Digital Resources and Their Use in Arabic Language Classroom: A Mini-narrative Review

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ABSTRACT

Digital resources, or specifically ICT, have a long history in language education. While the literature describes its extensive roles and functions, its availability and usage in Arabic classes are still restricted in their existence. This mini-narrative analysis was designed to introduce the subject of digital resources (software and online resources) and their usage in Arabic classrooms into context and to stimulate further discussion. According to the evidence reviewed in this report, future inquiries into digital tools in Arabic classrooms would require more successful acquisition, management, and use.

Keywords: Digital Resources, ICT, Arabic Language.

1. INTRODUCTION

When undertaking an investigation, researchers often analyze and guide their study steps with the findings of a review of prior research. A systematic review is a methodical procedure for identifying pertinent studies. These analyses are typically used to answer specific concerns with the use of systematic methodologies and objective assessments, such as determining the results of a particular intervention. Another possibility is to do a narrative analysis, which is the approach I take in this paper. A narrative review is a form of literature review in which the researcher summarizes the current state of education and its associated problems (references may necessary). Though narrative reviews are subjective in nature, they provide educational researchers with interesting and valuable knowledge.

The aim of this narrative analysis is to provide context and stimulate further discussion about digital resources (software and online resources) and their application in Arabic classrooms. The researcher strong foundation for addressing this subject stems from a strong appreciation for the value of digital resources as components of an integrated learning system in higher education [1], [2]. Numerous benefits accrue from the academic community's use of digital resources [3].

Admittedly, the significance of digital resources' use in advancing Arabic language learning has been widely discussed [4]. However, its use can be said to be restricted to a few forms [5]. In other words, the full potential of digital resources has not been fully realized, especially in the area of Arabic learning. The analysis of the literature (including editors) and very limited research indicate that the potential acquisition, management, and utilization of digital tools in Arabic classrooms would require more efficient acquisition, management, and utilization.

The purposes of this narrative review are formulated into the following four problem formulations:

1. What are the digital resources used by educators in Arabic class?

2. How is the use of digital resources in Arabic class at this time?

3. What benefits can be felt from using digital resources for developing Arabic language skills?

4. How can the use of digital resources in Arabic language education be improved?

2. METHOD

This mini-narrative analysis follows no rigid guidelines or methodologies; review and selection were made on a case-by-case basis. More precisely, the analysis of literature was focused on the confluence of the keywords "digital resources and Arabic teaching" and "technology and Arabic teaching". To locate arithmetic applicable to digital tools used in teaching Arabic, databases such as Web of Science, Scopus, and Google Scholar were used. The search is not time-limited, as research on this subject is still extremely scarce. Following the set of posts, the researcher simply defined the keywords and search for replication. Finally, the researcher determined significance based on the abstract. The results of this review will be presented in four sections according to the research objectives.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Digital Resources in Arabic Language Classrooms

Based on research reported by Al Musawai et al. [6], regarding the perceptions of Arabic educators on the digital resources they use, information was obtained that presentation software/application (PowerPoint), audio recorders, and online learning resources are often used in Arabic classrooms. Meanwhile, e-learning and the use of written documents have not been widely used.

3.1.1. PowerPoint

Among Arabic language educators, PowerPoint is the earliest, most developed, and well-known digital resource [7]. This ICT method is used by almost all Arabic educators for all of their tasks. PowerPoint is used by educators for a variety of purposes, including creating lesson plans, providing instructional materials, presenting assignments and activities that students must complete, and even assessing students' abilities.

The most common software is presentation software, which has advantages in terms of ease of development, duplication, and distribution. This interactive resource is compatible with Google Classroom, and students can have their own copy to use as a learning resource. Both offline and online learning are possible with PowerPoint. PowerPoint slides have also been widely promoted for a long time and are widely accessible on various Arabic language education forums' websites (for example, http://www.moudir.com/). Educators can access and store information efficiently and reliably using a site such as this [8].

3.1.2. Audio recorder

In the field of language learning, information and communication technology (ICT) is a relatively modern technology [9]. Educators can record their own voices

as instructional materials, and students can record their own voices while practicing speech skills. The captured audio can also be used as a form of evaluation and feedback, allowing students to improve their skills on their own [10]. In the context of automatic speech recognition, numerous audio recorders have been incorporated with computer software and smartphone applications (ASR). This technology refers to the platform's ability to recognize, interpret, and transcribe words and phrases in spoken language [11]. There have been a number of attempts by experts to improve ASR in the context of Arabic [12]–[14]. In the development of ASR, there have been no major issues with phonology or syntax, but the vast dialect variance and morphological complexity have been a challenge until recently [15]. Even simplified, during the Covid-19 pandemic, Arabic educators attempted to administer speaking assessments for students using the WhatsApp program [16]

3.1.3. Online language learning sites

As a source of linguistic information, online language learning sites are valuable digital resources [17]. It is used as an instructional platform for realia when illustrating educational activities a platform for students to practice their linguistic aspects, and developing assignments that must be completed by students in Arabic classes. Educators, on the other hand, have a negative view of this form of digital resource because it is often insufficient to meet the needs of students. The most common issue is that there is too much content on the website, which can make learning difficult for students [18].

In Arabic classrooms, newer technologies such Web 2.0 (e.g., Wiki and Edmodo) and learning management systems are used infrequently. However, as people move away from conventional learning and into online learning, Web 2.0 is becoming one of the most widely used interactive resources. Many universities created Web 2.0 websites in conjunction with e-learning in response to the Covid-19 pandemic as a forum for exchanging resources, communicating, and reporting assignments and student work results [19], [20]. SIPEJAR is one of the examples. SIPEJAR stands for *Sistem Pengelolaan Pembelajaran* or Learning Management System owned by Universitas Negeri Malang (UM).

In the same time, UM also has SIPADU (*Sistem Informasi Perpustakaan Terpadu* or Integrated Library System) which cater the needs of the students and academic staff in UM to access digital resources such as journals, theses, conference papers, academic reports, and monographs. However, not may of them have been adequately used for Arabic learning. Faculty of Letters in UM has recently experimented with the use of digital resources as a language corpus, one of which is in the field of Arabic. The corpus is a selection of writings that

students may use to practice their language skills [21]. The corpus developed by the Faculty of Letters UM team can be used in Arabic classes by utilizing features such as collocation and concordance. The findings of a pilot study show that this corpus can assist students in learning the form of terms, searching for their meanings, and understanding their background use. Learning to write and expanding vocabulary are the key goals of corpus-based language learning [22].

3.2. *Utilization of Digital Resources in Arabic Class*

Currently, digital resources have been integrated by most Arabic educators in their teaching method, but the selection of types, the learning activities designed, and the frequency of their use in the classroom will certainly differ from one educator to another. In general, educators consider the use of digital resources lies in two main things, namely ease of use of tools (ease to use) and their suitability to needs (usefulness). In another sense, the low level of use by Arabic educators of digital resources is closely related to content that is not in accordance with their needs [5], and the majority of educators feel comfortable when students use digital resources under their direction.

One of the significant findings from Al-Musawi's research [6] is the pattern regarding the level of technology use in Arabic classrooms. These results have an important role in providing preliminary data on the use of digital resources by Arabic language educators and encouraging broader research on this topic. It was explained that most of the technologies used to explain learning materials were less explored for learning preparation activities, and were almost never used for evaluation activities [6]. One example mentioned is an audio recorder. As explained in the previous section of this article, audio recorders have been integrated with software in the form of ASR, which can then be used as an evaluation method, especially in speaking ability.

Designing flipped classroom learning in Arabic classrooms allows for the exploration of digital resources for learning planning activities. This teaching method allows students to do pre-class work at home, such as watching videos or studying different digital resources provided by the instructor. Students are also required to perform pre-class activities. According to research, using the flipped classroom approach to provide students with access to a variety of digital resources can increase student self-directed learning [23], [24]. A number of recent studies have also shown that this form of instructional media in the improvement of Arabic language proficiency [25], [26]. The flipped classroom learning approach allows students to explore digital resources for assessment methods in addition to planning. In this process, class time is actually dedicated to more effectively carrying out learning tasks, such as

more in-depth discussion of the subject and providing input [27], [28]. This flipped classroom is particularly useful for optimizing digital resources in the form of video, which are still underutilized for preparatory activities [6].

Meanwhile, educators may use a variety of types of digital resources, ranging from website-based to computer applications, to optimize digital resources in terms of assessment methods. Educators should use "Kahoot!" for website-based learning. This platform is a multiple-choice questionnaire that can be accessed through a web browser or application [29], allowing all students to practice together using their own computers and smartphones [30]. According to recent studies, using "Kahoot!" will improve student awareness of concepts taught in Arabic grammar classes and increase motivation [29]. There has been a great deal of success with the app. In Arabic learning, the use of computer software for assessment methods was still limited to "filling in gaps," "multiple choice," and "connecting two words or phrases" [31] two decades ago. However, the results are very satisfying and help the teaching method [32] as it has advanced to automatic essay grading as it has been established.

In terms of evaluation methods, website-based digital resources are more widely used because of their ease of use, but computer-based software is still very limited. Apart from difficult access and limited options, the development of a computer-based Arabic language platform faces challenges, at least two, namely as follows [33], [34].

a) Language, some scientific words and terms are similar in Arabic and can cause problems when translated.

b) Technically, Arabic script runs from right to left compared to most other languages, therefore all interfaces and content must also be run from right to left.

The use of digital resources (technology) in Arabic classes itself is reported to have major problems, namely the availability of digital resources and the competence of educators.

3.2.1. *Digital resources availability*

Each type of digital resource has its own set of benefits when it comes to achieving educational and learning objectives. The more diversity there is, the more opportunities there are for educators to take advantage of it [35]. The key issue with the lack of use of digital resources is that there are insufficient digital resources to meet the needs of educators and students, or that there is insufficient awareness and information about their availability in Arabic classes [36]. As a result, knowledge about the availability of digital tools

that can be used by Arabic language educators must be gathered.

3.2.2. Teacher Competence

The key challenges that hinder Arabic language educators from using digital resources in the classroom are connected to their use of digital resources. Educators are often confronted with a lack of technological adaptation [37]. They must, on the other hand, be able to equip themselves to deal with digitally literate students [38]. One of the key reasons of the poor functional and pedagogical usage of digital resources in the classroom is alleged to be a lack of educator preparation [39]. The degree to which accessible digital resources can be used in the Arabic language classroom is limited due to a lack of educator training. It must be recognized that simply having digital resources available will not alter pedagogical practices unless educators are trained to use modern digital resources (technology).

3.3. Benefits of Using Digital Resources

The use of digital resources in Arabic classes has a clear benefit in terms of improving students' knowledge and language skills. Students with extensive access to digital tools may be able to conduct independent research and communicate with people outside of the classroom. Students may communicate with people from all over the world in terms of culture and language, including different dialects, in a global digital environment. Providing students with easy access to digital platforms is the same as providing them with the ability to see and hear different forms of using Arabic in various contexts. For pupils, this can be a tremendous opportunity to learn not just about pronunciation and intonation, but also about the meaning and metaphor of vocabulary use [40].

The incorporation of digital resources in Arabic classes is expected to stimulate other facets of student learning and language growth, in addition to their functional functions. In general, it is assumed that using digital resources increases motivation, provides more realistic input, and increases engagement and collaboration.

3.3.1. Motivation

Digital resources are primarily used to provoke students' attention and motivate them to learn a language in a fun and straightforward manner [41]. If we look closely, we can see that research on the use of ICT in learning other than language is primarily based on the learning motivation. This can be accomplished by incorporating enjoyable elements into many areas of language acquisition that students find tedious. Learning Arabic in the classroom becomes more efficient, strengthening students' awareness, as a result of this high sense of convenience, comfort, and motivation [42]. According to this interpretation, Al-Busaidi et al.

[43] found that using digital resources can increase the quality of Arabic teaching, resolve learning difficulties, and make Arabic learning more enjoyable.

3.3.2. Feedback

Digital resources are preferred because they can provide input and feedback to the target language for students. Feedback as a computer response to student answers can facilitate students to measure their progress, increase self-confidence and strengthen the subject matter [44]. It can also provide an effective way for educators to organize learning content and its interactions with students [9]. This important feature has offered students the opportunity to engage in an authentic language environment.

3.3.3. Collaboration

The use of digital resources is expected to be able to change Arabic classes that seem traditional to be more interactive and collaborative. Arabic learning is currently teacher-centered and textbook-oriented [37]. Many Arabic educators ignore the importance of methods by involving adequate and efficient digital resources [45]. In short, constructivist pedagogy (the current learning approach) requires student-centered and collaborative learning, which can be facilitated by the use of diverse digital resources into Arabic classrooms.

3.4. Improving the Use of Digital Resources in Arabic Language Education

Higher education is becoming increasingly conscious of the importance of maximizing the use of digital resources in order to improve education and learning quality. Every instructor (lecturer) must be able to use it in the classroom in an organized and structured manner in order to help students learn more effectively. Universities and educators must take a number of steps to ensure that the usage of available digital resources is maximized in the future and that their use in Arabic classes is of higher quality.

3.4.1. Exploration and documentation

Since there is a scarcity of knowledge about the availability of digital resources for Arabic language education, universities and educators must explore the digital resources they already have and collect them in a software and website that will serve as a robust storage area. Digital resources are organized by subject and type in this repository. While educators are familiar with how these digital tools are used, further instruction about how to use them in the classroom is needed. With the rapid growth of smartphone devices, it is preferable to design storage space in an application that makes it easier to access and share high-quality resource use.

3.4.2. Basic infrastructure

The high availability of digital resources cannot be fully utilized without strong support from universities. Poor infrastructure can be a barrier for educators to use it. In this case, tertiary institutions must provide quality and maintained equipment and provide adequate technical assistance.

3.4.3. Sustainable training

Higher education institutions must also design a professional development program (PDP) for teaching Arabic that is focused on utilizing digital resources. With the conditions of the Covid-19 pandemic, educators must be trained in how to use it in various modes, for example synchronous and asynchronous online. Higher education institutions must also encourage dialogue between educators and students so that they have the same understanding and perception of the purpose and value of the use of digital resources in learning Arabic. Finally, educators must also be encouraged to be able to produce new digital resources to expand variety and meet the needs of high-level students based on characteristics and learning styles.

4. CONCLUSION

In short, Arabic language educators are increasingly turning to digital resources, but there is still a lot of room for improvement. The majority of educators have digital tools in the form of PowerPoint presentation materials, while a few others lead their students to online learning sites and digital resources like audio recorders. However, when it comes to its use in the classroom, educators are much more interested in using digital resources to provide content and learning experiences in class, and the biggest void that needs to be filled right away is digital resources that are explicitly planned and given for class planning and in-class assessment methods. Arabic is a language that is spoken in Arabic countries. With the great potential and benefits that can be gained from the use of digital resources, such as increasing understanding of Arabic, encouraging learning motivation, providing feedback, and improving the quality of learning through collaborative learning, it is critical for educators to have technical and pedagogical expertise to design interactive digital resources on an ongoing basis. Regardless of Arabic educators' skill or familiarity with digital resources (ICT), they must be provided with access to a robust digital resource repository with catalogs and guides, as well as sufficient infrastructure.

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