-driven and user-generated nature of platforms like TikTok, collaboration between educators and digital content creators becomes essential. Many creators already produce Arabic language content that is rich in cultural relevance and learner appeal, yet lacks pedagogical structure. By partnering with these influencers, educators can help ensure that such content meets educational standards and aligns with curriculum goals. The case of the TikTok account @kampungarabalazhar illustrates this point well, demonstrating how educational institutions can work with native digital creators to build learning materials that are both academically sound and digitally attractive (Amzaludin et al., 2023). These partnerships also offer mutual benefits—educators gain access to wider audiences, while creators receive guidance to enhance the instructional depth of their content.

To make social media-based Arabic learning sustainable, institutions must support professional development that includes both media literacy and digital pedagogy. This includes training teachers to evaluate digital content critically, design microlearning experiences, and incorporate feedback mechanisms through interactive tools. Furthermore, educational policies should encourage the development of digital learning ecosystems where formal and informal learning intersect—through platforms like TikTok, students can explore authentic language use while still being anchored in pedagogical intent. As the line between educator and content creator continues to blur, pedagogical innovation will depend not just on technological adoption, but on rethinking instructional roles and learning pathways within the digital landscape (Dinia et al., 2024).

CONCLUSION

The integration of social media platforms such as TikTok and Instagram into Arabic language education presents a transformative opportunity to enhance learner engagement, autonomy, and cultural relevance. These platforms resonate deeply with Generation Z learners through their use of short-form videos, visual storytelling, humor, and interactive features like duets and hashtags. Such characteristics support microlearning, vocabulary retention, and community-based learning—facilitating informal yet impactful educational experiences. When thoughtfully implemented, social media does not merely entertain but actively fosters language acquisition by aligning instructional strategies with students' digital habits and cognitive preferences.

The effectiveness of these platforms is contingent upon addressing critical pedagogical and institutional challenges. Issues such as content accuracy, the ephemeral nature of posts, and the lack of formal frameworks underscore the necessity of educator involvement, media literacy, and collaboration with content creators. Educators must act as curators and guides, ensuring that informal learning is pedagogically sound and aligned with curriculum objectives. Therefore, moving forward, it is imperative for educational institutions to develop integrated digital strategies that support teacher training, content validation, and sustainable platform use—so that the promise of social media in Arabic language education can be fully realized without compromising academic integrity.

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