

## ARABIC TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGIES THROUGH SMALL: CHALLENGES AND IMPORTANCES DURING COVID-19

(Strategi Pengajaran and Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab Melalui SMALL:  
Cabaran dan Kepentingan Semasa COVID-19)

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### Abstract

Communication skills and use of technology are considered among the pillars to the teaching effectiveness and facilitation of teachers in the digital age. Both of these elements have been identified as a skill and knowledge that is vital to be mastered by most teachers especially generation X. Therefore, this concept paper discusses teachers' strategies in the implementation of teaching and learning process (TLP) of Arabic through Social Media Assisted Language Learning (SMALL). This article explains the challenges and importances of using current technology among teachers when virtually implementing TLP. The findings of this study suggest that teachers who teach traditionally need to correct weaknesses in communication skills and technology application first. Teachers cannot avoid following the current changes of TLP of this new era because the demands and needs of technology in education are constantly changing over time. This is because it will be more difficult in the event of a push where TLP is conducted online such as the occurrence of natural disasters and disease outbreaks. Thus, training on the use of technology should be continuously implemented so that the teaching objectives can be achieved optimally and students feel excited to follow the class.

**Keyword:** Arabic, Social Media, Communication, Online Teaching Technology

### Abstrak

Kemahiran komunikasi dan kebergantungan kepada teknologi adalah tonggak kepada keberkesanan pengajaran dan pembelajaran (PdP) guru era ini. Kedua-dua elemen ini telah dikenal pasti sebagai suatu kemahiran dan pengetahuan yang perlu dikuasai oleh kebanyakan guru terutamanya guru generasi X. Oleh itu, kajian ini membincangkan strategi guru dalam pelaksanaan PdP Bahasa Arab melalui Pembelajaran Bahasa Berbantuan Media Sosial (SMALL) dan menjelaskan cabaran dan kepentingan menggunakan teknologi semasa dalam kalangan guru ketika melaksanakan PdP secara maya. Hasil perbincangan ini menunjukkan bahawa guru yang mengajar secara tradisional perlu memperbaiki kelemahan dalam kemahiran komunikasi dan aplikasi teknologi terlebih dahulu. Guru tidak dapat mengelak daripada mengikuti arus perubahan PdP era baharu ini kerana desakan dan keperluan teknologi dalam pendidikan sentiasa berubah dari masa ke masa. Ini kerana ia akan menjadi bertambah sukar sekiranya berlaku desakan yang memerlukan PdP dijalankan secara dalam talian seperti terjadinya bencana alam dan wabak penyakit. Demikian, latihan berkaitan kemahiran komunikasi dan aplikasi teknologi perlu dilaksanakan secara berterusan kepada para guru supaya objektif pengajaran dapat dicapai dengan optimum seterusnya menjadikan pelajar berasa seronok untuk mengikuti kelas.

**Kata kunci:** Bahasa Arab, Media Sosial, Komunikasi, Teknologi Pengajaran dalam Talian

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Social media and social networks are not only important in certain sectors such as communication, entertainment, advertisement, tourism and information dissemination, but also affect the education sector today. Both have become part of students' daily language and their practice (Hamadeh, Bahous, Diab & Nabhani, 2020). According to McLoughlin and Lee (2010), social media is a set of web-based tools or services that have many uses based on Web 2.0 ideologies and technologies. Social media is a medium to communicate and get to know many people as well as a platform to exchange opinions, in addition to having a role in the education sector (Azmi, Rafiuddin, Kamalanathan, & Safar, 2019). Meanwhile, Norazman, Hasan; Naganathan, Krishanth Kumar; Basiron, Bushrah (2019) claimed, it is a platform for people who want to interact with each other in cyberspace and has an advantage over real-time interaction where users do not have to worry about face to face with anyone when they want to share something with their social network.

A study analysis of survey by Faizi, El Afia and Chiheb (2014) showed that all students reported their opinions being active on at least one social network, namely Facebook; 81% of these students use social media as a resource to improve their foreign language skills. The use of social media is not intended to replace or essentially revolutionize traditional learning processes. Yet, it is more useful to improve existing pedagogy and address certain problems in line with the needs of the times. Among those needs is to adopt social media as a new platform in the world of education due to the pressure of teaching and learning from home during disease outbreaks such as COVID-19, natural disasters such as floods and distance learning management.

Although social media is considered the latest technology in the current world of teaching and learning process (TLP), there are issues that need to be concerned and taken seriously by educational practitioners. The issue may stem from certain parties such as teachers, students or the platform itself. Thus, this conceptual study was conducted to identify the challenges faced by teachers and students while using social media. At the same time, to review the importance of social media so that this information technology can be utilized by taking into account the factors of weaknesses, failures or challenges that arise. Furthermore, teachers, students or those who make education policy will be more sensitive to any issues and take the appropriate approach and improvement to make TLP a success through social media.

## 2.0 REFERENCES HISTORY OF TECHNOLOGY-ASSISTED IN SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

### 2.1 Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL)

Starting with Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) after the use of computers was expanded to the education sector, then the world of TLP became easier for teachers. CALL is seen to be able to provide encouragement to students and help them to acquire Arabic vocabulary (Gharawi & Bidin, 2016). Most teachers expressed their interest in using CALL, especially when they realized its potential in helping and encouraging students, as well as assisting in the teaching and learning of Arabic vocabulary. However, this medium shows its distinctive nature where it requires time

that needs to be allocated by the teachers themselves (Gharawi, & Bidin, 2016) to build construct content and publish such content on any relevant platform.

There are also other constraints that restrict the seriousness and creativity of teachers to use CALL as a teaching aid such as differences in the Java system and the letters used by the operating system (OS) on each computer. Among them is because the system did not rely on the reorganization of computer host operating systems and allow Arabic teachers to produce their own interactive CALL materials in a form that can easily accessible to their students (Cushion & Hémard, 2002). There are also other weaknesses such as insufficient infrastructure for the purpose of TLP, especially in schools and higher institutions of learning in rural areas and unsatisfactory socio-economic status causing students to lag behind in the current of technological modernity. However, these challenges and issues were eventually addressed and adapted well by Arabic teachers especially for the improvement of their respective pedagogies. This means that awareness among teachers is increasing in line with the development of the world of education and information technology which provides unexpected benefits previously compared to traditional methods.

## **2.2 Web-Assisted Language Learning (WALL)**

When the responsible parties such as the Ministry of Education Malaysia (MOE) and schools have been able to channel sufficient infrastructure for the needs of teachers and students to use CALL, there is also a new technology called WALL began to take the place and role of the existing technology. At the same time, it improved the existing system to a more advanced one. WALL was triggered by the development of the world of information technology from the internet network which was previously introduced in the military and economic sectors only. Web-Assisted Language Learning (WALL) also helps students a lot to learn Arabic, especially gaining new vocabulary. This is because, WALL is able to provide audio-visual elements such as images and videos so that students can hear the correct pronunciation of each word, in addition it can facilitate learning and stimulate their interest (Shehab & Zeki 2015). In addition, other syllabus-related information can be easily accessed by teachers for their teaching (such as finding additional sources of information) and students (such as finding information and completing assignments or folios).

The web has different uses in modern language teaching: (a) as a source of teaching material, in a very short time, the web has become the largest source for foreign language learning; (b) as a multimedia application window (in this way CD-ROM is replaced by the web as the main means of storing multimedia applications.); and (c) as an e-learning platform (Ruiperez, 2002). Through the role played by WALL, teachers' teaching becomes more effective and arouses students' interest because teaching aids (TA) can be diversified. The results of a study by Jeong-Bae Son (2007) showed that, the web is a useful tool and additional resource for learning English as a Second Language (ESL), while students' attitudes towards the activities held were found to be positive.

Not only that, WALL is actively used outside of classrooms and lectures. Among them, a study by Ghani and David (2018) who found that the majority of students have a positive response to learning Arabic for the purpose of tourism through websites. It is alleged to increase students' desire and motivation to learn Arabic as well as give them the opportunity to practice self-directed learning. Thus, teaching becomes easy without the need for high costs for any visit outside their respective institutions, even teachers and students only rely on WALL to find information, get to know other people's places and countries, understand the socio-culture of outside communities and also economies.

### **2.3 Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL)**

Once most people around the world move from using cellular phones to smartphones, then another technology in the world of education is taking a step forward. Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) is gaining ground due to its mobile and economical nature. By using smartphones either via telecommunication data or Wi-Fi, teachers and students can communicate and run TLP easily and flexibly. For language acquisition activities, a study by Süleyman Nihat Şad, Niyazi Özer, Ümit Yakar and Fatih Öztürk (2020) showed that the participants of study used smartphones more often for the purpose of learning activities for listening and speaking skills than reading and writing activities. This shows that CALL and WALL technologies are still not completely abandoned by these individuals. In fact, they are intertwined to give maximum impact in teaching and learning.

Kukulska-Hulme (2012) says that MALL applications are growing very fast and it can be linked to language learning and one's physical context while on the move, especially to provide access to language learning such as enabling students to use language and share with others. Mobile learning can be done formally or informally, and these mobile devices serve as a bridge connecting learning in and out of the classroom. When learning takes place outside the classroom, it is often seen as a medium without teachers' control and supervision.

Through socio-cultural learning theory, Jonathan Wigglesworth (2019) found that students successfully carry out tasks and consider smartphones useful as language learning activities in foreign language learning classes. This shows that the role played by smartphones is not subject to the purpose of communicating and channeling information through audio-visual functions offered only, but even further than that to enter the world of language education with the help of mobile internet. Although there were differences of opinion among peers, participants were very proactive in spending money on their smartphones in order to help them get things done. These are among the positive effects of advances brought about by technology as happened in the MALL era.

However, it was found that the more students spend their time online, the more they experience the adverse effects of smartphones in terms of language learning. The results of a study on gender showed that female students use their smartphones more often than their male counterparts to engage in formal language learning activities (Süleyman Nihat Şad, Niyazi Özer, Ümit Yakar & Fatih Öztürk, 2020). The findings of this study give a clear picture that there are differences in terms of gender of students to take advantage of the functionality and sophistication of smartphones available in their hands. Wisdom needs to be there to address this issue as well as awareness among students is required to clearly understand the benefits that will be derived from this device.

The same is said about the attitude and acceptance of students in the use of MALL. Typically, these mobile devices offer a variety of ways to learn, communicate and collaborate, however, there are some issues that need special attention such as frustration among users when there is lack of institutional support or training and difficulty in distinguishing between social networking tools and mobile devices (Gikas & Grant, 2013). This is because mobile devices like smartphones are often used by society especially students for common purposes like media and social alone without looking to other roles like online learning, finding information quickly and communicating with teachers.

### **2.4 Robot-Assisted Language Learning (RALL)**

When many people rely on technologies like CALL, WALL and MALL, then the RALL was considered a current necessity also in human life. The robot not only has CALL,

WALL and MALL features, but is also capable of performing movements, voice/visual recognition and environmental interaction, non-verbal communication, collaboration with native speakers, diagnosing pronunciation, video conferencing with native speakers, guidance from native speakers, human adaptability, sensing, repeatability, intelligence, mobility and appearance (Nader Assadi Aidinlou, Minoo Alemi, Fahime Farjami, Muhammad Makhdoumi, 2014). Although the study of Lee, Noh, Lee, Lee, and Lee (2010) showed no significant difference in listening skills while using RALL during foreign language learning, but students get better improvement with the technology in speaking skills.

Yet, research has consistently shown that robots provide unique advantages in increasing learning motivation and engagement in tasks, as well as reducing anxiety, although long-term benefits have not been identified (Randall, 2019). This technology is still new and rarely practiced except in a few developed countries such as the United States, Japan, Taiwan, China and Korea. However, RALL is complementary to other mediums. There are several challenges that need to be addressed such as the study of the system framework used, the study of teacher training and education as well as the study of moral and technological issues involving RALL (Han, 2012). The results of another study showed that the feedback received only influenced gains in learning: students learned more with punishment, followed by reward, compared to no direct feedback (de Haas & Conijn, 2020). Therefore, this study suggests that feedback on the importance of RALL should be given attention in future research.

## **2.5 Social Media Assisted Language Learning (SMALL)**

Now mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets are becoming telecommunication and entertainment tools that are needed by many parties both in business, education, entertainment and administration. In the field of education, there are five benefits that can be derived from mobile social media namely environment that provides motivation, access to resources and sharing, offers assessment and feedback, learning management and content generation (Sijia Xue & Daniel Churchill, 2020). There are also significant differences between formal and informal language learning using smartphones among students (Süleyman Nihat Şad, Niyazi Özer, Ümit Yakar & Fatih Öztürk, 2020). However, there were no statistically significant differences between students' views on the use of smartphones for language learning according to the type of internet connection (Wi-Fi, mobile data, or both) (Süleyman Nihat Şad, Niyazi Özer, Ümit Yakar & Fatih Öztürk, 2020).

Nordin, Nur Hidayu; Mohammad, Nur Syuhada; Mohamad and Ahmad Marzuki (2019) said that social media such as the use of Instagram is not only for the young, but also suitable for all ages whether young or old. Therefore, teachers among generation X need to increase their awareness of the importance of this medium for the purpose of education and information dissemination. This will bridge the digital gap between them and generations Y and Z who are mostly social media users. They need to constantly add knowledge about this world of technology, communication and media and update teaching techniques in order to meet the needs of young people.

The role of SMALL is also supported by Hamadeh, Bahous, Diab and Nabhani (2020) with their claim that language acquisition can be facilitated with the help of social media to cultivate language skills, while the implementation of social media assisted pedagogy practice gained a good reaction among teachers and students. This gives an impression and shows a positive scenario towards the practice of social media assisted pedagogy in any subject especially the teaching and learning of Arabic. Sari and Hasibuan (2019) also saw that social media can be used as a tool to learn Arabic, improve students' skills, and help them interact better with lecturers and classmates.

Studies from Abdullahi, Rouyan and Noor (2018) suggested that students who study the subject of Arabic as a foreign language in Malaysia, especially to use web 2.0 such as Blog, Edmodo, Facebook, and Quizcreator Online. For the new generation, the TikTok application is also popular when used widely for any purpose. Although the TikTok application is quite popular with the current trend of the younger generation that makes it a medium to entertain by singing, dancing and parodying, but it is still used by smart users to channel information and give useful messages to the community through their sharing in the social, religious and political field. Thus, its use can also be utilized in the field of education because it promotes edutainment when the information can be arranged with videos, songs and other applications.

In addition, there are many more of social media that can be utilized such as WhatsApp, Telegram, Line, Viber, Tencent QQ, WeChat, Qzone, Tumblr, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Youtube and Reddit. Other mediums that are more popular among teachers and academics are such as Edmodo, TedEd, Google+, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Vimeo, Blogs and Content Communities. For students, among the social media that can be used are Twiducate, TweenTribune, 30hands Learning Network, Brainly, ClassHook, Classroom, Blackboard and EDU2.0. As such, social media is not only limited to entertainment that is considered neglectful only, but its use needs to be studied for optimal benefit among teachers and students. The use of social media in education is also very appropriate in the current digital and communication era where it provides students with the ability to receive useful information, in relation to the same group/learning group and other education systems. This technology helps to boost the world of education and facilitate students and teachers at the same time. Therefore, the role of social media is the right medium to be highlighted and expanded and becomes the basis of e-learning for educational institutions facing the era of Industrial Revolution 4.0.

### **3.0 LEARNING THEORY ON SOCIAL AND MEDIA BASIS**

The basis for the implementation of arabic TLP through SMALL can be directly linked to the social learning theory triggered by Albert Bandura. social learning theory began with the efforts of R. Sears and others to combine psychoanalytic learning theory and stimulus-response into a comprehensive explanation of human behavior. Albert Bandura, on the other hand, abandoned the psychoanalytic feature and drove more to the approach aspect, where he emphasized cognitive abilities and information processing as mediators of social behavior (Grusec, 1994).

This theory of social learning by albert bandura can be utilized to increase student engagement and learning activities through social media. Where everyone learns something from others through observation, imitation and modeling and it is also considered as a theory that connects between cognitive learning theory and behavior (behaviorist) because it includes attention, memory and motivation (Social Learning Theory, 2021). Here, the learning process takes place easily, the content is quick to understand and the teacher's pedagogy is aided by digital resources that replace existing materials (for which existing materials work well in most TLP in the classroom).

### **4.0 CHALLENGES OF SMALL DURING COVID-19**

There are studies that found that the level of Arabic language practice in terms of academics and social media among Malaysian students is at a moderate level (Ismail Zailani, Awad, Hussin, Faisal, & Saad, 2017). This clearly shows that the mother tongue (Malay and English as a second language) still dominates the lives of students. The

arabic environment has not yet been fully established. Despite the dumping of information on social media as well as the internet in Arabic, the academic aspects and students' interest in speaking Arabic are not very satisfactory. The main factor is, perhaps students only view that social media and academics are two different entities, and the role of social media is only limited to communication without involving other roles on their academic achievement.

Norazman, Hasan; Naganathan, Krishanth Kumar, Basiron, Bushrah (2019) in discussing the relationship between social media and libraries claimed, these two platforms channel a very vast wealth of knowledge to be extracted. They added, however, that the issue of information authenticity should also be given attention in discussing social media and library issues. This is the possibility of dumping of information and freedom to channel information among the public who do not belong to the group of experts in a field, and sometimes, trying to give an opinion and making a law without being based on facts and authentic knowledge. This factor shows, a person with a background in Islamic studies, for example, has not been able to provide authentic facts when it comes to a subject matter that related to Arabic grammar, although they are considered as being knowledgeable in some Islamic jurisprudence. Similarly, the same can be explained that not all graduates or residents of English-speaking countries are proficient in English linguistics if not thoroughly delved into it.

Among other factors that become a concern among students and teachers themselves is internet access. This refers to the cost that has to be borne by them to implement TLP virtually as well as the unsatisfactory internet system even in urban areas. In general, socio-economic diversity has resulted in some students not being able to enjoy high-speed internet networks such as Wi-Fi at home. In this case, they had to use internet data from mobile phones for this purpose. In Malaysia, usually, only people living in cities will enjoy good internet access, while people in rural areas will experience disruption. Rahimi, Azhan, Normeza, and Baharudin (2015) commented that this issue is very common especially to students who are in rural areas and do not have good internet access. To date, teachers do not make technology facilities such as the internet as a source of references to strengthen their knowledge and skills during the Arabic TLP (Zakaria, Norul'Azmi, Fauzi, Mohd Pisol & Hamzah, 2018).

Another challenge in the use of SMALL is ambiguity and misconceptions among its users. There is a possibility of confusion or misunderstanding of the text among users who communicate with Arabic text including students when using SMALL for learning. Social media texts such as notes, comments, and responses differ significantly from modern standard arabic (MSA) texts in terms of vocabulary and grammatical structure (Nerabie, Alkhatib, Mathew, El Barachi, & Oroumchian, 2021). This issue shows that there is a discrepancy from two aspects of the same language in terms of use and understanding of students who are affected by the influence of their respective dialects so that it is difficult for them to understand the standard language used by teachers. Sometimes, teachers and students mix standard languages and dialects such as in chat rooms on social media. This is a bad culture for students' second language acquisition.

Opportunities that are considered equal when using e-learning also affect the values, emotions and sensitivity between teachers and students. the opportunity is now wide open for everyone to share their thoughts, opinions or ideas freely and anonymously in real-time (Azzi, & Zribi, 2020) on social media. Another situation that may affect the outcome of TLP through social media is sharing availability from various parties (especially in terms of comments, responses, etc.) that is not filtered is likely to have a negative impact on the TLP process. This scenario occurs when information or subjects is unlimitedly spread out and is exposed to negative comments or impolite reactions when a teacher opens the setting for all audiences without turning on

specific settings to students only. This also encourages students to be prone to distractions and lose focus during TLP.

Among educators, another study on teachers' acceptance of the use of social media to develop Arabic language skills showed a different scenario. It is found that teachers mostly accept this medium for TLP of reading and writing skills at a high rate, while for speaking and listening skills it is still at a moderate level (Alanezi, 2021). As we know, the four language skills complete each other, and are inseparable in Arabic TLP. A person is not considered proficient in language if these four skills are not mastered to the best of their ability. These findings give an impression that there are still attitudes among teachers who rely on textbooks, translation or traditional grammar methods in teaching, while the world has changed the education system to adapt information technology for student success.

In addition to the challenges mentioned, reactions to the failure of good interactions are also an important highlight. Due to the use of social media in the nature of online learning, then virtual learning becomes a challenge to teachers and students Moghazy (2020) and (Norul'Azmi & Zakaria, 2019), among of them is, the possibility for them to interact between the two is low, the probability of students to engage with any TLP activities are also low, difficulties in monitoring students' engagement in the classroom, challenges in learning technical tools, lack of training for teachers in managing virtual classrooms, internet connection problems and difficulties in marking attendance of students. These challenges are similar to face-to-face classes when it involves pedagogy, classroom monitoring and communication between teachers and students. Teachers who are always open to innovations in today's world of education will easily adapt to each of these changes. Yet, if both sides are unwilling and limit themselves in the traditional way, then the situation becomes difficult without reflection from the teachers themselves who have always been the backbone of the TLP. Students may also find it difficult to interact with peers and teachers if they rely too heavily on social media.

The freedom of consumers to channel information through social media without appropriate control and content may be a source of harm to the reputation of schools and universities. Among others, the effect or angle of weakness from the use of social media is that people feel uneasy with themselves, cyberbullying and the intrusion of other people's accounts and profiles. The same thing also involves plagiarism among students when they easily commit cheating and copy the work of others from the internet and the answers of friends. This shows the weakness of TLP in e-learning that has existed for a long time. However, negative elements always arise even if we practice the TLP method traditionally.

It can be concluded here, although there are many challenges and obstacles that need to be addressed, nevertheless, the vision to make this platform a common thing and routine practice needs to be inculcated among academics and students. Teachers and students need skills and determination to learn new digital skills and become literate with the current changes in the world of education. Efforts to address the negative issues that emerge as a result of the use of social media among teachers and students should be discussed scientifically through further research.

## **5.0 IMPORTANCE OF SMALL DURING COVID-19**

Apart from the aspects of weaknesses and challenges that are the main points in the debate on the use of small among teachers and students, this study also tries to comment on some of the importance and benefits that can be derived from it. Initially, students can obtain information as easily and quickly as face-to-face with a teacher or lecturer. Through social media, various information can be obtained

quickly and easily (Azmi, Rafiuddin, Kamalanathan, & Safar, 2019). The borderless global world has promised opportunities for teachers and their students to interact and receive information easily and quickly. The internet, smartphones, tablets, cyber cafes and telecommunication networks have helped these groups to facilitate TLP activities virtually. If the teacher is unable to attend the lecture room for some reason, then TLP can still be implemented with e-learning. Similarly, if a student is ill or has a particular ailment to be unable to attend and engage themselves with the teacher in face-to-face mode, then technology will play a role in replacing the time and place that have been missed.

Good infrastructure and facilities provided by the government and telecommunication companies have also provided a pretty good route for teachers and students. Those living in the interior also share the same facilities with the urban community. As such, information can be accessed without time and place restrictions. Through the internet network, information can be accessed by anyone without the restrictions of space and time, and it has become one of the human rights in a country that practices democracy (Norazman, Hasan; Naganathan, Krishanth Kumar, Basiron & Bushrah, 2019). The Malaysian government, for example, is actively channeling assistance in the form of devices for the Bottom 40% (B40) income category who need this facility for learning activities from home, especially since the COVID-19 pandemic hit and the movement control order (MCO) had to be enforced. This is the best example of how government practiced the principles of democracy and provided human rights when pandemics occur.

In turn, students' annoyance for interaction with classmates or teachers can be reduced. This annoyance explains about the fear of direct communicating psychologically and sociologically. This is because, there are a number of students in the class who are active, and there are also those who are passive with some surrounding circumstances. That includes the annoyance of students from a weak level in terms of academics, social background and many more. according to Norazman et al. (2019), meanwhile, it is a platform for people who want to interact with each other in cyberspace and has an advantage over real-time interaction where users do not have to worry about in-person meeting with anyone when wanting to share something with their social network.

Among other interests is that communication and social networking become faster with the advent of social media. According to Fitriani (2017), social media is a means or container to interact, communicate, and to build a network through virtual communication media. In fact, social media is ahead of letters, telegrams, newspapers and even news channels on television and radio to share the latest news. As a result, the average society especially students of generation Y and Z have a mobile phone and it is often carried everywhere they go. Communication becomes easier when modern digital devices are used by having features that allow social media users to connect through cameras and voice messaging. This makes the facilities available on smart devices and computers not only limited to text and audio only, but also multimedia elements that complement each other such as videos, images and visuals.

Another importance that can be seen is that, student achievement in academics can be enhanced with the advancement of technology and the use of social media. This is emphasized by Deaton (2015) that social learning factors can be improved, and as a result, educators may have a positive impact on student achievement through the use of modern educational technology. Student outcomes from this social element-based learning have proven the validity of Bandura's social learning theory with social integration and digital technology. Although TLP had to be conducted through social media in order to maintain social incarceration and

prevent disease outbreaks such as COVID-19, similar interactions and communication still exist between teachers and students.

In addition, learning through social media is also able to support lifelong learning programme (LLP) and open distance learning (ODL). Terry Kind and Yolanda Evans (2015) explain that the use of social media and online networking platforms is a key method of continuing to learn in today's society for information sharing. In the past, distance learning was practiced with communication via email and teleconferencing, but the development of technology has improved the existing system and helped many lecturers, educators and teachers to continue knowledge contribution among students more easily and various ways from social media platforms.

The results of other studies also prove that social media gives influence and importance in the approach played by teachers during TLP from the aspect of self and student performance. There is a significant influence in self and performance on students' intention to use social media regardless of their learning style (Balakrishnan & Gan, 2016). This convinces us to continue to the use of social media as a platform for TLP even though students' approaches to learning differ: either participatory, collaboratively or independently. This new approach in the form of technology and communication is very necessary as students will feel easy and fun to follow each discussion and further understand the content well if the teacher's teaching methods are in line with the interests and desires of generation Y and Z students.

Social media has now been recognized as an important tool for educational purposes in the 4.0 era, where web 2.0 technology has taken over the role played by web 1.0 some time ago. It is growing rapidly due to the 2019 Corona virus outbreak that forced teachers to use social media to conduct online TLP. Thus, technological tools and social media evolving for various purposes such as social, entertainment and even education (Abdullahi, Rouyan, & Noor, 2018) have now changed drastically. The community out there also relies heavily on social media for marketing purposes by most profit-based companies and individuals, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) that make social media a medium to raise funds for their activities and also higher education institutions that promote their study programmes.

The new generation of students is more getting alert and confident to use social media because this is the digital culture of their generation. This can be used in the field of education as an effective tool and medium to obtain learning outcomes. At the same time, it is able to encourage and bridge the gap among students well. Togetherness between students with students or students with teachers can be fostered well if every social media user practices a healthy culture in their teaching and learning. Social media is a symbol of innovation and creativity in TLP towards providing dynamic and competitive students and forming good morals as the goal of education in Malaysia, especially those who want to produce a society that is intelligent, virtuous and has a high personality based on religion, customs and each other's beliefs.

Sharing expertise is a vital job cycle among academics. Social media is a new and modern infrastructure for these people to channel and share ideas and expertise in their respective knowledge. It can no longer be seen as a platform that connects people with customers in the world of business and communication, even academic relationships can be enhanced to a better and more conducive level and atmosphere. Getting a different perspective can also be done easily by using social media. The sharing of information that emerges from public speeches, forums or simply a throw of personal views is carried out through social media. Users can also get feedback from the partnership easily through the comment section and so on according to the privileges of certain social media applications. Users can conduct opinion polls easily as social media also provides applications and features to channel

surveys and receive them. Telegram applications, for example, are a simple medium for surveying and testing student comprehension. Just by using a smartphone, teachers can ask questions in their tutorial classes and students can see the answers given whether right or wrong, even marks or percentages and more.

Based on some of the interests discussed above, it can also be concluded that social media has a very important role towards educational institutions. Among them are the group being able to learn new digital skills, increase understanding and retain existing knowledge, increase classroom engagement and student interest, build communities and connect students with other global communities, make people active and effective users through virtual communication and improve student writing and working on excellent ideas through writings and responses. Thus, further research is needed, particularly in-depth studies that go beyond student satisfaction with knowledge, behavior change, and learning outcomes (Terry Kind and Yolanda Evans, 2015). The study should not be limited to the use of social media but should be in line with the development of the aspect of effective evaluation through this medium. Using social media effectively and collaboratively is an important aspect of literacy in the 21st century, therefore, it is important to move towards stated intentions and goals (social media effectiveness and collaborative learning) evaluating the use of its tools (Sylvia IV, 2014). This means that education policymakers need to be aware that tools for evaluating assignments produced by students are also in line with the results of assignments implemented through social media.

## 6.0 CONCLUSION

The implementation of Social Media Assisted Language Learning (SMALL) strategy has helped teachers in generating creativity and innovation in Arabic teaching. With the emergence of social media applications in teaching process, the issues and problems of learning Arabic among students can also be directly overcome. Through SMALL or other multi-media can make it easier for teachers and students to interact with each other more effectively while creating a fun and conducive teaching and learning process. The curriculum delivery among Arabic teachers becomes easier and more convenient to channelled. Students acquire vocabulary, grammar, skills and linguistic knowledge of Arabic only with access at their fingertips. In addition, this strategy indirectly highlights the authority of teachers as effective educators and tutors. Plus, the potential use of technology in teaching is to increase productivity in the education system. It is not only beneficial to facilitate and streamline teaching and learning activities but also to produce the quality of education in our country. The use of social media will be one of the channels for teaching and learning process in the future, rather than the role of replacing in-person classes during emergencies such as closures of school and higher education learning institutions due to natural disasters and disease outbreaks. Thus, all the challenges and importance of social media highlighted in this conceptual paper are expected to be discussed and refined further in the future through further study and discussion among education policy makers and practitioners.

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