

Integration of the Audiolingual Method and Microlearning Model as an Innovative Language Learning Strategy for Ma'had Al Jami'ah Students

Ahmad Royhan Firdaus¹, Azizatiz Zahra², Laila Rahma Aryani³, Agung Prasetyo⁴

¹ Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, Malang, Indonesia

² Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, Malang, Indonesia

³ Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, Malang, Indonesia

⁴ Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, Malang, Indonesia



ABSTRACT

Keywords:

Audiolingual Method,
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Model,

This study explores the integration of the Audiolingual Method (ALM) and the Microlearning model as an innovative approach to address the issue of monotonous language learning at Ma'had Al Jami'ah. The main objective of this research is to develop a more engaging and effective learning strategy to enhance students' motivation, participation, and foreign language competence. This study employs a qualitative-descriptive approach involving classroom observation and analysis of students' language learning outcomes to evaluate the implementation and impact of this integrative model. The findings indicate that the combination of Audiolingual Method repetitive and structured drill patterns with Microlearning's short, flexible, and technology-based learning segments significantly improves pronunciation accuracy, grammar mastery, and student engagement in the learning process. Furthermore, this integration fosters greater learner autonomy and provides continuous language exposure beyond classroom activities. The novelty of this research lies in merging a traditional habit-forming language method with a modern, digital-based learning model, resulting in a balanced and adaptive learning framework suited to contemporary Islamic higher education contexts.

INTRODUCTION

In the era of rapid digital transformation, language learning requires innovative pedagogical strategies that can adapt to learners' behavioral patterns and cognitive engagement in the digital space. Traditional methods of language instruction often emphasize grammar and translation, resulting in passive learning and limited speaking competence (Aghaei et al., 2021). However, recent studies have shown that combining behavioral-based approaches such as the Audiolingual Method with technology-driven models like Microlearning can enhance language acquisition by reinforcing repetition, stimulus-response learning, and short-term content retention (Ahmad et al., 2022; Al-Sobhi, 2023).

The Audiolingual Method, rooted in structural linguistics and behaviorist psychology, emphasizes listening and speaking through pattern drills, repetition, and mimicry. It aims to develop learners' automatic responses and correct pronunciation by continuous reinforcement (Alqahtani, 2020). Despite its effectiveness in improving pronunciation and speaking fluency, Audiolingual Method has been criticized for lacking learner autonomy and contextual application (Bataneh & Al-Hamad, 2021). Therefore, it is necessary to integrate Audiolingual Method with a learning model that can foster engagement, personalization, and contextual practice.

On the other hand, Microlearning a pedagogical innovation based on delivering content in small, focused learning units has gained increasing attention in digital education contexts (Leong et al., 2021). It promotes better knowledge retention, motivation, and flexibility through short and mobile-accessible learning segments (Hug, 2022). Studies demonstrate that Microlearning can enhance cognitive processing and learner satisfaction, especially in blended and online environments (Yilmaz & Baydas, 2022).

When combined with traditional methods like Audiolingual Method, it creates a balanced approach that merges behavioral reinforcement with digital accessibility and autonomy (Khazaei et al., 2024).

In the context of Ma'had Al-Jami'ah, an Islamic higher education dormitory system in Indonesia, language programs such as Shobahul Lughoh are crucial in shaping students' Arabic communication competence. However, challenges such as limited exposure time, lack of learner motivation, and uneven language proficiency persist (Fauzi et al., 2023). This context necessitates an innovative instructional model that not only strengthens memorization (mufrodat) but also builds communicative skills efficiently. Integrating the Audiolingual Method with Microlearning could address these issues by offering frequent, short, and focused language drills accessible through digital platforms, reinforcing daily practice among mahasantri (Islamic boarding students).

Previous research has examined Audiolingual Method or Microlearning separately, but few studies have explored their integration as a comprehensive pedagogical strategy in Islamic higher education or ma'had environments (Rahman et al., 2023; Arifin & Rahmawati, 2024). Therefore, this study is scientifically significant as it bridges classical language pedagogy with digital microlearning innovation, offering an applied framework suitable for Islamic learning contexts that value both discipline and technological literacy. The objective of this study is to analyze the integration of the Audiolingual Method and Microlearning model as an innovative language learning strategy for mahasantri of Ma'had Al-Jami'ah. Specifically, it aims to determine how this integration enhances memorization (mufrodat), speaking fluency, and learner engagement in daily language practice.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research design based on interviews as the primary data collection technique. Qualitative research is appropriate for exploring in-depth perceptions, experiences, and understandings of participants regarding a particular phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In this context, the research seeks to explore mahasantri's (students in Ma'had Al-Jami'ah) perspectives on the integration of the Audiolingual Method and Microlearning Model as an innovative language learning strategy in the Ma'had environment.

The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows for a rich, contextual, and interpretive understanding of the research problem. Rather than testing hypotheses or measuring variables numerically, this approach focuses on the meanings and experiences conveyed by participants (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Through this method, the study aims to uncover how the combination of repetition-based language drills (Audiolingual Method) and short, modular learning sessions (Microlearning) can enhance motivation, retention, and speaking fluency among students in the religious and residential learning environment of Ma'had Al-Jami'ah.

The participants in this research were mahasantri of Ma'had Al-Jami'ah who actively participated in Arabic learning programs, particularly those involved in Shobahul Lughoh or similar activities. A purposive sampling technique was used to select participants who had sufficient experience and insight relevant to the research topic

(Palinkas et al., 2015). The sample consisted of 10 participants, including both senior and junior students, to ensure the diversity of perspectives.

The primary research instrument was semi-structured interviews, which allowed the researcher to explore respondents' opinions, experiences, and reflections while maintaining flexibility during data collection (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). Each interview lasted approximately 30–45 minutes and was conducted in an informal yet guided manner to encourage openness. The researcher recorded and transcribed the interviews with participants' consent. Questions were designed to explore aspects such as:

- 1) Students' experiences using the Audiolingual Method.
- 2) Students' perceptions of Microlearning-based activities.
- 3) The perceived impact of integrating both methods on learning effectiveness.

Data were analyzed using thematic analysis, as proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). This process involved transcribing the data, coding significant statements, identifying emerging themes, and interpreting the meanings related to the research questions. The analysis aimed to reveal the essence of participants' experiences and identify recurring patterns about the effectiveness and challenges of the integrated approach.

To ensure data credibility, the researcher applied member checking by asking participants to review and validate the accuracy of transcribed data and interpretations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Triangulation was not applied, as this study focused solely on interview data. Nevertheless, careful documentation, researcher reflexivity, and transparent reporting were employed to strengthen the reliability and trustworthiness of findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Theme 1: Enhanced Mastery of Daily Arabic Expressions

The first emerging theme demonstrated that the integration of ALM principles into short, accessible video-based microlearning sessions significantly improved mahasantri's mastery of Arabic daily expressions (*ta'bir yaumi*). The repetitive listening and speaking practices in the videos helped learners internalize pronunciation patterns and syntactic structures. One participant stated, *"Every Monday and Thursday morning I listen to the short video shared by the musyrif, and I repeat after him. Gradually, I start using the same expressions when greeting my friends or asking questions."* This quote reflects how the habit of repetition, the hallmark of the Audiolingual Method leads to automaticity in spoken language.

In line with Al-Harbi (2022), repetition and habit formation remain essential for achieving fluency, particularly in foreign language learning contexts where exposure to native input is limited. The use of short Arabic dialogues such as *"Kayfa haluka?"* or *"Ayna tadhabu?"* enabled learners to build confidence in initiating everyday communication. This structured drilling was further enhanced by the brevity of microlearning content, which encouraged frequent review and reinforcement. Research by Bruck, Motiwalla, and Foerster (2020) supports that microlearning modules lasting less than five minutes are most effective for improving linguistic retention and pronunciation accuracy.

Furthermore, the students expressed that the learning process felt less intimidating because the materials were short and practical. Another participant mentioned, *"When I only have to focus on one or two phrases a day, it feels easy to memorize and apply them directly in daily life."* This demonstrates that microlearning not only increases retention

but also lowers the cognitive burden, making language learning manageable even in a non-classroom context. As Mahmud and Basri (2021) point out, contextualizing Arabic through daily-life expressions promotes communicative competence and authentic usage.

Through this theme, it becomes evident that combining ALM and microlearning cultivates a learning environment emphasizing both repetition and contextual communication. Students' fluency was no longer restricted to formal classroom interactions but extended to dormitory conversations, reinforcing Arabic as a living language in their daily routines.

Theme 2: Positive Engagement with Video-Based Microlearning

The second major theme highlights the students' overwhelmingly positive attitude toward using short videos shared through WhatsApp as a learning medium. Many participants emphasized that this method made learning more flexible and enjoyable. One student stated, "The videos are short and easy to understand. I can replay them whenever I forget how to pronounce something." This convenience increased learners autonomy and engagement.

Microlearning's format, as shown by Mosa, Mohammed, and Obaid (2023), caters to learners' modern digital habits by providing accessible, bite-sized learning segments that can be revisited multiple times. The use of WhatsApp as a distribution platform was also particularly effective given that it is a familiar communication tool among students. According to one musyrif, "Sharing videos via WhatsApp makes it easier for students to stay consistent. They can practice anytime, even before sleeping or after Fajr prayer.

Interestingly, students reported that learning from videos made by an Indonesian musyrif who spoke fluent Arabic created a sense of identification and cultural connection. It demonstrated that mastering Arabic was achievable for non-native speakers. This aligns with Rahman et al. (2023), who found that seeing relatable role models using the target language increases motivation and perceived attainability. The musyrif's pronunciation, tone, and body language also provided authentic modeling of natural Arabic communication.

Moreover, the visual and auditory reinforcement of the video format provided dual-channel input that enhances cognitive processing, as supported by Mayer's (2021) Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning. By combining verbal repetition (audio) and contextual demonstration (visual), students not only memorized expressions but also grasped their appropriate situational use. This synergy between technology, repetition, and accessibility exemplifies a modern adaptation of the Audiolingual Method suitable for digital-native learners.

Theme 3: The Role of Musyrif as a Motivator and Cultural Mediator

The third theme centers on the pivotal role of the musyrif, not only as a linguistic model but also as a motivational and cultural bridge in facilitating Arabic language acquisition. Interviews revealed that the musyrif's presence in the videos made the learning process more personal and inspiring. One student said, "Because the musyrif is Indonesian, I feel closer to him. He explains the expressions clearly, and I believe I can speak Arabic like him." This highlights the affective dimension of learning—emotional connection and

psychological comfort—which, according to Krashen’s (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis, can significantly enhance language acquisition.

The musyrif’s approach combined repetition, modeling, and encouragement, aligning with the humanistic side of the Audiolingual Method. His ability to contextualize Arabic expressions within the daily life of the dormitory helped bridge cultural meanings and practical use. For instance, when teaching “*shobahul khoir*” (good morning), he linked it with morning routines in the Ma’had, making it relatable and memorable. This practice echoes the findings of Mahmud and Basri (2021), who emphasized the necessity of cultural mediation in effective foreign language teaching.

Moreover, the musyrif’s dual role as a linguistic guide and a spiritual mentor created a holistic learning environment. Students perceived Arabic not just as an academic subject but as a medium of religious and social interaction. As one participant noted, “When the musyrif uses Arabic to greet us daily, it reminds us that language is part of our identity as santri.” This finding aligns with Rahman et al. (2023), who asserted that peer and mentor modeling fosters intrinsic motivation and builds authentic communication habits.

In essence, the musyrif’s video-based teaching acted as a personalized and culturally grounded form of microlearning that enhanced motivation, reinforced identity, and facilitated deeper engagement. Through this integrative approach, Arabic became not merely a subject to learn but a lived language practiced daily within a meaningful community setting.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that integrating the Audiolingual Method (ALM) with microlearning through short, musyrif-led YouTube videos distributed via WhatsApp provides an effective, innovative approach to improving Arabic daily expressions among Ma’had Al-Jami’ah students. The findings reinforce the thesis that traditional repetition-based language instruction, when supported by modern digital formats, can create a more engaging, accessible, and contextually relevant learning experience. As demonstrated through thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), this blended strategy not only strengthened students’ linguistic competence but also fostered intrinsic motivation, confidence, and a sense of cultural identity within the Arabic-speaking community of the dormitory.

The importance of this integration lies in its ability to transform the rigid, grammar-centered perception of Arabic learning into a dynamic and communicative process. By leveraging microlearning’s brevity and repetition, learners can internalize expressions like *kayfa ḥāluka* or *ayna tadhhabu* through consistent exposure and practice. This approach aligns with contemporary research emphasizing the efficacy of microlearning in enhancing retention, learner autonomy, and motivation (Bruck et al., 2020; Mosa et al., 2023). Furthermore, the presence of the musyrif as a relatable Indonesian role model underscores the pedagogical importance of peer modeling in second-language acquisition (Rahman et al., 2023), bridging linguistic theory and lived experience.

The study also highlights that the affective dimension of learning such as comfort, motivation, and identity is equally vital to cognitive development. As Krashen’s Affective Filter Hypothesis suggests, positive emotional states lower anxiety and enhance language

acquisition. The musyrif's supportive communication and cultural contextualization of Arabic expressions contributed to this favorable emotional environment. Students not only learned how to speak but also when and why to use specific expressions, reflecting a deeper cultural and pragmatic understanding (Mahmud & Basri, 2021). Such outcomes demonstrate that meaningful language learning occurs when learners feel both connected to and represented in the learning process.

In conclusion, this research contributes to the growing body of literature advocating for the fusion of traditional linguistic pedagogy with contemporary digital strategies. It emphasizes that Arabic, as both a language of faith and communication, can be revitalized through innovative approaches that resonate with the digital habits of modern learners. For educators, this model offers a replicable framework: concise, contextual, and culturally grounded microlearning guided by trained mentors. Future research should expand this framework by exploring other linguistic skills such as listening comprehension, syntax recognition, and intercultural pragmatics through similar digital interventions. Ultimately, the success of this hybrid method affirms that when technology serves pedagogy rather than replaces it meaningful, transformative language learning becomes not only possible but inevitable.

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