



## **Students' Perceptions of Using Social Media as a Tool for Learning Arabic at UINSI Samarinda**

**\*Adinda Rana Salsabila**

*Universitas Islam Negeri Sultan Aji Muhamad Idris Samarinda*

**Alya Nur Fadhilah**

*Universitas Islam Negeri Sultan Aji Muhamad Idris Samarinda*

**Rabiyatul Adawiyah**

*Universitas Islam Negeri Sultan Aji Muhamad Idris Samarinda*

**Rifka Nabila Az-Zahrah Sasy**

*Universitas Islam Negeri Sultan Aji Muhamad Idris Samarinda*

**Siti Rosdiana**

*Universitas Islam Negeri Sultan Aji Muhamad Idris Samarinda*

**Abdullah Fatkhan**

*Universitas Islam Negeri Sultan Aji Muhamad Idris Samarinda*

**\*Correspondence :** [salsabilaadinda760@gmail.com](mailto:salsabilaadinda760@gmail.com)

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### **Abstract**

This study aims to explore students' perceptions at UINSI Samarinda regarding the use of social media as a tool for learning Arabic. The phenomenon under investigation arises from the increasing utilization of digital platforms by students, alongside the challenges they encounter in optimizing social media for language learning. A qualitative phenomenological approach was employed, focusing on students' experiences and subjective meanings. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, participatory observation, and documentation of learning materials on social media, involving 15 students from the Arabic Language Study Program selected using purposive and snowball sampling techniques. Data were analyzed thematically using the Miles and Huberman interactive model, including data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings revealed three primary themes: (1) ease of access and learning flexibility, as students used social media to study at different times and locations; (2) motivation and active engagement, with social interactions and feedback from peers and native speakers enhancing participation and learning interest; and (3) challenges and obstacles in online learning, such as distractions from entertainment content and difficulties understanding materials without direct guidance. These findings reinforce social constructivist and digital literacy theories in language learning while highlighting Indonesian students' subjective experiences, which have rarely been examined qualitatively. This study has

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practical implications for developing structured, social media-based learning strategies and for institutional policies on integrating digital platforms into the curriculum. Further research is recommended to explore the relationships between digital literacy, learning motivation, and the effectiveness of social media across various Islamic higher education contexts.

**Keywords** : Social Media, Arabic Language Learning, Student Perceptions, Phenomenology, Digital Literacy.

### A. Introduction

The global advancement of information and communication technology has transformed language learning, including Arabic.<sup>1</sup> Social media has emerged as a significant phenomenon that facilitates interaction, collaboration, and flexible access to learning materials.<sup>2</sup> Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and Twitter function not merely as conventional social networks but also as educational tools, enabling students to interact with native speakers, share learning resources, and practice language skills online.<sup>3</sup> This phenomenon is globally relevant, including in Indonesia, given the increasing internet penetration and students' growing interest in digital learning.

At the national level, students in Islamic higher education institutions, including those at UINSI Samarinda, have shown a tendency to utilize social media for learning Arabic. Such use is crucial due to limited face-to-face instructional time, restricted access to authentic learning resources, and the need for flexible learning opportunities. For instance, Abdullah and Al-Bawaleez found that students can enhance their Arabic language skills through online interactions on social media

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<sup>1</sup> N Fauziyah et al., "Implementasi Metode Qira'ah Dalam Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab Di Madrasah Tsanawiyah Negeri Samarinda," *Borneo Journal of ...* 1, no. 1 (December 22, 2023): 51–66, <https://doi.org/10.69493/ajoa.v1i2.28>; Khairy Abusyairy et al., "Pengaruh Media Video Berbahasa Arab Terhadap Keterampilan Mendengar Dalam Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab," *Borneo Journal of Primary Education* 2, no. 3 (October 3, 2022): 125–37, <https://doi.org/10.21093/BJPE.V2i3.5588>; Siti Khotijah et al., "The Effect of Wordwall Learning Media on Arabic Mufrodlat Mastery in Grade III Students at Madrasah Ibtidaiyyah Negeri II," *Borneo Journal of Language and Education* 2, no. 1 (April 1, 2022): 1–13, <https://doi.org/10.21009/ALMAKRIFAH.19.01.01>.

<sup>2</sup> Ahmad Fadhel Syakir Hidayat, Akhirudin Akhirudin, and Sutiah Sutiah, "Curriculum Management Characteristics in Arabic Language (A Comparative Study of Curriculum Documents in Arabic Language Education at UINSI Samarinda and UIN FAS Bengkulu)," *Lisanan Arabiya: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Arab* 7, no. 2 (2023): 143–60; Renti Yasmar, Aidillah Suja, and Ahmad Fadhel Syakir Hidayat, "Pemanfaatan ChatGPT Dalam Meningkatkan Keterampilan Menulis/Maharah Kitabah Berbasis 6C (Critical Thinking, Creativity, Collaboration, Communication, Computational and Compassion)," *Al-Jawhar: Journal of Arabic Language* 1, no. 2 (December 22, 2023): 87–104, <https://doi.org/10.69493/ajoa.v1i2.28>; Ummu Khairin Nisa et al., "Implementasi Metode Qira'ah Dalam Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab Di Madrasah Tsanawiyah Negeri Samarinda," *Borneo Journal of Language and Education*, October 31, 2022, 10–22, <https://journal.uinsi.ac.id/index.php/bjle/article/view/5902>.

<sup>3</sup> Mahyudin Ritonga et al., "Arabic as Foreign Language Learning in Pandemic COVID-19 as Perceived by Students and Teachers," *Linguistics and Culture Review* 5, no. 1 (2021): 75–92; Masahiko Keshav, Laura Julien, and Jessica Miezal, "The Role Of Technology In Era 5.0 In The Development Of Arabic Language In The World Of Education," *Journal International of Lingua and Technology* 1, no. 2 (August 2022): 79–98, <https://doi.org/10.55849/jiltech.v1i2.85>; Rega Armella, Adi Siswanto, and Ahmad Fadhel Syakir Hidayat, "The Influence of Social Media on Mazmumah Morals in Students of SMP Negeri 34 Samarinda," *Borneo Journal of Islamic Education* 3, no. 2 (2023): 195–209.

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platforms, particularly in vocabulary acquisition, reading, and writing.<sup>4</sup> Sidgi further noted that social media can accelerate foreign language learning by providing more contextualized learning experiences.<sup>5</sup>

However, practical observations indicate the existence of challenges. Preliminary observations at UINSI Samarinda suggest that some students primarily use social media for entertainment rather than academic purposes, even though they recognize its potential to support Arabic language learning.<sup>6</sup> This raises a significant research question: what are students' perceptions of using social media as a tool for learning Arabic, and which factors influence its effectiveness? This study is relevant from both educational and social perspectives, as Arabic language proficiency is associated with religious literacy, cultural interaction, and academic competence within Islamic university environments.

Social media, as a form of computer-mediated communication (CMC), can facilitate language learning through social interaction, collaboration, and instant feedback. Social constructivist theory emphasizes the importance of social interaction in learning, positioning social media as a platform for participatory and collaborative learning.<sup>7</sup> Additionally, blended learning frameworks suggest that combining conventional classroom instruction with online learning via social media enhances students' motivation, engagement, and the quality of academic interaction.<sup>8</sup>

Previous studies have reported various outcomes regarding the use of social media in Arabic language learning. Ritonga et al. observed that during the COVID-19 pandemic, students and instructors relied on online platforms for Arabic learning, with some students reporting increased confidence in reading and writing Arabic.<sup>9</sup> Keshav et al. highlighted the role of Era 5.0 technologies in enhancing Arabic language education, particularly through interactive social media tools.<sup>10</sup> Abdullah and Al-Bawaleez demonstrated that interaction with content and native speakers via social media significantly improves students' language competencies, especially in vocabulary and grammar.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Ahmad Taufik Hidayah Abdullah et al., "Analysis of EFL Learners' Language Proficiency Development across Different Social Media Platforms," *Theory and Practice in Language Studies* 12, no. 9 (2022): 1756–61.

<sup>5</sup> Lina Fathi Sidig Sidgi, "The Impact of Social Media on Learning English Vocabularies," *International Journal of Humanities and Education Development (IJHED)* 3, no. 4 (2021): 90–96.

<sup>6</sup> Ismail Akzam, Harif Supriady, and Alfitri Alfitri, "Improve Arabic Language and Islamic Skills with BISA System to Arab Village," *Linguistics and Culture Review* 5, no. S1 (2021): 624–32.

<sup>7</sup> Areej Alshutayri and Eric Atwell, "A Social Media Corpus of Arabic Dialect Text," *Computer-Mediated Communication and Social Media Corpora. Clermont-Ferrand: Presses Universitaires Blaise Pascal*, 2019, 1–23.

<sup>8</sup> Devi Rafika Sari, Ahmad Fadhel, and Syakir Hidayat, "The Effects of Using Animation Movies Toward Students Understanding on Sharaf Rules At Twelve Grade of Religious Class At MAN 2 Samarinda In Academic Year 2020/2021," *Borneo Journal of Language and Education* 1, no. 1 (April 2, 2021): 81–95, <https://journal.uinsi.ac.id/index.php/bjle/article/view/5271>; Muh Syaiful Romadhon, Amalia Rahmah, and Yekti Wirani, "Blended Learning System Using Social Media for College Student: A Case of Tahsin Education," *Procedia Computer Science* 161 (2019): 160–67.

<sup>9</sup> Ritonga et al., "Arabic as Foreign Language Learning in Pandemic COVID-19 as Perceived by Students and Teachers."

<sup>10</sup> Keshav, Julien, and Miezal, "The Role Of Technology In Era 5.0 In The Development Of Arabic Language In The World Of Education."

<sup>11</sup> Abdullah et al., "Analysis of EFL Learners' Language Proficiency Development across Different Social Media Platforms."

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Mahfud et al. examined the influence of Islamic culture and the Arabic language in the Nusantara region, demonstrating that social media facilitates students' access to culturally relevant Arabic texts and vocabulary.<sup>12</sup> Akzam et al. illustrated the effectiveness of the BISA system, a social media-based platform, in enhancing language skills and comprehension of Islamic texts at Arab Village.<sup>13</sup> Alzanin et al. found that short-text analysis from social media can be utilized for automated modern Arabic language learning, supporting the acquisition of contemporary vocabulary.<sup>14</sup>

Romadhon et al. emphasized social media-based blended learning as an effective strategy for Tahsin instruction, providing collaborative learning experiences and instant feedback.<sup>15</sup> Salih and Elsaid reported positive student attitudes toward using social media for learning, particularly in reading, writing, and interacting with native speakers.<sup>16</sup> Ghani and Daud highlighted the integration of digital game-based learning with social media for Arabic communication, which enhances student motivation and practical language skills.<sup>17</sup>

Other studies corroborate these findings.<sup>18</sup> Alrasheedi demonstrated that social media can improve both Arabic and English writing skills among Arab students.<sup>19</sup> Alsafari et al. underscored the role of social media in reducing hate speech incidents and fostering positive interaction in Arabic language learning within online communities.<sup>20</sup> Alfaki reported that social media usage assists Arab students in promoting English language skills, which is relevant given that cross-linguistic learning

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<sup>12</sup> Choirul Mahfud et al., "Islamic Cultural and Arabic Linguistic Influence on the Languages of Nusantara; From Lexical Borrowing to Localized Islamic Lifestyles," *Wacana, Journal of the Humanities of Indonesia* 22, no. 1 (2022): 11.

<sup>13</sup> Akzam, Supriady, and Alfutri, "Improve Arabic Language and Islamic Skills with BISA System to Arab Village."

<sup>14</sup> Samah M Alzanin, Aqil M Azmi, and Hatim A Aboalsamh, "Short Text Classification for Arabic Social Media Tweets," *Journal of King Saud University-Computer and Information Sciences* 34, no. 9 (2022): 6595–6604.

<sup>15</sup> Romadhon, Rahmah, and Wirani, "Blended Learning System Using Social Media for College Student: A Case of Tahsin Education."

<sup>16</sup> Abdulgalil Abd Allah Salih and Dr Abuelgasim Sabah Elsaid, "Students Attitude towards the Use of Social Media for Learning Purposes (Case Study: Al-Baha University, College of Sciences & Arts-Biljurashi)," *Journal of Literature, Language and Linguistics* 50, no. 7 (2018): 31–36.

<sup>17</sup> Mohammad Taufiq Abdul Ghani and Wan Ab Aziz Wan Daud, "The Impact of Digital Game-Based Learning towards Arabic Language Communication," *Jurnal Komunikasi: Malaysian Journal of Communication*, 2023.

<sup>18</sup> Irsal Amin et al., "Student Perception of the Development of Arabic Learning Model in Intensive Learning Program at IAIN Padangsidempuan Language Development Center," *Lisanan Arabiya: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Arab* 6, no. 1 (2022): 69–86; Rijal Mahdi et al., "Analisis Kesalahan Tata Bahasa Dan Diksi Para Debator Dalam Debat Ilmiah Bahasa Arab Mukhtamar ITHLA IX," *Al-Ma 'Rifah* 19, no. 1 (2022): 1–12; Jamaluddin Shiddiq et al., "Ujian Munaqosyah Mahasiswa PBA IAIN Ponorogo: Analisis Psikolinguistik Pada Senyapan Dan Kilir Lidah," *An Nabighoh* 24, no. 2 (2022): 185–98.

<sup>19</sup> Saleh Alrasheedi, "The Effect of Social Media Networking Use in EFL Classrooms in Saudi Arabia: An Argumentative Review," *International Journal of English Linguistics* 10, no. 1 (2020): 241–54.

<sup>20</sup> Safa Alsafari, Samira Sadaoui, and Malek Mouhoub, "Hate and Offensive Speech Detection on Arabic Social Media," *Online Social Networks and Media* 19 (2020): 100096.

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strategies can also be applied to Arabic.<sup>21</sup> Aidulsyah indicated the influence of social media on shaping Arabic language learning culture among urban Indonesian youth.<sup>22</sup>

Despite the extensive research on the effectiveness and strategies of social media use, a significant gap remains: qualitative studies exploring the meanings, experiences, and perceptions of students regarding social media use in learning Arabic in Indonesia are still limited. Most prior studies focus on quantitative outcomes or technical aspects of platform use, leaving students' subjective experiences underexplored. This study addresses this gap by emphasizing the learning experiences and interpretations of students as research subjects.

The theoretical framework of this study draws on social constructivism, collaborative learning theory, and digital literacy. Social constructivism posits that knowledge is constructed through social interaction, whereas digital literacy supports students in using social media effectively for learning Arabic. The relationship between students' perceptions, learning motivation, and social media usage constitutes the focus of the analysis. This study aims to describe UINSI Samarinda students' perceptions of social media as a tool for learning Arabic, contributing theoretically to the literature on digital-based Arabic language learning and practically to instructional strategies in Islamic higher education.

### B. Method

This study employed a qualitative phenomenological approach to explore UINSI Samarinda students' perceptions of using social media as a tool for learning Arabic. The phenomenological approach was chosen because it emphasizes understanding individuals' lived experiences and the subjective meanings they attribute to them.<sup>23</sup> Through phenomenology, the researcher was able to investigate students' perceptions in depth regarding their interactions with social media in the context of Arabic language learning, including their motivation, learning strategies, and challenges encountered. This approach aligns with the study's objective to capture social reality from participants' authentic perspectives, rather than merely measuring the frequency or quantitative effectiveness of social media usage.

The research was conducted at UINSI Samarinda from September to December 2025. The participants comprised 15 active students from the Arabic Language Study Program, selected using purposive sampling based on the following criteria: active use of social media for learning Arabic, willingness to participate in in-depth interviews, and at least one semester of prior experience. To expand the sample, snowball sampling was applied, whereby additional informants were recommended by the initial participants.<sup>24</sup>

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, participatory observation, and documentation of learning materials on social media. Data validity was reinforced through methodological and source triangulation, as well as member

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<sup>21</sup> Ibrahim Mohamed Alfaki, "Towards a Digital World: Using Social Networks to Promote Learner's Language," 2018.

<sup>22</sup> Fachri Aidulsyah, "The Rise of Urban Salafism in Indonesia: The Social-Media and Pop Culture of New Indonesian Islamic Youth," *Asian Journal of Social Science* 51, no. 4 (2023): 252–59.

<sup>23</sup> John W Creswell and J David Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (Sage publications, 2017).

<sup>24</sup> Sugiyono, *Metode Penelitian Pendidikan: (Pendekatan Kuantitatif, Kualitatif Dan R & D)* (Bandung: Alfabeta, 2008).

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checking, in which preliminary findings were verified by the participants to ensure that the researcher's interpretations accurately reflected their experiences.<sup>25</sup> Data analysis followed thematic procedures based on the Miles, Huberman and Saldana interactive model, encompassing three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification.<sup>26</sup> Interview data were initially coded openly (open coding) to identify categories and themes, followed by axial coding to connect themes to broader phenomena.<sup>27</sup> This approach enabled the researcher to systematically understand students' subjective experiences and to develop findings that could inform the design of social media-based Arabic language learning strategies. Additionally, an audit trail was maintained to document each step of the research process, ensuring transparency and the reliability of the results.

### C. Findings and Discussion

Based on thematic analysis of data from interviews, participatory observations, and documentation of learning materials on social media, three primary themes were identified: (1) Ease of Access and Learning Flexibility, (2) Motivation and Active Engagement, and (3) Challenges and Obstacles in Online Learning. Each theme encompasses several sub-themes that illustrate patterns in students' perceptions regarding the use of social media in Arabic language learning.

#### Ease of Access and Learning Flexibility

The findings indicate that UINSI Samarinda students intensively use social media to support Arabic language learning. Students employ a variety of digital platforms, including YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, WhatsApp, and Telegram, to access learning materials, watch videos, read articles, participate in interactive quizzes, and engage in online discussions. These activities reflect students' need for flexible learning that can be adapted to their busy class schedules and other campus activities. Participants reported that social media use makes the learning process easier, more practical, and accessible at any time. For example,

Participant I3 stated: "I watch Arabic vocabulary videos on YouTube every day and note down new words on my phone."

These findings suggest that social media serves as an important tool for self-directed and interactive learning that aligns with each individual's learning rhythm.

Observations supported the interview findings, revealing that students not only consume materials but also actively share notes, provide comments, and engage in discussions with peers via WhatsApp and Telegram groups. These activities demonstrate that social media functions as a blended learning platform, allowing students to study flexibly outside formal class hours. In practice, students utilize various platform features to mark important materials, store digital notes, or share learning content with peers. This aligns with the principles of social constructivism, which posit that knowledge is constructed through interaction and collaboration between individuals and their social environment.<sup>28</sup> Thus, social media is not merely a

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<sup>25</sup> Yvonna S Lincoln and Egon G Guba, *Naturalistic Inquiry* (sage, 1985).

<sup>26</sup> Matthew B. Miles, A. Michael Huberman, and Johnny Saldaña, *Qualitative Data Analysis. A Methods Sourcebook* (California: SAGE Publications, 2020).

<sup>27</sup> Johnny Saldaña, "The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers," 2021.

<sup>28</sup> Alshutayri and Atwell, "A Social Media Corpus of Arabic Dialect Text."

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medium for information consumption but also a platform for content production and reflective learning.

To illustrate the variation in platform use and learning activities, the following table presents data from interviews with 15 participants:

**Table 1. Variation in Students' Platform Use and Learning Activities**

Participant	Social Media Platform	Type of Learning Activity	Frequency per Week	Short Quote
I1	YouTube	Watching vocabulary videos	5	"Videos help me remember new vocabulary."
I2	Instagram	Reading Arabic articles	3	"Articles on Instagram are easily accessible anytime."
I3	YouTube	Watching videos & noting vocabulary	7	"I write down every new word I learn."
I4	TikTok	Participating in interactive quizzes	4	"Quizzes on TikTok challenge me to learn."
I5	WhatsApp	Group discussion	3	"Discussions in the group help me understand new sentences."
I6	Telegram	Sharing notes	2	"I share notes so friends can learn too."
I7	YouTube	Noting new vocabulary	6	"Writing vocabulary from videos helps me remember better."
I8	Instagram	Reading articles & discussions	4	"I enjoy reading articles and then discussing with friends."
I9	TikTok	Watching videos & quizzes	5	"Short videos and quizzes make learning fun."
I10	WhatsApp	Discussion & writing sentences	3	"Writing Arabic sentences in the group provides immediate feedback."
I11	Telegram	Sharing grammar exercises	2	"Grammar exercises are supported by peers in the group."
I12	YouTube	Watching tutorials	4	"Video tutorials can be replayed if I don't understand."

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I13	Instagram	Reading Arabic cultural articles	3	“Articles about Arab culture expand my vocabulary knowledge.”
I14	TikTok	Watching vocabulary videos	6	“Short TikTok videos motivate me to study.”
I15	WhatsApp	Discussion & writing practice	3	“Discussion and writing practice improve my skills.”

Analysis of the table shows that YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram are the most popular platforms for learning vocabulary and grammar, while WhatsApp and Telegram are primarily used for discussion and sharing materials. This indicates that students use social media not only as a learning resource but also as a collaborative space for sharing information, correcting mistakes, and discussing content. The diversity of activities fosters a more holistic learning experience and supports more contextualized and meaningful Arabic language learning. By combining content consumption and production, students can develop a deeper understanding of the language.

Participants emphasized that learning flexibility is a primary advantage of social media use.

Participant I7 remarked: “I can watch YouTube videos anytime, even while waiting for class. This makes learning more flexible.”

These findings suggest that students can tailor their learning strategies to their personal needs and daily routines, making social media an effective alternative for overcoming the time constraints of formal classroom learning. This flexibility also allows students to revisit materials repeatedly, enhancing comprehension and vocabulary acquisition.

In addition to temporal flexibility, students also utilize social media to access diverse and authentic learning materials, including tutorial videos, cultural articles, and interactive exercises. Observations revealed that participants routinely highlight important materials, store digital notes, and share information within study groups. These activities strengthen their understanding of vocabulary, grammar, and Arab culture, while enhancing their ability to apply knowledge in real-world contexts. Consequently, social media not only supports academic Arabic language learning but also broadens students' cultural awareness.

Learning activities through social media are also collaborative.

Participant I10 stated: “Writing Arabic sentences in the WhatsApp group allows friends to provide corrections and suggestions. I learn more quickly this way.”

Such interactions reflect the principles of social constructivism, in which knowledge is constructed through reflection and social engagement. This collaboration helps students better comprehend vocabulary and grammar while enhancing learning motivation through immediate peer feedback.

The frequency of social media use correlates with learning progress. Participants who used platforms five to seven times per week, such as I3 and I14, reported improvements in vocabulary comprehension and writing skills. Conversely, students

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with lower usage frequency experienced slower learning progress. These findings indicate that consistent engagement with social media significantly affects learning effectiveness, highlighting the importance of time management and intrinsic motivation.

The combination of multiple platforms creates a holistic learning ecosystem. Interactive videos from YouTube and TikTok, combined with discussions on WhatsApp and Telegram, generate learning experiences that support digital literacy, collaboration, and motivation. Such activities allow students to develop comprehensive language skills, including reading, writing, and contextual interaction. Social media serves not merely as an information-access tool but also as a medium for meaningful and participatory learning experiences.<sup>29</sup>

Overall, the theme of Ease of Access and Learning Flexibility underscores that social media constitutes a dynamic interactive learning space. Students can adapt their learning strategies, increase engagement, and build contextualized Arabic language understanding. Social media functions not only as an information source but also as a collaborative medium that enhances learning experiences and fosters a flexible, participatory learning culture. Therefore, social media can serve as a strategic alternative in Arabic language learning in the digital era.

### **Motivation and Active Engagement**

The findings indicate that social interactions via social media significantly enhance UINSI Samarinda students' motivation in Arabic language learning. Students utilize various platforms, including WhatsApp, Telegram, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube, to engage in discussions, complete quizzes, write posts, and receive feedback from peers and instructors. These activities foster active engagement, in which students do not merely receive information passively but participate in constructing knowledge. Field observations revealed that students who actively interact tend to maintain better focus, acquire new vocabulary more quickly, and apply grammar in everyday communication contexts. Thus, social interaction on social media is not merely a source of entertainment but serves as a tangible driver of motivation and engagement in the Arabic learning process.

Most participants (11 out of 15) emphasized that discussing with peers in WhatsApp or Telegram groups helps them understand new vocabulary and grammar while promoting learning consistency.

Participant I1 stated: "Discussions make me more confident in writing Arabic."

Observations showed that students respond to peers' questions, share learning strategies, and provide corrections in writing Arabic sentences. Such interactions enhance a sense of responsibility and active participation, which are crucial in collaborative learning. This aligns with the principles of social constructivism, which emphasize that learning is most effective through social interaction, reflection, and collaboration among individuals. In other words, peer-to-peer interaction via social media encourages students to be more active, motivated, and autonomous in learning Arabic.

Feedback from instructors or native speakers was also found to enhance students' learning motivation.

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<sup>29</sup> Romadhon, Rahmah, and Wirani, "Blended Learning System Using Social Media for College Student: A Case of Tahsin Education."

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Participant I5 noted: "The teacher provides corrections that improve my grammar skills."

This form of interaction enriches the learning experience, as students receive immediate feedback that can be used to correct errors and reinforce conceptual understanding. Observations indicated that students receiving feedback from instructors or online mentors tend to post more frequently and participate more actively in discussions compared to those studying independently. These findings confirm that social media can function as an effective collaborative tool, where a combination of peer interaction and formal guidance creates meaningful learning experiences and boosts students' self-confidence.

Observations revealed that students actively write Arabic posts, participate in online quizzes, and respond to peers' comments across various platforms. These activities not only enhance Arabic language skills but also cultivate a sense of responsibility toward the learning process and peer collaboration. Students reported that challenges posed through interactive quizzes, writing exercises, and group discussions motivate them to engage consistently in learning. Active engagement allows students to develop more effective learning strategies, manage study time independently, and improve digital literacy skills, which are essential for modern language learning. Therefore, active interaction on social media facilitates a more comprehensive, personalized, and reflective learning experience.

**Table 2. Interview Table: Motivation and Active Engagement**

Participant	Type of Interaction	Frequency per Week	Impact on Motivation	Short Quote
I1	WhatsApp group discussion	4	High	"Discussions make me more confident in writing Arabic."
I2	TikTok quiz	3	Medium	"Quizzes are challenging and motivate me to learn."
I3	Comments on Instagram	5	High	"Friends' comments provide helpful feedback."
I4	Writing Arabic sentences in group	6	High	"The challenge of writing Arabic sentences makes me study diligently."
I5	Teacher feedback on Telegram	4	High	"The teacher provides corrections that improve my grammar skills."
I6	Telegram community discussion	3	Medium	"The Telegram community gives new practice ideas."
I7	Writing video posts	5	High	"Creating posts motivates me to study more seriously."

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<b>I8</b>	Friends' comments on Instagram	4	Medium	"Comments from friends help me understand new vocabulary."
<b>I9</b>	Interactive TikTok quiz	4	High	"Interactive quizzes increase my learning motivation."
<b>I10</b>	Writing exercises in WhatsApp group	5	High	"Writing exercises in the group help me focus on learning."
<b>I11</b>	Grammar feedback on Telegram	3	Medium	"Grammar feedback helps me correct mistakes."
<b>I12</b>	Online discussions and quizzes	2	Medium	"Online discussions and quizzes help me engage more actively in learning."
<b>I13</b>	Comments on Arab culture	3	Medium	"Comments about Arab culture broaden my knowledge and motivation."
<b>I14</b>	Writing sentences on TikTok	5	High	"Writing sentences on TikTok makes me more creative in learning."
<b>I15</b>	Discussion and writing exercises on WhatsApp	3	High	"Discussion and writing exercises enhance my learning motivation."

The table data indicate that interactions involving immediate feedback and writing activities tend to generate high motivation among students, whereas passive activities such as reading comments are associated with moderate motivation. This highlights the importance of active engagement in improving learning outcomes. Students who frequently participate in active interactions reported faster language development, stronger motivation, and increased self-confidence. Therefore, the use of social media as a learning tool should be structured to enhance active participation to maximize its positive impact.

Participants reported that interactive quizzes on TikTok or challenges involving writing Arabic sentences in groups make the learning process more enjoyable and competitive. Field observations corroborated these reports, showing that students who actively write posts or regularly respond to quizzes demonstrate higher engagement in group discussions. These activities help students not only understand the material but also enhance critical thinking, creativity in writing, and communication skills. Therefore, gamification and interactive activities on social media can serve as an effective strategy to motivate students in learning Arabic.

Thematic analysis indicated that the combination of peer interaction and feedback from instructors or native speakers increases students' self-confidence and strengthens Arabic language comprehension.

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Participant I4 emphasized: "The challenge of writing Arabic sentences motivates me to study diligently."

These findings suggest that social media functions not only as an individual learning space but also as a collaborative and motivational platform, where students acquire meaningful, constructive learning experiences that can be directly applied in communication practice.

The findings of this study are consistent with those of Ritonga et al. and Mahfud et al.,<sup>30</sup> who highlighted that online interaction enhances language skills and meaningful learning experiences within the Arab-Islamic cultural context. Social media facilitates learning based on active participation, feedback, and reflection, aligning with the principles of social constructivism. Accordingly, active engagement through social media can maximize Arabic language comprehension while fostering students' intrinsic motivation to learn.

Overall, the theme of Motivation and Active Engagement underscores that social media functions as a collaborative ecosystem that enhances motivation, engagement, and the quality of Arabic language learning. The integration of various types of interactions, whether with peers or instructors, can serve as a critical strategy for educators in designing more effective, enjoyable, and productive online learning experiences. Social media, with its interactive features, provides sufficient flexibility to create collaborative, participatory, and sustainable learning environments.

### Challenges and Obstacles in Online Learning

Although social media facilitates access to Arabic language learning for UINSI Samarinda students, the findings reveal several significant obstacles that affect the effectiveness of the learning process. Participants reported several primary challenges, including distractions from highly engaging entertainment content, difficulties in understanding Arabic materials without instructor guidance, and technical issues such as unstable or slow internet connections. These barriers directly impact the quality of online learning interactions and students' motivation to engage with the material. Practically, this phenomenon indicates that social media does not automatically guarantee learning benefits. Pedagogical strategies, time management, and adequate digital literacy are required to minimize these challenges and ensure that students remain productive and focused in learning Arabic.

The first sub-theme identified was distraction from entertainment content, reported by seven out of fifteen participants.

Participant I12 stated: "Sometimes I scroll through feeds more than I study."

Field observations indicated that students are frequently tempted to watch entertainment videos, viral content, or access other non-educational social media, disrupting learning consistency. Excessive scrolling habits present a distinct challenge in online learning. These distractions also create time pressures, as students must divide their attention between studying and digital entertainment. This phenomenon underscores the importance of self-regulation and time management in social media use to maintain effective learning.

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<sup>30</sup> Ritonga et al., "Arabic as Foreign Language Learning in Pandemic COVID-19 as Perceived by Students and Teachers"; Mahfud et al., "Islamic Cultural and Arabic Linguistic Influence on the Languages of Nusantara; From Lexical Borrowing to Localized Islamic Lifestyles."

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The second sub-theme concerns difficulties in understanding materials without direct guidance. Eight participants reported challenges in comprehending grammar, complex sentences, or online quizzes without instructor support.

Participant I2 remarked: "Grammar is difficult to understand without the teacher's explanation."

This suggests that formal interaction or guidance from instructors remains essential, even when social media provides flexible access to learning materials. The lack of direct guidance slows students' understanding of complex Arabic concepts, potentially diminishing learning motivation. Integrating pedagogical guidance with social media use is therefore key to enabling effective learning and deeper comprehension.

The third sub-theme involves technical barriers, including slow or unstable internet connections, experienced by participants such as I3 and I7. These technical issues disrupt access to tutorial videos, online quizzes, and discussions in WhatsApp and Telegram groups, resulting in interruptions or inefficiencies in the learning process. Such conditions also affect students' ability to interact effectively with peers and instructors. When confronted with technical challenges, students tend to lose motivation, especially when unable to complete learning activities on time. Therefore, the quality of digital infrastructure also significantly influences the effectiveness of social media as a learning tool.

**Table 3. Interview Table: Challenges and Obstacles**

Participant	Type of Obstacle	Frequency per Week	Impact on Learning	Short Quote
I1	Entertainment distraction	3	Medium	"I am often distracted by entertainment while studying."
I2	Difficulty understanding grammar	4	High	"Grammar is difficult to understand without the teacher's explanation."
I3	Slow internet connection	2	Medium	"Slow internet hinders my learning."
I4	Entertainment distraction	3	Medium	"Too much entertainment content reduces focus."
I5	Low learning motivation	2	Medium	"Sometimes I feel lazy to study due to many distractions."
I6	Difficulty understanding material without teacher	4	High	"It is hard to understand the material without teacher guidance."
I7	Unstable internet connection	3	Medium	"Unstable internet disrupts access to materials."
I8	Entertainment distraction	3	Medium	"I am often distracted by entertainment on

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				social media.”
<b>I9</b>	Difficulty reading Arabic articles	2	High	“Reading Arabic articles is difficult without guidance.”
<b>I10</b>	Entertainment distraction	2	Medium	“Scrolling too much reduces study time.”
<b>I11</b>	Difficulty understanding online quizzes	3	High	“Online quizzes are hard to understand without instructions.”
<b>I12</b>	Excessive feed scrolling	4	High	“I scroll feeds more often than I study.”
<b>I13</b>	Difficulty writing Arabic sentences	3	High	“It is challenging to write Arabic sentences without examples.”
<b>I14</b>	TikTok content distraction	3	Medium	“TikTok content easily distracts me.”
<b>I15</b>	Lack of teacher guidance	2	High	“Lack of teacher guidance hinders learning.”

Analysis of the table indicates that entertainment distractions and insufficient direct guidance are the most common obstacles, exerting a high impact on learning effectiveness. Students who are frequently distracted by entertainment content or lack teacher support tend to experience decreased motivation and difficulty completing learning tasks. This underscores the need for strategies in time management, digital literacy, and supervised social media use to maintain a structured and productive learning process. In other words, these obstacles are not solely technical or behavioral but also require a systematic pedagogical approach to optimize the use of social media in learning.

Technical barriers, such as slow internet connections, also have a significant impact. Students experiencing technical disruptions tend to lose access to video materials, online quizzes, or group discussions, resulting in decreased learning motivation. This condition creates disparities in learning experiences among students, where those with better access are more capable of participating in learning activities. These findings indicate that the effectiveness of social media-based online learning depends on adequate digital infrastructure and consistent technical support.

Observations further revealed variations in students' digital literacy. Participants with higher digital literacy were able to utilize bookmarking features, manage notifications, and optimize group discussions for more effective learning, whereas students with lower digital literacy were more prone to distractions, struggled to organize learning materials, and were less productive. These findings underscore the need to enhance digital literacy as a critical competency in online learning, to minimize distractions and limitations in access.

These findings are consistent with Sidgi,<sup>31</sup> who emphasized the importance of pedagogical guidance in social media-based learning to mitigate obstacles such as distractions and difficulties in understanding materials. Integrating social media with formal learning strategies is essential to maintain focus, increase motivation, and

<sup>31</sup> Sidgi, “The Impact of Social Media on Learning English Vocabularies.”

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ensure optimal learning outcomes. Social media should function as a supportive tool rather than a replacement for formal instruction, so that students' learning experiences remain effective.

Overall, the theme Challenges and Obstacles in Online Learning highlights that the effectiveness of social media as a learning tool depends on students' ability to manage distractions, receive pedagogical guidance, and overcome technical barriers. Structured learning strategies, adequate digital literacy, and monitored use of social media are key to the successful implementation of social media in Arabic language learning. Consequently, existing obstacles can be minimized, enabling students to maximize the benefits of social media for effective learning.

The findings of this study affirm that social media functions as an interactive learning ecosystem for UINSI Samarinda students in Arabic language learning, rather than merely serving as an auxiliary tool. Students utilize platforms such as WhatsApp, Telegram, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube to access materials, engage in discussions, upload writing exercises, and receive feedback from peers and instructors. These activities enable collaborative and reflective language learning, in which students do not simply receive information passively but actively construct understanding through interaction with others. Field observations revealed that students who actively participate in discussions and post content are better able to comprehend new vocabulary and grammatical structures, consistent with the principles of social constructivism. Consequently, social media provides students with a space to actively build knowledge, enhance engagement, and facilitate meaningful learning experiences.<sup>32</sup>

Social interactions via social media clearly enhance students' active engagement, positively impacting their motivation and Arabic language proficiency. Students who regularly write posts, participate in group discussions, or complete online quizzes reported improvements in vocabulary, writing skills, and self-confidence in language use. Observations also showed that more active students provide feedback to peers, respond to comments, and participate in community discussions, making learning more participatory. These findings confirm that online interactions through social media can significantly foster learning engagement and effectively develop language competencies, in line with Keshav et al.<sup>33</sup>

From a socio-cultural perspective, students' participation in online groups not only supports Arabic language learning but also reinforces Islamic cultural identity. Discussions on Islamic texts, vocabulary, and Arab culture provide meaningful learning experiences that integrate cultural values into language practice. Observations indicated that actively engaged students are able to relate learning content to daily life, enrich cultural knowledge, and enhance contextual communication skills. These findings align with Mahfud et al.,<sup>34</sup> who emphasize the integration of language and culture as a key component of online learning experiences.

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<sup>32</sup> Ritonga et al., "Arabic as Foreign Language Learning in Pandemic COVID-19 as Perceived by Students and Teachers."

<sup>33</sup> Keshav, Julien, and Miezal, "The Role Of Technology In Era 5.0 In The Development Of Arabic Language In The World Of Education."

<sup>34</sup> Mahfud et al., "Islamic Cultural and Arabic Linguistic Influence on the Languages of Nusantara; From Lexical Borrowing to Localized Islamic Lifestyles."

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Field observations further revealed that students who write posts or respond to peers' comments demonstrate greater confidence and responsibility toward the learning process. They reported that writing Arabic sentences, providing comments, and participating in online quizzes helped them achieve deeper understanding of the materials. These results are consistent with Abdullah and Al-Bawaleez,<sup>35</sup> who found that online interaction enhances language proficiency through collaboration and feedback. Thus, social media supports effective collaborative learning and can serve as an alternative learning tool that strengthens students' motivation and skills.

Students also reported that interactive quizzes and online Arabic sentence writing provide enjoyable and challenging learning experiences. These activities make students more competitive, focused, and creative in using Arabic. This aligns with the principles of digital game-based learning, where gamification elements such as challenges, scores, and real-time feedback can enhance motivation and engagement in learning.<sup>36</sup> Therefore, interactive and competitive elements of social media can maximize a more enjoyable and effective learning experience.

Social media also enables students to learn flexibly, including outside formal class hours, thereby supporting the concept of blended learning. Observations indicated that students use online platforms while waiting for classes, during transportation, or at home, allowing them to review materials or deepen understanding independently. These findings support Romadhon et al.,<sup>37</sup> who emphasized that blended learning with social media expands learning spaces and provides temporal flexibility. Consequently, students can adjust their learning according to their personal rhythms and maximize Arabic language comprehension.

Challenges such as distractions from entertainment content and difficulties with learning materials highlight the need for pedagogical guidance and digital literacy. Students with higher digital literacy can optimize platform features, manage notifications, and mark important materials, whereas students with lower literacy are more easily distracted and less effective in learning.<sup>38</sup> These findings underscore that digital literacy is a key factor in the success of online learning, making digital literacy enhancement programs essential for supporting the effectiveness of social media as a learning tool.

Integrating social media with formal learning strategies is also crucial to maintaining focus and learning effectiveness. Alshutayri and Atwell demonstrated that social media can serve as an effective collaborative learning tool if combined with structured activity management strategies.<sup>39</sup> Therefore, systematic organization of learning activities and integration into the formal curriculum are key to successful social media utilization.

Theoretically, this study expands the phenomenological literature on Arabic language learning experiences via social media in Indonesia. The findings confirm that social media provides contextual, collaborative, and reflective learning experiences,

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<sup>35</sup> Abdullah et al., "Analysis of EFL Learners' Language Proficiency Development across Different Social Media Platforms."

<sup>36</sup> Ghani and Daud, "The Impact of Digital Game-Based Learning towards Arabic Language Communication."

<sup>37</sup> Romadhon, Rahmah, and Wirani, "Blended Learning System Using Social Media for College Student: A Case of Tahsin Education."

<sup>38</sup> Sidgi, "The Impact of Social Media on Learning English Vocabularies."

<sup>39</sup> Alshutayri and Atwell, "A Social Media Corpus of Arabic Dialect Text."

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which have been underexplored in local research.<sup>40</sup> Accordingly, social media enriches understanding of modern Arabic learning practices that are adaptive to students' needs.

Future research could explore the influence of individual characteristics, learning motivation, and digital literacy on social media's effectiveness. While social media can enhance students' flexibility, motivation, and engagement, its success depends heavily on pedagogical support, digital literacy, and proper management of learning activities.<sup>41</sup> Therefore, social media constitutes a potentially effective learning medium when implemented with well-designed pedagogical strategies and integrated into the formal curriculum.

### D. Conclusion

This study found that UINSI Samarinda students perceive social media as a tool for learning Arabic across three main dimensions: ease of access and learning flexibility, motivation and active engagement, and challenges in online learning. Students utilize various digital platforms to access materials, engage in discussions, and receive feedback from peers and native speakers, making the learning process more interactive, collaborative, and contextual. These findings reinforce social constructivist and digital literacy theories in the context of language learning, while addressing a gap in qualitative literature concerning Indonesian students' subjective experiences. Practically, the study highlights the importance of designing structured social media-based learning strategies, managing discussion groups, assigning interactive tasks, and monitoring student activities, with implications for institutional policies integrating social media into the curriculum. For future research, it is recommended to explore the relationships between digital literacy, learning motivation, and the effectiveness of social media, as well as to compare students' experiences across different Islamic higher education institutions to broaden the understanding of social media-based Arabic language learning.

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<sup>40</sup> Alfaki, "Towards a Digital World: Using Social Networks to Promote Learner's Language."

<sup>41</sup> Alzanin, Azmi, and Aboalsamh, "Short Text Classification for Arabic Social Media Tweets."

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