

Digital literacy: exploration of social media-based Arabic language learning

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Abstract – Social media is often used as a learning tool, one of which is Arabic learning. This study aims to explore social media-based Arabic learning carried out by Arabic Language Education study program lecturers at IAIN Palangka Raya. By using descriptive qualitative research methods, this study describes the steps for implementing Arabic language learning which is carried out using social media, such as accessing, selecting, understanding, analyzing, verifying, evaluating and producing. The findings in this study describe that social media is used as: First, as a publication forum for project-based assignments; Second, as a means of digital literacy to obtain information; Third, as a way for students to optimize social media as a medium for literacy. The social media used in learning Arabic in the PBA IAIN Palangka Raya study program are Whatsapp is used as a learning resource for *Maharah Istima*, Instagram is used as a learning resource in *Maharah Kalam*. Facebook is used as a learning resource for *Maharah Qiraah* and *Kitabah*. Meanwhile, Youtube is mostly used for the publication of project-based assignments. Further research recommended is the effectiveness of using social media in improving Arabic learning skills, as well as digital literacy-based Arabic learning using other information technologies.

Keywords: Arabic learning, digital literacy, social media

1. Introduction

The large number of smartphones used today has triggered the emergence of a digital literacy trend. Digital literacy is based on a person's ability to use digital devices, such as a smartphone, laptop, or PC connected to the internet to obtain information. The high intensity of smartphone use by the millennial generation makes it possible for teachers to take the opportunity by optimizing the role of this device as a learning tool, so that students do not only focus on using social media as a means of entertainment.

As an active user of digital devices, a teacher who uses social media as a learning tool, needs to know the stages that must be taken so that learning objectives are achieved in line with digital literacy competencies. This also applies to the Arabic learning process which is the object of this research. Arabic learning in this era participates in constructing social media as a means of learning. This is due to its users, most of whom are digital natives.

Digital natives are the young generation who were born when the internet has become a part of their lives. Their lives have been surrounded by the internet from the time they are in their womb to the beginning of their birth (Supratman & Supratman, 2018). Generation is growing up and entering adolescence. They are adept at using smartphones to communicate, play online games, and watch Youtube.

As they age, their ability to use smartphones increases even more in childhood and adolescence (Ainiyah, 2018). They consider the use of digital tools, no longer as an option, but as a necessity. In Indonesia alone, it has been named the country in the sixth position as the largest internet user in the world (Media, 2021).

Internet users in Indonesia in early 2021 reached 202.6 million people. This number increased by 15.5 percent or 27 million people when compared to January 2020. The current total population of Indonesia is 274.9 million. This means that internet penetration in Indonesia in early 2021 will reach 73.7 percent. This is included in the latest report released by content management service HootSuite, and social media marketing agency We Are Social in a report titled "Digital 2021". Indonesian internet users spend an average of 8 hours 52 minutes surfing the internet. The internet activity most favored by Indonesian internet users is social media. Currently, there are 170 million Indonesians who are active users of social media. On average, they spent 3 hours 14 minutes on social networking platforms (Assidik, 2018).

This is what encourages education academies to actively call for digital literacy competencies from an early age, so that students can take advantage of social media as a learning tool. Several previous studies that support digital literacy efforts in the learning process are as follows; first, research conducted by Sahidillah and Miftahuhurisqi (2019), in their article it is stated that social media, especially Whatsapp can be used as a means of increasing digital literacy skills.

The features contained in the WhatsApp application can be used to support the learning process. Second, research conducted by Yusuf et al (2019) was stated that students in this era were already familiar with using digital technology and generally knew how to access digital information. However, being digitally literate, it is not enough just to be able to use these digital tools, but also to know how to manage, research and integrate information digitally. Although students today are generally considered technology savvy, many of them still do not use digital technology effectively, such as utilizing it to acquire planning, monitoring, and controlling skills in relation to critical thinking skills. A similar statement was also agreed upon by Rezha Rosita Amalia (Amalia, 2018), as stated in her article that internet users are not only required to be proficient in technical competence in using the internet only. However, they are also required to be able to think critically about the various content displayed by the internet, so that they are able to use the internet effectively for their own interests.

Apart from several previous studies related to digital literacy movement efforts, such as research by Diputra et al (Diputra et al., n.d.), Dewi (Dewi, 2019), and Rohman (Rohman, 2017), many researches and articles related to social media as a learning tool have also emerged.

Various social media, tested and described in the learning process through the research that has been done. As research conducted by Kamhar and Lestari (Kamhar & Lestari, 2019), stated in his writing about the Indonesian language learning process carried out using the social media youtube. Likewise with research conducted by Rembulan and Fauziah (Rembulan & Fauziah, 2020), Fariadi and Fitriah, in their writing he describes the learning process using social media Instagram. More specifically in the Arabic language learning process, previous research that has been carried out related to the use of social media is research conducted by Ilmiani et al (Ilmiani et al., 2020), Darsa and Antika (Darsa & Antika, 2020), Suroiyah (Suroiyah, 2020).

From various studies related to digital literacy and the use of social media as a learning tool, considering that there are not many studies that specifically discuss digital literacy in learning Arabic using social media, so here the author tries to look further about digital literacy by using social media in the process. Arabic learning conducted by Arabic Language Education study program lecturers at IAIN Palangka Raya.

From the results of preliminary observations made by researchers it is known that, in addition to using social media in the Arabic language learning process, here the PBA study program lecturers also prioritize the process or stages in digital literacy in the use of social media used during the Arabic language learning process in Arabic Language Education study program. Based on this background, researchers are interested in exploring this condition further, by describing it in a research article on the exploration of social media-based Arabic learning conducted by PBA study program lecturers at IAIN Palangka Raya.

2. Method

2.1 Research design

The research methodology used is descriptive qualitative method which aims to describe the Arabic learning process carried out by the lecturers of the Arabic Language Education study program IAIN Palangka Raya. This research was conducted over a period of four months from January to April 2021 in the PBA IAIN Palangka Raya study program.

2.2 Participants

The main subjects in this study were the lecturers of the PBA IAIN Palangka Raya study program, while the informants in this study were students of the PBA study program, the head of the PBA study program, colleagues who were in the IAIN Palangka Raya environment. The data collection techniques used were observation, interview and documentation.

2.3 Data Collection

Observations were made by seeing directly the Arabic learning process in the PBA IAIN Palangka Raya study program, both online and offline. This is done periodically, continuously and repeatedly, to obtain the required data. Interviews with PBA study program lecturers, conducted directly or indirectly. Live interviews are scheduled for three meetings, while indirect interviews are via telephone or whatsapp chat. This was done to confirm the unclear data. Documentation is carried out by collecting data related to the Arabic language learning process using social media, both in the form of files, photo capture, teaching materials, proof of assignment, and student assignments.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Searching results of the application

The process and stages of learning Arabic based on social media implemented by PBA study program lecturers at IAIN Palangka Raya are as follows:

First, most of the PBA study program lecturers ask students to document assignments that have been done on social networks, be it YouTube, Instagram or Facebook. The assignments that are uploaded to YouTube are in the form of validated power points and have received permission from the lecturers to be published. The tasks that are uploaded to Instagram

and Facebook are project-based tasks such as the task of making online teaching materials, learning media, games, teaching practices and practicing Arabic conversations. Before students upload and publish the work that has been done, students are assisted technically regarding download procedures, such as writing the title or keywords on the uploaded video to make it easier to search.

From the research results that have been described above, it can be seen that the PBA study program lecturers apply the principles of digital literacy, namely access. Accessing what is meant here is a competency related to technical skills in using the media. According to Asari et al (2019), what is meant by the ability to access is the ability to operate a computer or smartphone, before uploading or downloading media information. By asking students to document the assignments they have done and assisting them in technical upgrading, this shows that the PBA study program lecturers also direct students in a digital literacy culture.

Second, the lecturer of the PBA study program directs students to obtain information through social media. From the research results it is known that in several courses, PBA study program lecturers use social media as a learning resource. This is so that students can collect information or various references that are considered up-to-date and relevant to the data needed. As stated by Yanuarti and Sari (Yanuarti & Sari, 2019), we can get the latest information from the internet or social media because besides being more updated, news obtained from the internet is also easier to get, anytime and anywhere. However, in the process of collecting information, references, or materials requested by the PBA study program lecturer, the lecturer asks students to select or filter the data obtained, by selecting information with reliable references. This is in line with the principles of digital literacy, namely selecting. Astuti (2018) stated that in a digital literacy culture, it is very necessary to sort out valid and accountable information, by looking at where the source came from and who the author is. To find out a valid source of information, it can be seen from the website address, for example information on the world of education can be seen from the domain extension / top level domain using edu.ac.id, or sch.id.

The several courses in the PBA study program at IAIN Palangka Raya that mostly use social media in learning facilities are; Whatsapp is used as a learning resource for Istima 'maharah. By using the Voice note feature on the Whatsapp feature, PBA study program lecturers can train students' listening skills. For example, by means of the lecturer listening to his voice, directly with the students using Arabic. The communication that is established is not only during the lecture, but students are also free to interact using voicenote using Arabic. Even though it looks very simple, this method is effective in attracting student interest in learning listening skills. Previously, research on the use of WhatsApp in learning has also been widely carried out (Montag et al., 2015), Apart from being a social media, the use of WhatsApp is very helpful in the learning process (Gon & Rawekar, 2017).

Instagram is used as a learning resource in *Maharah Kalam*. In Instagram, there are features that are very popular and favored by millennial teenagers (Handayani, 2015) such as Instagram stories and Instagram feeds. This is used by lecturers of the PBA study program to create learning resources on Instagram, in learning, especially in the speaking skill course, in this course the lecturer makes conversation videos using Arabic according to the learning theme. Only then did the lecturer ask students to make a similar video.

Facebook is used as a learning resource for maharah Qiraah and kitabah. The social media Facebook, is a social media that is still existent until now ("Social Media Networks as a Learning Tool," 2015), even though its popularity has now been displaced by Instagram. However, Facebook is a social media that is owned by almost all groups (Moghavvemi et al., 2018). Therefore, lecturers of the PBA study program also use it as an attractive learning resource for students. By using Facebook, PBA study program lecturers create reading groups and writing exercises. The lecturer of the PBA study program writes a discourse on a theme, then at the end of the writing, the lecturer gives several questions addressed to students, students are welcome to answer the question in the comments column.

Meanwhile, Youtube is mostly used for the publication of project-based assignments. It is intended that the assignments made by students can be used by others as a source of learning. Moreover, according to Moghavvemi (Moghavvemi et al, 2018) now YouTube has changed its function, from entertainment media to science media.

From the research results that have been presented, it can be seen that social media is being converted as a learning resource. can be accepted easily among students, and with this approach, the lecturer considers it can attract students' interest. As the results of the third study, as a way for students to optimize social media as a medium for literacy. Nowadays, social media is a necessity for everyone (Mao, 2014), as well as students, to direct the use of social media for things that are more useful, so here PBA study program lecturers often connect their learning with the use of social media. So that students become more interested and feel that learning is part of their daily social life. PBA lecturers also give an appeal to students about the importance of understanding in the use of social media.

The understanding in question is an understanding in choosing the appropriateness of which sources to be used as a reference, who wrote the source, someone's perceptions in writing, or the person's opinion being conveyed. Thus, once we understand, the author's goals and can verify it with what we need, then we can then analyze it with the data we have, into a different product. This is also part of the principles of digital literacy, namely understanding, verifying, analyzing and producing.

Research article reporting on a quantitative study should present the results of both descriptive and inferential statistical analyses. In a qualitative study, the author should present verbal data consisting of detailed description of his or her observation. Each table or graph presented in this section should be accompanied by a short, clear description, and hence no table or graph should be presented to speak for itself. No interpretation of the presented data should be offered in this section. This section should not exceed 20% of the total length of the entire article.

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4. Conclusion

The novelty in this research can be seen from the exploration of the Arabic learning process based on social media by promoting digital literacy. Previously, previous research only described the process of implementing learning using social media, without further explaining the principles of digital literacy. In fact, the development of social media is part of digital literacy innovation. So that both of them are connected to each other. Following are the conclusions from the results of the research conducted:

First, lecturers of PBA study program ask students to document assignments that have been done on social networks, be it YouTube, Instagram or Facebook. Uploading tasks to social media requires the ability to access. Accessing is the earliest principle in digital literacy. Accessing what is meant here is a competency related to technical skills in using the media.

Second, the lecturer of the PBA study program directs students to obtain information through social media. However, in the process, the lecturer asks students to select or filter the data obtained, by selecting information with reliable references. This is in line with the principles of digital literacy, namely selecting.

Third, as a way for students to optimize social media as a medium for literacy. So that students become more interested and feel that learning is part of their daily social life. PBA

lecturers also give an appeal to students about the importance of understanding in the use of social media. Thus, after we understand, the author's goals and can verify it with what we need, then we can then analyze and evaluate it with the data we have, into a different product. The principles of literacy applied here are understanding, verifying, analyzing, evaluating and producing.

This study recommends further research on the effectiveness of using social media in improving personal Arabic language skills in terms of digital literacy. So that this research can be used as a reference for further researchers regarding the learning process of Arabic based on social media.

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