SOCIAL MEDIA AS ALTERNATIVE MEDIA FOR ARABIC TEACHING IN DIGITAL ERA

Azkia Muharom Albantani
Universitas Islam Negeri Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta
azki@uinjkt.ac.id

Abstract
The article aims to reveal the role of electronic social media such as youtube, instagram, and facebook as alternative media for Arabic teaching. The article employed a qualitative method through literature approach revealing phenomenon that are developing in the Arabic teaching. It is true that the three social media are alternative media that can be used by teachers in teaching Arabic. Students of elementary to secondary school, further students of college commonly use the three social media. The use of social media in the learning process is very likely may improve students’ motivation and interest. In addition, Arabic teaching will of course not bordered by space since it can be conducted anywhere.

Keywords: social media, teaching media, Arabic, youtube, instagram, facebook

INTRODUCTION
Technology of information is improving more and more sophisticated in line with the developing era. Many experts say that nowadays we are in the digital era. In fact, it is commonly referred by the Industrial Revolution 4.0 where an information can be spread quickly throughout the world through cyberspace, though we still often ask when the Industrial Revolution 1.0, Industrial Revolution 2.0, and the Industrial Revolution 3.0 come to an end.
Arabic teaching as well should match the developing era. Digital era is typically identic with the gadget, both for kids and adults. Therefore, we will not be surprised noticing many students bring their gadget to school. It can actually be the chance for Arabic teachers to prepare alternative media for the Arabic teaching.

At present, schools start to implement Curriculum of 2013. One of the core of the curriculum is that students should be active and independent in searching data and information, that are needed in the learning process. Hence, the teaching process is not teacher centered but students centered but still in the teachers’ guidance.  

Social media is increasingly developed with the users that cannot be limited for example YouTube and Instagram become the main social media that have been commonly used by many generations, from the generation of X, generation of Y, generation of Z, in fact it is used by generation of A. further, how about the Arabic teaching? We should find the alternative solution so that the Arabic teaching can be in line with the other foreign language teaching such as English and France.

Generation of X were born in 1961-1980 who tend to be risky and good and making decision. Moreover, considering the technology of information, the generation is already familiar with computers; hence, the generation has started to think innovatively to make human life become easier. Generation of Y refers to Generation of Millennial. They were born in 1981-1994. In this era, beside the spreading of computer, furthermore the developing of video games, gadget, smartphones and every computer based facility that are offered and the sophisticated internet cause the Generation Y becomes the generation that can get information easily and quickly. The way of thinking and the character of the generation can be said to have many visionary and innovative ideas to bear generation who have knowledge and mastery of science and technology. Generation of Z is the generation who were born in 1995-2010. The generation is the transition from the generation of Y where the technology was developing. Their way of thinking tends to have everything instantly. However, we cannot make many conclusions since they are now teenagers. Their life tends to depend on the technology; they put their priority in the popularity of their social media. Generation of Alpha is the generation who were born in 2010-present. This generation is the next generation Z where they were born with the technology that is increasingly sophisticated.

---

their very young age, they are familiar with gadget, smartphone and the current sophisticated technology. In addition, most of them were born in the family of the generation of Y who were born in the early development of technology. Their way of thinking which is open to development and transformative as well as innovative will influence the development of children of the generation of Alpha.4

At present, generation of Z and generation of A are the generations who are very likely and potential in learning Arabic optimally. However, technology approach should be paid attention in the teaching considering that the two generations are very familiar with the gadget technology. In fact, their parents introduced them to gadget technology from they were born when their parents were taking pictures to be shared in the social media.

Many research results often reveal that one of the unsuccessfulness of the Arabic teaching is the lack of students’ motivation and interest in joining the class.5 It is true that nowadays some of Arabic teaching is still conducted conventionally using the method of qawaid and tarjamah. It is definitely not false. However, teachers should pay attention and think the suitable formula in order that students are able to understand the lesson being delivered, and it is not merely doing the obligation to teach. The current problematic is the senior teachers who are considered old. Many of them find it difficult to use electronic teaching media, moreover when they have to use social media as teaching media. The development of era that affects the development of technology demand the teachers to master technology based teaching media.6 However, unfortunately it is still rarely found, especially in Indonesia. The phenomenon in the field shows that the implementation of Information and Communication Technology based Arabic teaching by teachers face many obstacles, especially in term of Human Resource and the infrastructure.7

Many kinds of technology should be utilized in the Arabic teaching such as internet, web, interactive CD, Satellite/Parabola, Arabic E-learning, which give opportunity for teachers to

---

explore information and science in the teaching process that become their major; the media indeed enable the teaching and learning process becomes more effective.\(^8\)

The development of gadget operation system also gives a bright future for Arabic teaching. The development of gadget operation system starting from Blackberry OS, Android OS, and OSX make it easy for the users to input Arabic letters in searching data and information in fact in sending message. Whereas, in the previous majority of gadget can only be used to input alphabet letters. Today, gadget users can easily change the language input that will be used in the gadget setting. This also becomes a good opportunity for the Arabic teaching in order that it can develop in line with the development of technology. Then, should Arabic teachers always be technology illiterate?

**METHOD**

The writing employed qualitative method in revealing the developing phenomenon in the Arabic teaching. Literature approach was employed in the collection of the data and information related to the writing, both printed and online. In addition, many statements from experts were included to support the discussion part. What experts’ statements mean comes from relevant science journals.

**RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram can be classified in the top eight social media with the most users and are mostly accessed by majority of teenagers to adults. These three social media can definitely be used optimally in the Arabic teaching. This of course will challenge the teachers’ creativity to get advantage of them optimally.

![MONTHLY USERS](image)

**Picture 1. Graph of Social Media Users 2017\(^9\)**

---

\(^8\) Rahmat Iswanto, “Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab,” 139-152.

Social Media as Alternative Media For Arabic Teaching in Digital Era

151 | *Azkia Muharom Albantani*
From the graph above it is clear that in 2017 Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram are the most commonly used social media. Facebook has been accessed by 2 billion accounts; YouTube has been accessed by 1.5 billion accounts; and Instagram has been accessed by 700 million accounts. The number is definitely potential to be used for online teaching development.

**YouTube**

In this digital era, YouTube becomes the most trending social media for many range of ages, in fact it becomes financial profit source for many people that is commonly called *youtuber*, let us call them Atta Halilintar, Ria Ricis, Baim Paula who have already had millions of *subscriber*. In fact, many take the advantage of YouTube channel to increase their popularity and financial. Many scholarship awardees abroad create YouTube channel to share information of their daily life in the foreign country. It is not only for earning their life, in fact YouTube channel make them popular, let us call them Akhyar Mustafa, Turah Parthayana, dan Jerome Paolin.

However, it is unfortunately that content creators in YouTube that specifically discuss education are still rarely found. Some of YouTube accounts that run the function of education media for youngster mainly is “Kok Bisa” which pack the content by using animation, simple language, and the explanation that is not too complicated. Education media in YouTube still require much contribution from many parties since we understand that there is no much education content with the genre of vlog, and other creative content with the theme of education is still rarely found. This of course becomes a problem as well as a potential to develop.\(^9\)

Arabic teachers can also take the advantage of YouTube in improving students’ motivation and interest in learning, in fact improving their understanding in learning Arabic.\(^10\) Arabic teachers are able to create channels to upload many videos of vlog related to the Arabic teaching. They do not need much money; they only need phone cell with the camera to record video and the internet data plan to upload the video to YouTube channel.

In the teaching and learning process in the classroom, teachers can divide students into groups in line with the number of theme that should be covered in one term. The groups should prepare materials that become their task and they should present them in the classroom according to the schedule that has been determined. Teachers let students free to search for the source of information

---


of their task, both from the classical books, modern book, as well as authoritative articles from the internet.  

Another alternative, teachers may first prepare some vlog video related to the topic of Arabic learning. Then, students are asked to access the videos in the classroom teaching and learning in-group. After that, every group may give comments of their understanding after watching the video. Then, the comments are discussed across groups and in every group may give summary about the topic being discussed.

Picture 2. YouTube Channel of Arabic Learning  

Browsing results show that there are YouTube channels that specified Arabic learning with the name of Belajar Bahasa Arab online video. The channel has been followed by 65 other accounts and has shared only 6 videos of Arabic learning. The materials of Arabic learning presented in this channel are the Arabic principle in the intermediate level. Unfortunately, the shared videos used the Arabic language for the explanation, hence it make the learner find it difficult to understand. Arabic learning through this channel is informal. There is no specific rule in joining the lesson. Other YouTube account owners only need to access the YouTube channel without following the channel to watch the video of Arabic teaching.

Picture 3. Lesson Materials of YouTube Channel of Belajar Bahasa Arab

---

12 Azkia Muharom Albantani and Ahmad Madkur, “Musyahadat Al Fidyu: Youtube-Based Teaching,” 294.  
Facebook

The media social created by Marck Zuckerbeck was first became trending and was the only one media social with the most users. However, in line with the era development, teenagers move to other media social, like Instagram. Hence, Facebook now is accessed more by adults.

Facebook becomes the media which is used mostly to share feelings, ideas, and experiences. Facebook is the website that provides column of status to share anything freely. Facebook has the column of status to write anything we want. With this media, students can freely express their feeling and express it in the form of learning comment.14

Arabic teachers can optimally use Facebook in the Arabic teaching. This social media has the feature of group so that it can collect students’ account in one group. The Arabic teaching in group of Facebook can be started when the teachers share materials of Arabic learning, for example isim, fi’il, and harf. After that, students are given task individually to give example in the column of comment one by one of the isim, fi’il, and harf freely but with the rule that they cannot give the same comment as the other has given. If there is same comment, teacher will warn the students to change it. The comments are likely become formative assessment in the teaching.

Facebook can also be used for informal Arabic learning. There are some accounts of experts on Arabic teaching who give materials of Arabic learning. Therefore, other accounts do not need to join the group to read the materials. The requirement to join the learning is they only need to be friend with the account of the experts. However, one of Facebook account can be friend with only 5000 accounts for the maximum number. Therefore, it becomes the weakness when the accounts have reached the maximum number of friends.

---

The writer found a group with the name of *Belajar Bahasa Arab* which provides free Arabic learning service. This group has been followed by about 800,000 other Facebook accounts. The browsing results show that Arabic learning materials presented in this account starts from the basic materials such as thematic vocabularies. Interestingly, the list of vocabularies is designed very well to attract learning motivation of the followers. The list of vocabularies is shared completely with the version of transliteration into alphabet letter.

Sometimes the account manager also shares videos and words in Arabic as the intermezzo materials in order that the followers do not get bored in learning. Arabic learning through this account is informal. There is no specific rule to join the lesson. The owner of Facebook account only need to follow the account of belajar_bahasa.arab in order to be able to learn Arabic materials that shared by the account manager. In addition, the group of bahasa Arab also provides the Instagram account with the name basis.arabic to facilitate people who only use one of the social media either Facebook or Instagram.

![Lesson Materials of the Group of Belajar Bahasa Arab](image)

**Picture 5. Lesson Materials of the Group of Belajar Bahasa Arab**

**Instagram**

Social Media of Instagram is very familiar among teenagers. This social media actually has fewer features than Facebook. Instagram can only share photos and short videos. Other account may access photos and videos without following the account. Accounts which are trending in Instagram usually have YouTube channel as well. Instagram is commonly used to share spoiler video that has been shared in YouTube. Therefore, it can be said that Instagram becomes a media to promote while YouTube becomes the media for earnings.

Previously, Instagram is specified to only upload and show photos, but nowadays the media has been up to dated. One of the excellences of the media is that the users may upload the video that has been recorded before. Furthermore, there is also other excellence of the Instagram namely...
Instagram live feature. The feature enable users to show their activity live through the camera on their gadget.\(^{16}\)

Formal Arabic learning can be started when the teacher create an account which can be followed by all students in the class. Further, students follow the account with their own accounts. Arabic teaching material is presented in the form of pictures containing learning content. After that, students are pleased to ask anything related to the Arabic learning materials through comment column.

In addition, Arabic teachers may give task in the form of quiz that is shared through Instagram account. Students may do and send the task through the comments column. Then, the teacher may give assessment to students’ work results. The mark can be used for formative and other assessment.

![Image](image.png)

**Picture 6. Account of Belajar Bahasa Arab in Instagram\(^ {17}\)**

The writer found there is an account with the name of belajar_bahasa.arab_ which is an Instagram account with the aim of providing online Arabic Course. 119,000 followers have followed the account. The account claims that it has been successful in teaching Arabic to the alumni. The browsing results show that the Arabic learning materials being presented in the account starting from the basic material such as thematic vocabularies. Interestingly, the list of vocabularies is well designed to attract learning interest of the followers.

Sometimes, the account manager shares video in Arabic as an intermezzo material in order that the followers do not get bored in learning. The Arabic learning through this account is informal. There is no specific rule to take the lesson. The Instagram account owners only need to follow the


\(^{17}\) Creator, “Instagram Account of Belajar Bahasa Arab,” accessed in May 9, 2019, https://www.instagram.com/belajar_bahasa.arab_/.
account of belajar_bahasa.arab_ in order to get the Arabic materials delivered by the account manager.

Picture 7. Arabic Learning Materials in the account of belajar_bahasa.arab_

**Strategy for Arabic Teaching through Social Media**

There are two alternative strategies of using the social media in teaching Arabic, i.e. using the available account or using teacher’s account. The use of Arabic materials in the available account has some consequences. The teacher may only teach Arabic material which is only provided in the account. However, the enforcement materials from the teacher can solve this matter. While the Arabic teaching by using the provided materials in the teacher’s account may cover many materials that have been determined in the lesson plan. One of the consequences is that the teacher should prepare all the content needed in the Arabic teaching independently.

Applying social media in the teaching is of course not an easy task for teachers who do not own skill in the field of information technology. However, actually applying social media in the Arabic teaching can be learned by paying attention to the steps that will be explained in the following:

1. Make sure that the teachers and learners already have account of social media.
2. The teachers may add learners in the account that is used.
3. The teachers may give task individually, in groups, or give information for discussion through comments column in the social media.
4. In addition to giving task individually and in groups, teachers may also deliver information related to the Arabic learning of the real class in the social media sites.
5. Learners may ask the teacher or friends in the classroom about the information delivered by the teacher when they do not understand it.\(^\text{18}\)

---

Strengths and Weaknesses

Strengths

YouTube and Instagram are Open Access social media, i.e. an account may access products of other accounts without following or being friends of the account. It is different from the Facebook, the information that is shared by an account can only be accessed by other accounts which have been friend.

Whereas, Facebook can be said as Open Media social media, hence the account owners may not only share information in the form of text but also information in the form of pictures, sound, videos, and other media. Therefore, Arabic learning will be more interesting if the teachers can maximize their skill in designing lesson materials in the form of media.

Facebook can be used in the Arabic teaching through sharing information in the form of text. Therefore, the use of text will save the internet data plan. This way, students only need to use phone cell and the limited internet data plan to access the lesson.

YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook are social media which can share information in the form of texts, pictures, videos, and others. It of course needs the Arabic teachers’ creativity in presenting lesson materials in order to improve students’ motivation and interest.

YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook are social media that can be accessed without space border. Therefore, students not only in the classroom, but also at home or in other places that have internet connection can access many kinds of materials of Arabic lesson that has been uploaded or shared in the social media.

YouTube, Instagram, dan Facebook are social media that can be accessed without registration fee, hence every people can easily join. In fact, social media can be financial earning for the users. However, there is also content which the users should pay in the social media that is commonly used for promoting, as what we can find in Facebook.

Weaknesses

YouTube and Instagram are social media to share information in the form of pictures and videos. It of course needs enough internet data plan to access the media. Hence, it is better to use unlimited internet data plan to access these two media.

---

YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook are social media that can only be accessed through gadget with the internet connection. Therefore, teachers who are in the poor internet connection will find difficulties in using social media in the teaching and learning process.

Youtube, Instagram, dan Facebook are social media that can only be accessed through gadget. Therefore, the use of gadget should be time limited. Otherwise, it will give negative impact for our health especially eyes.

Some Arabic teachers can be considered technology immigrant. This will make them difficult in using social media in the teaching and learning process. In fact, it is likely that there is no hope they can use other electronic media. This is our task in order that teachers both the juniors and the seniors should improve their skills in facing the development of information technology.

Some Arabic teachers are fanatic in using classical book in the teaching and learning process. Hence, they do not want to use other media that have been developed. Whereas, the era has been changed and continuing to develop. It is better when other electronic media accompany the classical book so that the lesson materials can be delivered to students.

CONCLUSION

Of the many current popular social media, it can be concluded that YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook are alternative media that can be used by teachers in the Arabic teaching. Students from the elementary level to the secondary level, in fact students of the college mostly use the three social media. The use of social media in the teaching process is very likely to improve students’ motivation and interest. Further, the Arabic teaching of course will not be space bordered since it can be followed anywhere. However, the task for all parties is how the internet can be used by people in all area in this country including in the remote area. Therefore, all people in the country can use the development of information and the technology.

REFERENCES


