

THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY IN EARLY CHILDHOOD IN ARABIC LANGUAGE LEARNINGAdam Mudinillah¹, Noor Al-Saud², and Hamid Maulana³¹ Al-Hikmah Islamic College of Pariangan Batusangkar, Batusangkar, Indonesia² Princess Nourah bint Abdulrahman University, Saudi Arabia³ Mahmud Yunus State Islamic University Batusangkar, Batusangkar, Indonesia**Corresponding Author:**

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Article Info

Received: May 15, 2025

Revised: May 27, 2025

Accepted: June 15, 2025

Online Version: June 30, 2025

Abstract

This study discusses the use of technology among children offering benefits as well as risks; Excessive use can lead to sleep deprivation, mental health problems, and reduced social interaction. Teachers play a crucial role in encouraging language acquisition, encouraging creative teaching using technology while ensuring responsible use of gadgets. The research highlights the effective integration of gadgets in Arabic language learning, which shows increased engagement and digital skills among children. The methods used include qualitative descriptive research through observations and interviews that reveal how teachers adapt their approach to the digital age, emphasizing the importance of creating a fun and flexible learning experience. This research reveals that the proper use of gadgets can improve listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in Arabic, while increasing children's interest in learning.

Keywords: Arabic Language Learning, Early Childhood, Technology

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Journal Homepage <https://journal.zmsadra.or.id/index.php/jqa>How to cite: Mudinillah, A., Al-Saud, N., & Maulana, H. (2025). The Use of Technology in Early Childhood in Arabic Language Learning. *Qaul 'Arabiy*, 1(1), 1–8. <https://doi.org/XX.XXXXX/jqa.v1i1.1420>

Published by: Yayasan Zia Mulla Sadra

INTRODUCTION

Early childhood is a golden age in the development of cognitive, language, religious, motor, artistic, social and emotional abilities. At this time, children's brains have a very extraordinary capacity to receive information, including language skills. Language development in early childhood is an important aspect that needs to be developed in children. Because language is the main tool in communication, thinking, and learning. At an early age, children's language development is influenced by various factors, especially social interaction, cognitive abilities, and environment. According to the cognitive theory developed by Jean Piaget, language is viewed as part of the overall cognitive development. According to Piaget, children learn language through internal processes that are based on biological maturity and environmental exploitation. That is, Piaget believed that language was not the main cause of cognitive development, but rather the result of development. This means that children's language skills grow along with their thinking development. Children need to reach a certain level of understanding of concepts before they are able to express them in the form of words or language.

According to Lev Vygotsky's theory, language development in children is influenced by social interactions, cultural environments, and adult assistance in children's language development. According to Lev Vygotsky, language is not only a means of communication, but also a tool for thinking that develops through social relationships. Arabic, as one of the international languages as well as the language of religion in Islam, has an important value to be introduced from an early age. Teaching Arabic in early childhood is often difficult, especially when it comes to engaging children's interest in active and enthusiastic learning.

Early childhood is often thought of as miniature adults, yet it has unique and complex characteristics that distinguish it from adults (Fauzi & Nikmatullah, 2016). They are in a phase of growth and development called the *golden age*, a rapid learning process and cognitive development (Rosyidi & Hasanah, 2023). During this period, children tend to imitate everything that is seen and experienced around them, be it positive or negative behaviors (Solihat, Riansi, 2018). Therefore, it is important for adults in the child's environment to set a good example and pay attention to the influence on the child's development.

Use *Gadgets* has become a common phenomenon among early childhood in the modern era (Saidah, 2021). Moreover, with the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic, online education through *Gadgets* to be the main solution in Indonesia (Nukman et al., 2024). This results in many early childhood using *Gadgets* as the main medium for playing and learning (Winnuly et al., 2023). Even though *Gadgets* Can provide great benefits in learning and entertainment, excessive use can lead to negative impacts, including decreased sleep quality, increased risk of mental disorders, and reduced social interaction. Furthermore, the current digital era is changing the learning pattern in early childhood education units. According to the Director General of Early Childhood Education and Community Education (PAUD Dikmas), Ministry of Education and Culture Harris Iskandar, today's children have a character that is difficult to manage, vulnerable to minimal focus, and easily narcissistic. Therefore, a special strategy is needed in educating children in the current alpha era. The Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII) released a survey on the penetration of the number of internet users in Indonesia in 2024 reaching 221.6 million people and ranked 6th largest in the world of internet users. This condition is quite dangerous for children, moreover, parents must be able to control children's activities in the use of gadgets.

On the other hand, learning Arabic in kindergarten often uses monotonous learning media, such as flashcards, which can make children quickly feel bored and disinterested (Afwadzi, 2020). Understanding Arabic is important because it is the language found in the Qur'an, the guideline of human life, and as a second language after the mother tongue. Therefore, it is important for early childhood to be familiar with Arabic letters and learn the

language from an early age (Hasan, 2018). One of the parties that can support this introduction is teachers. The role of teachers in the early childhood learning process is very important (Rachman et al., 2023). Teachers are not only tasked with conveying the subject matter, but also shaping the child's character and setting a good example (Masturoh & Mahmudi, 2023). In today's digital era, teachers need to understand technological developments and utilize them effectively and well in the learning process. They are also responsible for teaching children about the wise and responsible use of technology (. Teachers can use interesting approaches such as integrating technology in the form of gadgets (Yuliastini & Sucipto, 2022). The use of gadgets can provide a more interactive and enjoyable learning experience for children.

The use of gadgets in learning Arabic can provide various benefits, such as increasing interest in learning and social interaction, but there are also some risks that need to be considered (Munawir et al., 2024) . For example, excessive use of gadgets can lead to attention disorders and sleep disorders in children. Therefore, it is important for teachers and parents to supervise and control the use of children's gadgets wisely (Sa'diyah & Hadi, 2019). Thus, further research is needed to explore how the use of gadgets can be effectively integrated in Arabic language learning in early childhood. Understanding the challenges and opportunities in integrating gadgets in Arabic language learning in early childhood raises the need to explore the learning transformations carried out by the teacher community (Rachman et al., 2023). In this context, learning transformation not only includes changes in teaching methods, but also involves the active role of the teacher community in developing and adapting learning approaches to children's needs and interests in learning Arabic. Through a qualitative approach with a descriptive study type, this study aims to find out how the transformation of Arabic language learning through gadgets by the teacher community in RA Mamba'ul Hisan Surabaya. The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to gain an in-depth understanding of teachers' experiences and practices in integrating technology in learning. Descriptive studies are used to provide a comprehensive picture of the observed phenomenon, namely the transformation of Arabic language learning through the use of gadgets.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach. The purpose of this study is to provide an objective explanation of the conditions that are occurring by collecting and describing the data obtained from the research. This type of research is qualitative with a descriptive design, which is carried out with field observation. Field observation itself is a research method that is carried out directly by observing objects and collecting interview data with sources. The researcher then analyzes and reassesses the phenomena that occur to obtain the information needed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Arabic language learning

Learning in Arabic is called al-ta'lim or al-tadris, and it is similar to the teaching planned by the teacher. Communication, according to Oemar Hamalik, is a collection of human elements, materials, facilities, equipment, and procedures that influence each other to achieve learning goals. People in the teaching system are made up of students, teachers, and others (Yuliastini & Sucipto, 2022).

Arabic learning is a teaching process or activity that focuses on students' understanding of Arabic as a foreign language. This is done by teachers and students, as well as other elements that help achieve learning goals, such as effective teaching methods and learning

media (Al Mardhi & Bachtiar, 2024). Learning Arabic is an effort to help students master the Arabic language, both orally and in writing, by paying attention to various elements, such as speaking, writing, reading, and listening skills, as well as vocabulary, grammar, and sentence structure. The main goal of learning Arabic is to provide students with knowledge and understanding of the language, build communication skills, and foster a positive attitude towards the language (Ghofur & Riski, 2024).

In general, the purpose of learning Arabic is to understand the Qur'an and Hadith, which requires the ability to speak Arabic to understand them. In addition, understanding the meaning contained in worship readings is also important. In addition, the purpose of learning Arabic is to improve communication skills, including improving Arabic language skills both orally and in writing, which consists of four components: listening (*istima*), speaking (*kalam*), reading (*qira'ah*), and writing (*kitabah*). Increase cultural awareness, including gaining an understanding of the relationship between language and culture and broadening cross-cultural insights (Muradi, 2013).

Early Childhood Language Development

A child's language development takes place gradually as they get older and includes the ability to listen, speak, read, and write. In the early stages, the child begins to listen, then speak, read, and finally write (Jailani, 2018).

Early childhood language development is a complicated process that goes through several

Stages. The latest study found that there are several stages, namely:

1. **Prelinguistic Stage:** At this stage, the baby begins to make sounds such as cooing and babbling as well as responding to surrounding sounds.
2. **Linguistic Stage:** At this stage, children begin to pronounce the first words and understand their meanings.
3. **Grammar Development Stage:** Children begin to make simple sentences and understand basic sentence structure.
4. **Advanced Grammar Stage:** Children are able to use more complex sentences and understand more complex grammar rules.

Children do not specifically learn language or vocabulary during early childhood, but on average children master more than 14,000 vocabulary words by the end of early childhood (Kholilullah, Hamdan, 2020).

Factors that affect a child's language development include:

1. **Genetic Factors,** this genetic factor is able to affect the speed and ability of children's language development. These genetic factors are factors that come from the family from birth or biological inheritance related to brain structure, cognitive function, and physiological of the body. Genetic factors also affect grammar, vocabulary, and verbal communication skills. Children who inherit cognitive abilities, including the potential to learn language from their parents. Parents with good language and cognitive abilities tend to have children who are more likely to pick up on language skills, on the other hand, if there is a family history of speech disorders or dyslexia, it is likely that the child will experience similar challenges.
2. **Social Environment:** Interaction with parents, siblings, and peers is essential. Children's language development can be supported by an environment rich in language stimulation, such as good conversation and exposure to diverse vocabulary. The influence of social environment with interaction with peers helps children learn language in a social context. Children learn to understand nonverbal cues and speak to situations or circumstances, besides that parenting and attention from parents also affect language development in early childhood, this is because children interact or hear directly from their immediate environment.

3. Parental Education, Background Parents with higher education tend to be more aware of the importance of language stimulation and are better able to provide an environment that supports children's language development. Parents who have a good educational background tend to understand their children's needs better. They are more sensitive to their child's development so that they will provide the best stimulation that their child will give. Conversely, lack of language stimulation and lack of support from parents can hinder children's language development. Therefore, it is important for parents and educators to create a supportive environment by providing adequate language stimulation to their children (Nasution et al., 2023).

Data Analysis Results

The results of the data analysis showed that (1) the gadgets used by teachers were in the form of audio, video, and applications, (2) the materials were packaged in various ways in the form of animations and games, (3) children showed high interest when participating in learning, and (4) the use of gadgets could develop digital skills. Table 1 is a more detailed finding.

The use of gadgets in early childhood does not always have a negative impact, sometimes the use of appropriate and wise gadgets in teacher supervision will be helpful in supporting teaching and learning activities, especially in learning Arabic. The use of gadgets is also not a taboo thing in today's digital era. This is supported by a statement that explains that the process in teaching and learning activities today is to utilize digital technology. In the early childhood learning process, teachers not only have a role to teach, but teachers must also have high creativity in order to design and implement learning that is fun, interesting, creative, friendly, and flexible for children (Hidayat et al., 2021). In the field, there are many conditions where adults involve gadgets as a medium to support children's learning at home. Therefore, the author will discuss in detail the transformation of Arabic language learning through gadgets by the Teacher community at RA Mamba'ul Hisan Surabaya from several important aspects found.

The use of technology in early childhood in Arabic language learning

The results of the study show that the use of gadgets in learning Arabic has resulted in transformational progress in the teaching and learning process. This is in line with learning theory that emphasizes the importance of utilizing technology in creating a dynamic and engaging learning environment (Istiqomah & Baroroh, 2021). This transformation allows teachers to deliver learning materials in a more interactive and engaging way for children, which in turn can improve their learning effectiveness (Listyawan et al., 2023).

First, *Maharah Istimah* (Listening). In the use of gadgets for *maharah istimah*, children can listen to Arabic audio repeatedly, because listening repeatedly will make children accustomed to good and correct rhythms, intonation, and pronunciation. Language learning theory shows that intensive listening is one of the effective methods in improving children's audio comprehension and speaking ability (Saputra et al., 2023). The results show that by using gadgets, children can gain better listening skills because they have easier access and flexibility to practice listening to audio repeatedly.

Second, *Maharah Kalam* (Speaking). The use of gadgets for *maharah kalam* allows children to interact directly with learning materials through Arabic games provided in the app or website (Istiqomah & Baroroh, 2021). Language learning theory emphasizes the importance of children's active interaction in language learning, which can improve their speaking skills. The results showed that with challenging Arabic games, children are more motivated to speak Arabic and improve their overall speaking skills.

Third, *Maharah Qiro'ah* (Reading). In the context of the use of gadgets, *maharah qiro'ah* increases because children can access various reading materials in Arabic through

applications or websites (Masturoh & Mahmudi, 2023). Language learning theory shows that active reading is key to improving children's reading comprehension and vocabulary (Pransiska & Sari, 2022). From the results of the research with the audio feature that accompanies the text, children can practice their reading skills while listening to the pronunciation of words, thereby improving their understanding of the text.

Fourth, Maharah Kitabah (Writing). In the use of gadgets for maharah kitabah, children can practice writing letters and sentences in Arabic with the help of applications or digital platforms (Saputra et al., 2023). Language learning theory suggests that direct feedback and automatic correction can improve a child's writing skills. The results show that with the auto-correction feature and instant feedback, children can correct their writing mistakes and improve their Arabic writing skills significantly.

Increase Children's Interest in Learning

The use of gadgets has been proven to increase children's interest in learning Arabic. This can be seen when the process of children's teaching and learning activities looks focused and plays an active role in learning. Children also show their interest by following the instructions given by the teacher. This is in line with the theory of learning motivation which emphasizes the importance of giving children control over their learning and arousing their intrinsic interest (Munawir et al., 2024). By utilizing technology that is interesting and relevant to children, teachers can stimulate their interest in learning Arabic, which in turn can increase children's motivation and involvement in the learning process (Fauzi & Nikmatullah, 2016). The use of gadgets has also helped in the development of children's digital skills. Digital literacy theory highlights the importance of children to understand, use, and participate in the ever-evolving digital world (Masturoh & Mahmudi, 2023). By engaging in learning Arabic through gadgets, children have the opportunity to develop their digital skills, including online navigation skills, information evaluation, and collaboration in a digital environment. The findings of this study have important practical implications for the development of technology and teaching practices in early childhood schools. Based on relevant learning theories and motivations, the use of gadgets in learning Arabic can be an effective means to improve the quality of learning and children's involvement. This shows the importance of thoughtful integration of technology in education to maximize children's learning potential.

CONCLUSION

Developments in the current digital era have had a lot of impacts on the world of education. Teachers are required to update their knowledge and adapt quickly to follow changes in technological developments. Human resources in this era are also required to be superior and able to compete outside following the rapid development of the times. Therefore, the use of gadgets as a learning medium is no longer a taboo thing to do.

The use of technology in Arabic language learning has developed a significant transformation in the learning process. Teachers have succeeded in using gadgets as a creative and innovative learning medium, as well as increasing children's interest in learning. In addition, the use of gadgets also helps in the development of children's digital skills. These findings provide important practical implications for the development of curriculum and teaching practices in early childhood schools, highlighting the importance of thoughtful technology integration in education to improve the quality of children's learning. Thus, the use of gadgets in learning Arabic not only increases learning effectiveness, but also helps children develop skills that are relevant to the demands of today's digital age.

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