



Enhancing madrasah tsanawiyah Arabic speaking using visual media

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ABSTRACT

The teaching of Arabic in Islamic schools continues to face difficulties in fostering students' speaking proficiency (*maharah al-kalam*). This situation largely stems from the limited provision of authentic oral practice within conventional, teacher-dominated classroom settings. This condition causes students to lack confidence and to be passive in their use of Arabic for communication. This study examines the use of visual media, specifically animated videos and picture cards, to improve students' speaking skills in Arabic Language Learning. The research employed a descriptive qualitative method, involving 34 students from class VIII.3 at MTs Negeri 1 Kota Tangerang Selatan as research participants. Data collected through observation, interviews, and documentation were then analyzed using Miles and Huberman's interactive model. The results showed that animated videos increased students' learning motivation, understanding of the material, and pronunciation accuracy through authentic visual and auditory contexts. Meanwhile, picture cards facilitated active interaction, enriched understanding, and fostered students' confidence in speaking. The integration of the two media strengthened linguistic comprehension, encouraged emotional engagement, and promoted effective collaborative learning.

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ABSTRAK

Pembelajaran 'Bahasa Arab' di sekolah Islam masih menghadapi berbagai kesulitan dalam mengembangkan kemampuan berbicara murid (*maharah al-kalam*). Kondisi tersebut disebabkan oleh terbatasnya ketersediaan praktik lisan yang autentik dalam pembelajaran konvensional yang didominasi oleh peran guru. Kondisi ini menyebabkan murid kurang percaya diri dan pasif dalam menggunakan bahasa Arab secara komunikatif. Studi ini meneliti penggunaan media visual berupa video animasi dan kartu bergambar untuk meningkatkan kemampuan berbicara murid dalam pembelajaran Bahasa Arab. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah kualitatif deskriptif dengan melibatkan 34 murid kelas VIII.3 di MTs Negeri 1 Kota Tangerang Selatan sebagai subjek penelitian. Data dikumpulkan melalui teknik observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan model interaktif Miles dan Huberman. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa video animasi mampu meningkatkan motivasi belajar, pemahaman materi, serta ketepatan pengucapan murid melalui konteks visual dan auditori yang autentik. Sementara itu, kartu bergambar memfasilitasi interaksi aktif, memperkaya kosakata, serta menumbuhkan kepercayaan diri murid dalam berbicara. Integrasi kedua media tersebut memperkuat pemahaman linguistik, mendorong keterlibatan emosional, dan mempromosikan pembelajaran kolaboratif efektif.

Kata Kunci: kartu bergambar; kemampuan berbicara; media visual; pembelajaran bahasa Arab; video animasi

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INTRODUCTION

Arabic Language education in a madrasah plays a vital role in enhancing students' communicative competence, particularly speaking skills (*maharah al-kalam*), which constitute a central indicator of effective oral language use. Speaking competence encompasses not only lexical and grammatical knowledge but also the ability to convey meaning appropriately within authentic communicative contexts (Effendi, 2025; Habib, 2025). In Islamic secondary education, the development of *maharah al-kalam* is essential for enabling learners to participate actively in academic, religious, and social communication using Arabic. Schools organize teaching and learning activities to realize established educational goals (Jannah et al., 2024). Arabic Language teaching is still largely characterized by teacher-centered practices, with an emphasis on rote learning, grammatical explanation, and translation activities rather than communicative use of the language (Al-Mubarakah & Hardiyanti, 2023; Nafisah, 2023). These challenges suggest a mismatch between instructional practices and the communicative goals of contemporary language education.

Learning media are tools that facilitate the transfer of knowledge from teacher to student, thereby enhancing learning effectiveness (Muhaimin & Juandi, 2023). Despite its importance, the implementation of speaking instruction in many madrasahs remains marked by shortcomings that require resolution. In this regard, learning media have gained increasing attention as pedagogical tools that enhance learner engagement and support the development of foreign language skills. Research conducted since 2020 has demonstrated that digital and multimedia-based learning media can facilitate language acquisition by presenting input through multimodal channels, thereby reducing cognitive load and supporting deeper comprehension (Chen et al., 2021).

Visual and audiovisual media are particularly relevant to the teaching of *maharah al-kalam*. Animated videos, as audiovisual resources, provide learners with contextualized linguistic input through the integration of images, movement, sound, and dialogue. Empirical studies suggest that animated videos can enhance learners' attention, listening comprehension, and pronunciation while simultaneously supporting oral production by modeling authentic communicative situations (Mostafa et al., 2020; Muftah, 2023).

In addition to audiovisual media, picture cards have been widely recognized as effective visual tools for promoting speaking activities. Picture cards offer concrete visual stimuli that encourage learners to describe, narrate, and construct utterances, thereby supporting vocabulary development and syntactic accuracy (Khoirunnisa & Fauji, 2023; Makhyoun, 2024). Moreover, their use in pair and group work has been shown to foster peer interaction, collaborative learning, and greater confidence in oral communication, all of which are essential components of communicative language teaching (Ahmadil et al., 2025).

Nevertheless, several research gaps remain evident in existing literature. First, although the effectiveness of animated videos and picture cards has been widely acknowledged, most studies examine these media in isolation, with limited attention to their integrated use within a single instructional design. Second, prior research tends to focus predominantly on quantitatively measured learning outcomes, offering limited insight into instructional processes, classroom interaction, and learners' communicative experiences, particularly from qualitative perspectives (Sarip et al., 2024). Third, empirical investigations that specifically address the implementation of integrated visual and audiovisual media in Arabic-speaking instruction at the Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs) level remain scarce.

The present study aims to explore the implementation of animated videos and picture cards in Arabic Language Learning and to examine their contribution to the development of students' *maharah al-kalam* at the MTs level. Employing a descriptive qualitative approach, this study seeks to provide nuanced

insights into how the integrated use of visual and audiovisual media can support interactive, contextualized, and communicative speaking instruction. The findings are expected to contribute to the growing body of research on Arabic Language pedagogy and offer practical implications for improving speaking instruction in Islamic secondary education.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Concept of *Maharah Al-kalam* in Arabic Language Learning

Arabic Language education in madrasah plays a pivotal role in fostering students' communicative competence, particularly speaking skills (*maharah al-kalam*). Traditional instructional approaches are less effective in fostering communicative competence, particularly in foreign language learning contexts where learners have limited opportunities to practice outside the classroom (Siregar & Rahmah, 2021).

In Islamic secondary education, the development of *maharah al-kalam* is essential for enabling learners to participate actively in academic, religious, and social communication using Arabic. Students are afforded limited opportunities to engage in meaningful speaking practice, which negatively affects their confidence, willingness to communicate, and overall speaking proficiency (Haniah et al., 2023). Arabic language learning requires reexamination to enable effective instruction.

Language pedagogy emphasizes learner-centered instruction and the meaningful integration of technology. Arabic teachers in madrasah continue to rely on traditional teaching methods and have not fully optimized the use of visual and audiovisual media due to constraints related to pedagogical competence, institutional support, or resource availability (Al-Mubarakah & Hardiyanti, 2023; Haniah et al., 2023).

Animated Video as Visual Media

Animated video is a form of visual and audiovisual media that combines moving images, color, and sound to present content dynamically and engagingly. In language learning, animated videos serve as visual tools that present vocabulary, dialogues, and cultural contexts in ways that static text cannot. By appealing to both visual and auditory channels, these videos support dual coding theory, which posits that integrating verbal and visual information enhances learners' comprehension and retention.

Animated videos allow learners to observe pronunciation, gestures, facial expressions, and real-life communicative situations. Data indicate that students exposed to animated Arabic Learning materials exhibited significantly higher levels of comprehension and retention than those who relied solely on text-based resources (Derajat et al., 2025). In addition, the visual and interactive characteristics of animation have been shown to enhance learners' affective engagement, thereby increasing motivation and encouraging more active participation in the learning process (Al-Mubarakah & Hardiyanti, 2023). In the context of Arabic Language Learning, animated videos have been found to facilitate the acquisition of functional expressions and pragmatic language use, aligning with the learning preferences of digitally oriented students (Alyousify & Mstafa, 2022).

By embedding vocabulary and expressions within relatable scenarios such as marketplaces, classrooms, or social interactions, animated videos contextualize language learning. Learners can intuitively associate words with actions and objects, bridging the gap between abstract linguistic input and practical usage (Al-Jarf, 2021). Thus, animated videos function as both cognitive scaffolds and affective enhancers, making them powerful tools in developing *maharah al-kalam* in Arabic.

Picture Cards as Visual Media

Picture cards are a tangible form of visual media that provide static visual stimuli to support vocabulary acquisition, sentence formation, and interactive language practice. Using picture cards in Arabic classrooms significantly improves students' speaking performance by prompting the production of descriptive and narrative language (Khoirunnisa & Fauji, 2023). The visual stimulus encourages learners to activate prior knowledge, organize their thoughts, and construct coherent sentences, consistent with visual learning theory, which posits that pairing imagery with language enhances retention (Nugraha et al., 2019).

Beyond cognitive benefits, picture cards foster interaction and collaboration. Group or pair activities with picture cards encourage learners to discuss, negotiate meaning, and communicate in Arabic, reflecting the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) (Haniah et al., 2023). Augmented reality-enhanced picture cards further improve pronunciation and vocabulary retention by linking visual objects with real-time verbal practice (Makhyoun, 2024).

From an affective perspective, picture cards reduce speaking anxiety and boost learner confidence. Tools that integrate creativity and visual design, such as Canva-based video content, support self-expression and motivation, highlighting the pedagogical role of visual media in fostering both engagement and fluency (Ikhlas et al., 2023).

Integration of Visual Media in Arabic Instruction

Combining various forms of visual media (animated videos and picture cards) enhances Arabic Learning by leveraging complementary strengths. Animated videos provide rich, contextualized input, while picture cards facilitate active practice and output. This approach aligns with multimodal learning theory, which emphasizes that multiple sensory modalities enhance comprehension and retention (Sarip et al., 2024). The use of interactive storytelling applications in Arabic Language classrooms significantly enhanced students' motivation and creativity (Rini et al., 2023), and digital interactive tools effectively increased learners' engagement and participation (Sukmarini, 2021). Furthermore, the integration of visual media accommodates diverse learning preferences and reinforces communicative competence by meaningfully linking language input and output.

Additionally, the integration of visual media supports the holistic development of learners by engaging their cognitive, affective, and social dimensions. It fosters intrinsic motivation, confidence, and collaboration, preparing students for 21st-century learning environments that value creativity and communication (Zibin et al., 2025; Sanni, 2023).

METHODS

This study employed a descriptive qualitative research design to gain a deeper understanding of the Arabic Language learning process through the use of animated videos and picture cards. Qualitative methods commonly involve observation, interviews, and documentation to comprehensively explore participants' perceptions and experiences. The research was conducted at MTs Negeri 1 Kota Tangerang Selatan, which was purposively selected for its prior use of innovative instructional media. The subjects were 34 students from class VIII.3 (16 males, 18 females) who participated actively in Learning. The steps of this research were as follows Creswell and Poht in "SAGE Publication Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches".

1. Preparation and Planning

This stage involved conducting a literature review, developing research instruments, and obtaining research approval and informed consent.

2. Data Collection

Data collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and documentation to capture learning interactions, participants' perspectives, and instructional materials. The observations focused on students' speaking performance, participation levels, pronunciation accuracy, vocabulary use, and confidence during oral interactions, as well as teachers' instructional strategies in utilizing visual media to stimulate speaking activities. Field notes were used to record classroom dynamics, student responses, and patterns of interaction between teachers and students.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with Arabic language teachers and selected students to explore their perceptions, experiences, and responses regarding the use of visual media in Arabic-speaking instruction. The interview questions were designed to be flexible, allowing participants to elaborate on the benefits, challenges, and effectiveness of visual media in supporting speaking practice. This approach enabled the researcher to obtain rich, contextual data while remaining aligned with the research objectives.

Documentation was collected to support and triangulate the observational and interview data. The documents included lesson plans, teaching materials, visual media used in the classroom, students' speaking task records, and photographs of learning activities. These documents provided additional evidence of how visual media were planned, implemented, and utilized to enhance Arabic-speaking skills in MTs classrooms.

3. Data Triangulation and Validation

Data triangulation and member checking were employed to enhance credibility and trustworthiness. The data sources included Arabic Language teachers, MTs students, and learning documents related to Arabic-speaking instruction. Data were gathered through classroom observations, in-depth interviews, and analysis of documentation, including lesson plans, teaching materials, and students' speaking performance records.

4. Data Analysis

Qualitative data were analyzed using an interactive model consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Data analysis followed the stages: familiarization with the data, initial coding, theme development, theme review, and theme definition.

5. Reporting

The findings were reported descriptively to illustrate the influence of animated videos and picture card media on students' engagement, comprehension, and Arabic speaking skills.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Arabic speaking skills (*maharah al-kalam*) constitute a fundamental aspect of Arabic Language Learning at MTs Negeri 1 Kota Tangerang Selatan. Preliminary observations and needs analysis reveal that many students encounter persistent difficulties in expressing ideas orally. These difficulties include limited vocabulary mastery, low self-confidence, inaccurate pronunciation, and insufficient exposure to authentic speaking situations. Such conditions are closely linked to instructional practices that remain predominantly teacher-centered, with a strong reliance on textbooks and memorization, resulting in minimal opportunities for meaningful oral interaction in the classroom. Initial planning observations at MTs Negeri 1 Kota

Tangerang Selatan also indicate that students often perceive Arabic as a difficult and abstract subject, which contributes to low learning motivation and passive participation in speaking activities. One factor identified is the limited integration of instructional media that support comprehension and increase student engagement.

In response to these findings, the potential of visual media as an instructional alternative is explored. However, the use of visual media in Arabic-speaking instruction at MTs Negeri 1 Kota Tangerang Selatan has not been systematically explored, particularly through qualitative inquiry that captures both teachers' instructional strategies and students' learning experiences. This study is designed to examine how visual media can be utilized to enhance students' Arabic speaking skills and to address the instructional challenges identified in the early stages of the research process.

Table 1 presents the research results on the effectiveness of visual learning media in Arabic language learning.

Table 1. Context of Role of Animated Video Media

Aspect	Research Method	Procedure / Focus	Findings
Context of Role of Animated Video Media	Observation	Monitored student attention, comprehension, and participation during video sessions	Videos captured attention, enhanced comprehension, and encouraged students to imitate dialogues. Classroom atmosphere became relaxed and engaging.
	Interviews	Students asked about motivation and learning experience	Students reported that the videos were enjoyable and increased their confidence in speaking Arabic. Teachers reported increased engagement and interactive learning.
	Documentation	Analyzed lesson plans and video usage	Videos provided contextualized learning, combining visual and auditory elements to enhance understanding of vocabulary and expressions.

Source: Research, 2025

Animated videos successfully captured students' attention and increased engagement. Students focused on storylines and contextual situations, facilitating comprehension of vocabulary and speech patterns without relying heavily on translation. Videos created a relaxed and enjoyable classroom atmosphere, stimulating intrinsic motivation and encouraging students to speak Arabic confidently.

Observations indicated that students were more quickly able to understand instructions and use relevant vocabulary after watching videos. They could imitate dialogues, use gestures, and practice expressions in a meaningful context. Teachers reported that videos facilitated interactive and enjoyable learning sessions, enabling students to connect visual cues with language concepts. Overall, animated videos improved students' comprehension, confidence, and willingness to participate in oral communication.

Table 2 shows the use of picture cards for speaking practice, animated video media.

Table 2. Use of Picture Cards for Speaking Practice Animated Video Media

Aspect	Research Method	Procedure / Focus	Findings
Use of Picture Cards for Speaking Practice Animated Video Media	Observation	Monitored student attention, comprehension, and participation during video sessions	Videos captured attention, enhanced comprehension, and encouraged students to imitate dialogues. Classroom atmosphere became relaxed and engaging.

Aspect	Research Method	Procedure / Focus	Findings
	Interviews	Students reflected on confidence and engagement.	Students reported greater confidence and a greater willingness to speak. Teachers noted flexibility in using cards for warm-ups, discussions, or role-plays.
	Documentation	Reviewed teaching materials, integrating picture cards	Cards were used to connect visual stimuli to language production, supporting communicative competence.

Source: Research, 2025

Picture cards were effective in facilitating speaking practice. Students engaged in activities such as guessing pictures, describing objects, and conducting paired dialogues. Visual stimuli helped students express ideas orally and encouraged them to think in Arabic rather than translating from their native language.

Observations also indicated that picture cards strengthened vocabulary recall and sentence formation. Students were able to construct simple yet meaningful sentences about school, daily activities, and professions. Small group exercises fostered peer interaction, creating a lively and communicative classroom environment. Interviews revealed that students felt more confident and motivated to speak when using picture cards. At the same time, teachers reported that cards could be adapted for warm-ups, discussions, or role-play activities.

Table 3 shows the integration of animated videos and picture cards.

Table 3. Integration of Animated Videos and Picture Cards

Aspect	Research Method	Procedure / Focus	Findings
Integration of Animated Videos and Picture Cards	Observation	Observed lessons combining both media for comprehension and speaking exercises	Integration led to a more interactive and comprehensive learning process. Students connected video content with card-based exercises, thereby improving speaking fluency and confidence.
	Interviews	Gathered feedback from students and teachers on the combined use	Students found it easier to produce speech independently. Teachers observed a smooth.
	Documentation	Analyzed lesson sequences and media application	Multimedia integration supported diverse learning styles, enhanced cognitive and affective engagement, and strengthened communicative competence.

Source: Research, 2025

The integration of animated videos and picture cards (see **Table 3**) resulted in a more comprehensive and interactive learning process. Videos introduced context, modeled language, and provided visual and auditory cues. Picture cards allowed students to practice and apply language skills by creating new dialogues based on video scenarios.

Observations showed that students transitioned from passive observation to active participation, constructing dialogues and describing images with growing confidence. The combination of media catered to different learning styles, supporting both visual and auditory learners. Interviews confirmed that students found speaking easier after watching videos because they could relate the content to concrete visual references. Teachers noted that this integrated approach facilitated a progression from imitation to independent speech production. Overall, the synergy between animated videos and picture cards enhanced students' cognitive, affective, and social engagement. Students demonstrated increased

motivation, creativity, confidence, and communicative competence in Arabic, highlighting the effectiveness of a multimodal and interactive learning environment.

Discussion

This discussion elaborates on the findings presented in the results section by evaluating the research's success and situating them within relevant theoretical perspectives and prior studies. The lack of engaging learning media is a challenge in the teaching and learning process (Umiroh & Rahmi, 2025). The findings demonstrate that the integration of visual media was successful in enhancing students' Arabic speaking skills at the level of MTs. The observed improvements in participation, confidence, fluency, and vocabulary use indicate that visual media played a meaningful pedagogical role rather than functioning merely as a supplementary instructional tool.

The increased level of student participation suggests that visual media effectively supported engagement in Arabic-speaking activities. This finding is consistent with the Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning, which posits that learners process information more efficiently when verbal input is supported by visual elements (Mayer, 2021). By providing concrete contextual cues, visual media reduced cognitive load and enabled students to focus more on oral production (Mahartini et al., 2025). Similar results have been reported in recent studies on foreign language instruction, which found that visual media encourages active participation and interaction by making abstract language concepts more accessible (Rahmah et al., 2024).

The improvement in students' speaking confidence and fluency indicates that visual media contributed to the creation of a supportive learning environment. From the perspective of the Affective Filter Hypothesis, lower anxiety and increased motivation facilitate language acquisition, according to Krashen in the book *"Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition"*. Visual media appears to lower students' affective barriers by providing familiar and engaging reference points during speaking tasks. The role of supportive instructional strategies in reducing speaking anxiety and fostering fluency in second language classrooms (MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2022). Interactive learning media also helps to increase student participation in the learning process (Rosyiddin et al., 2023).

The findings related to vocabulary recall and meaning construction suggest that visual media functioned as an effective mediational tool. From a sociocultural perspective, visual media supports learners by bridging prior knowledge and new linguistic input, as discussed by Lantolf and Poehner in their book, *"Sociocultural Theory and Second Language Development"*. Visual cues enabled students to link lexical items with meaningful contexts, thereby strengthening retention and facilitating oral expression. Visual support enhances lexical access and promotes meaningful language use in foreign language learning contexts.

Beyond linguistic outcomes, the findings indicate a positive transformation in the teaching-learning process. The integration of visual media supported a shift toward a more student-centered and communicative classroom environment, consistent with communicative and task-based language teaching principles. These results suggest that the research successfully achieved its objectives and contributes to the growing body of evidence supporting the use of visual media in language instruction. The findings reinforce earlier studies while offering contextual insight into Arabic Language teaching at the MTs level.

CONCLUSION

This qualitative study concludes that the integration of visual media plays a substantial role in enhancing students' Arabic speaking skills at MTs Negeri 1 Kota Tangerang Selatan. The findings indicate that the

use of visual media contributes to increased student participation, improved speaking confidence and fluency, and better vocabulary recall during Arabic speaking activities.

Visual media serves as an effective contextual support that enables students to generate ideas more easily, reduces speaking anxiety, and encourages clearer and more confident oral expression. Moreover, its use fosters a more interactive and student-centered learning environment by shifting the instructional focus from teacher-dominated explanations toward meaningful communicative practice. Also, a deep learning approach has the potential to transform the Arabic language curriculum into a more humanistic one (Syifa et al., 2025). Visual media is a practical and pedagogically effective strategy for improving Arabic speaking instruction at the madrasah level. Therefore, Arabic language teachers are encouraged to systematically integrate visual media into speaking lessons to enhance students' communicative competence and learning motivation.

Despite these contributions, this study is limited by its qualitative design and focus on a single educational context. Future research is recommended to employ mixed-methods or experimental approaches to measure improvements in speaking quantitatively and to examine the long-term effects of integrating visual media in Arabic Language education.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

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