


## Enhancing Arabic Vocabulary Acquisition through Short-Form Video Content: TikTok and Instagram Reels as Learning Media

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### ABSTRACT

Short video content on social media platforms such as TikTok and Instagram Reels is increasingly being used as an informal learning medium, including in the context of Arabic language learning. This study aims to analyze the role of short video content, particularly on TikTok and Instagram Reels platforms, in improving Arabic vocabulary mastery through a literature review approach. This study employs a qualitative method by analyzing 10 scientific journal articles related to digital-based language learning, indexed between 2022 and 2026. The findings indicate that microlearning-based short video clips have great potential as a visual, interactive, and easily accessible learning medium. TikTok has proven relatively effective for initial introduction and brief vocabulary reinforcement, while Instagram Reels better supports the development of contextual and creative vocabulary use. The effectiveness of both platforms is influenced by the quality of content design, delivery strategies, and users' level of digital literacy. Nevertheless, challenges such as distraction and undirected use remain obstacles. Overall, the strategic use of short videos can serve as an effective alternative learning medium in the digital era, while also serving as an important consideration for teachers and curriculum designers in developing technology-based Arabic language learning.

**Keywords:** *Short Videos, TikTok, Instagram Reels, Vocabulary, Arabic*

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## INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology in recent years has brought about significant changes in the world of education, including language learning. This shift is also reflected in the increasing use of video-based content among young learners (Riwayanto & Zahra, 2024). The presence of social media platforms such as TikTok and Instagram Reels is no longer viewed merely as a form of entertainment but is increasingly being utilized as a more flexible learning medium that aligns closely with the daily lives of students (Harahap & Hasibuan, 2024) This trend aligns with the growing need for innovative and creative learning materials capable of stimulating interest in learning while simultaneously improving learning outcomes, particularly in vocabulary acquisition (Mahendrata et al., 2022).

In language learning, vocabulary mastery is a fundamental aspect of language proficiency in daily life (Adelya, 2024). Without adequate vocabulary mastery, other skills such as speaking, reading, and writing will struggle to develop to their full potential (Damanik et al., 2023). Therefore, a learning approach is needed that is not only effective but also engaging and contextual, enabling learners to more easily understand and retain new vocabulary (Neeraja, 2025).

In line with this, the use of short-form video platforms like TikTok has begun to demonstrate significant potential in language learning. TikTok allows content to be delivered in a brief, concise, and visual manner, making it easier for users to understand. Research indicates that TikTok can serve as an effective tool for improving vocabulary mastery due to its interactive content and accessibility anytime and anywhere (Amini & Amelia, 2026).

Besides that, the concept of micro-learning incorporated into short videos has also proven to help make the learning process more efficient and less burdensome for learners (Rosyidah & Ahnaf, 2025).

Similar to TikTok, Instagram Reels also serves as an audiovisual learning tool. The use of Instagram in language learning has been proven to increase student engagement and motivation (Muhammad Asyari et al., 2024). Even in some studies, the use of Instagram Reels can significantly improve speaking skills and understanding of language structure (Widiyanti & Fadhlawati, 2024).

In Arabic language learning, the use of social media is also beginning to gain attention. Students tend to view social media as a tool that helps them understand the material in a more relaxed yet meaningful way (Kasmudi, 2023). In this case, TikTok, in particular, has been utilized as a medium to introduce Arabic vocabulary through creative and communicative content (Mu'izzudin et al., 2024). Another study also indicates that Arabic language learning content on TikTok is quite diverse and has the potential to enhance vocabulary comprehension when used appropriately (Priantiwi & Abdurrahman, 2023).

Additionally, the success of short videos in language learning is not limited to a single language but extends to many languages. Several studies on English and Japanese language learning have shown that the growing use of short videos can enhance comprehension and retention of the material (Salma et al., 2025; Hidayat et al., 2025). These findings suggest that a short-video-based approach can be widely applied and has the potential to be used in various language learning media, including Arabic.

Although research on the use of TikTok and Instagram Reels in language learning is growing, studies specifically examining the role of these two platforms in improving Arabic vocabulary mastery remain relatively limited. Most studies tend to be partial, focusing on a single platform or on specific language skills (Mufliha et al., 2025). Existing studies generally examine TikTok or Instagram Reels in isolation, without directly comparing the two platforms. No study has specifically compared the relative contributions of both platforms to Arabic vocabulary mastery within the same context. Yet, understanding the distinct roles of each platform is crucial for educators seeking to select the most appropriate media for their learning objectives. A comparative and comprehensive literature review of this kind has rarely been conducted, particularly in the context of Arabic language learning.

## METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach in the form of a systematic literature **review**. This approach aims to examine, analyze, and synthesize various previous research findings related to the use of short-form video content, specifically TikTok and Instagram Reels, in improving Arabic vocabulary proficiency. In this study, no direct field data collection was conducted; instead, secondary data in the form of relevant scientific journal articles that meet the established inclusion criteria were utilized.

Data sources were obtained from national and international journal articles published between 2022 and 2026. Data collection was conducted through searches of scientific databases, including Google Scholar, ERIC, and DOAJ, using relevant keywords such as "Arabic vocabulary," "TikTok in language learning," "Instagram Reels education," and "digital media Arabic". The selected articles were those with topic relevance, available in open access, and possessing adequate academic quality and indexing. Inclusion criteria: peer-reviewed articles, published 2022–2026, discussing short-form video in language learning, written in English or Indonesian, focusing on language learning or short-form video in educational contexts. Exclusion criteria: non-peer-reviewed sources (blogs, theses), articles unrelated to vocabulary or Arabic learning, and articles published before 2022.

The data analysis method used was content analysis. Of the articles identified through database searches, 10 articles met all inclusion criteria and were selected for final analysis. The analysis process was conducted in several stages, namely: (1) identification of

relevant articles, (2) grouping based on research themes, (3) comparison of research results, and (4) synthesis to identify patterns, similarities, and differences in the findings. This analysis aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of using short video content in Arabic vocabulary learning.

In order to ensure data validity, this study employs source triangulation, which involves comparing findings from various articles. Consequently, the results of this study are expected to possess a higher level of validity and provide a more holistic picture. Through this approach, this study is expected to make a theoretical contribution and serve as a reference for the development of digital media-based Arabic language learning, particularly through the utilization of short-form video platforms

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The research and analysis of several selected articles indicate that the use of short-form video content, such as TikTok and Instagram Reels, has a positive impact on language learning, particularly in improving vocabulary mastery. Numerous studies show that short, visually engaging, and easily accessible videos can make students more interested in learning while reducing feelings of boredom and fatigue. Additionally, presenting material through both audio and visual elements helps students better understand the meanings of vocabulary words.

In terms of usage, TikTok is more frequently used for direct vocabulary learning, such as introducing new words, providing examples of their use in sentences, or simple dialogues. Meanwhile, Instagram Reels is more commonly used for a variety of learning activities, such as speaking practice, text comprehension, and activities that require creativity. This indicates that both platforms have their own distinct characteristics and advantages, yet both remain effective in supporting the language learning process. Here are some findings from several scientific articles that have been analyzed. The following discussion elaborates on these findings, organized into four key themes.

Table 1. Analysis of Scientific Journal Reviews

No	Author	Title Research	Research Focus	Media	Method Research	Results
1.	Amini, A., Amelia, F., & Nurlisa (2026)	The Role of TikTok as a Tool for Vocabulary Development in Indonesian Language Learning	The Use of TikTok in Vocabulary Development	TikTok	Descriptive qualitative	TikTok is effective at expanding students' vocabulary because its content is engaging and easily accessible
2.	Bahri, A., Damayanti, C. M., Sirait, Y. H., & Alfarisy, F. (2022)	The TikTok App as a Tool for Learning English in Indonesia	The Effectiveness of TikTok in English Language Learning	TikTok	qualitative	TikTok helps with language learning through the presentation of interactive and engaging content
3.	Ilham, F., Zubaidillah, M H., & Khalidi, A. (2024)	An Exploration of the Use of Social Media in Arabic Language Learning from the Perspective of Students	Students' Perceptions Of the Use of Social Media in Arabic Language Learning	Social media	qualitative	Social media helps make learning more flexible, engaging, and accessible
4.	Mu'izzudin, Mochamma d, Nuryulia, Siti, Fuady, Siti Tsamrotul, & Akmal, A. A. (2024)	TikTok platform as a medium for Arabic language learning to enhance vocabulary knowledge	Usage of TikTok in expanding Arabic vocabulary	TikTok	qualitative	TikTok is effective at expanding vocabulary through creative and engaging content

5.	Mufliha, N. A., Sahlani, & Samsuri (2025)	Analysis of the Use of the TikTok App as a Medium for Teaching Arabic to Seventh-Grade Students at MTs Nurul Huda Babakan Curug, Tangerang County	The Use of TikTok in Formal Arabic Language Education	TikTok	Descriptive qualitative	TikTok is effective for use in formal education and for improving student understanding
6.	Priantiwi, T. N. & Abdurrahman, M. (2023)	Content Analysis Arabic Language Learning on TikTok	Analysis of the Types of Arabic Language Learning Content on TikTok	TikTok	Content analysis	TikTok content is diverse, educational, and can support vocabulary learning
7.	Rachmawati, K., & Purwananti, Y. S. (2026)	Instagram Reels as a Grammar Learning Tool for Second Semester English Education Students at Universitas Bhinneka PGRI	The Use of Reels in Grammar Instruction	Instagram Reels	qualitative	Instagram Reels helps make understanding language structure easier and more engaging
8.	Rosyidah, D. A., & Ahnaf, F. H. (2025)	Analysis of TikTok as a Medium for Micro-Learning-Based Instruction in Indonesian Language Education	TikTok as a micro-learning platform	TikTok	qualitative	TikTok is effective for short learning sessions and improving students' memory
9.	Salma, C. O. P., Maulidya, I., Farizi, A., Beda, G. H. K., & Lestari, H. R. (2025)	The Effectiveness of Japanese Language Learning Through Short Videos (YouTube Shorts, TikTok, and Reels)	The Effectiveness of Short Videos in Japanese Language Learning	Multi-platform (Short video)	qualitative	Short videos significantly improve language retention and comprehension
10	Simamora, S. A., Cahyani, & Khaerudin Kurniawan (2024)	A Project-Based Learning Model Utilizing Instagram Reels for Teaching Procedural Writing	Integrating Reels with Project Based Learning	Instagram Reels	Experiment	Improve creativity, participation, and student learning outcomes

### Microlearning Effectiveness

The effectiveness of TikTok in vocabulary learning is closely related to the microlearning approach. The short duration of the videos encourages the presentation of material in a concise, focused, and direct manner, getting straight to the point, thereby making it easier for learners to understand and remember vocabulary gradually and clearly (Salma et al., 2025; Rosyidah & Ahnaf, 2025). Thus, in practice, it can easily enhance Arabic language learning.

Beyond comprehension, the microlearning format has also been shown to strengthen memory retention. The repetitive and habitual nature of consuming short videos allows learners to encounter vocabulary multiple times in different contexts, reinforcing long-term recall. Research confirms that TikTok, as a micro-learning platform, is effective for short learning sessions and improving students' memory, making it a practical tool for gradual vocabulary acquisition (Rosyidah & Ahnaf, 2025).

### Platform Comparison: TikTok vs Instagram Reels

In Arabic language learning, TikTok has proven useful as a tool for introducing vocabulary at the beginner to intermediate levels. The content typically includes pronunciation, meanings, and examples of usage in simple sentences. This is important because Arabic has different pronunciation and structures compared to Indonesian. With the audio component in the videos, students can not only understand the meaning of words but also hear examples of correct pronunciation. This finding aligns with research showing that

TikTok can aid in learning Arabic vocabulary through communicative and easily understandable content (Mu'izzudin et al., 2024).

In fact, Instagram Reels is more often used for practical and productive purposes. Many people use this platform for learning activities such as speech practice, student-created content, and project-based learning. In this context, students are not merely spectators but also active creators of content, which encourages critical thinking and deeper language engagement. Several studies indicate that using Reels can be highly effective in improving speaking skills and language comprehension (Rachmawati & Purwananti, 2026; Simamora et al., 2024).

In addition, Instagram Reels offers a distinct advantage in supporting context-based learning. Through the presentation of scenarios or short dialogues, learners can understand how vocabulary is used in real-life situations. This is particularly important for learning Arabic, which often lacks examples of real-life usage. Some studies even suggest that Reels can also be used to understand other aspects of the language, such as grammar rules and literature, indicating that this platform is highly flexible for language learning (Ikhsani & Syafruddin, 2024; Rachmawati & Purwananti, 2026).

### **Factors Influencing Effectiveness**

In terms of media characteristics, TikTok and Instagram Reels feature an interactive format that combines audio and visuals, which greatly aids language comprehension. In vocabulary learning, the use of images is crucial because it helps students clearly associate words with their meanings. For example, when an Arabic word is displayed alongside an image or usage context, memory retention is strengthened. This aligns with findings that visual-based learning tools can enhance students' understanding and interest in learning (Bahri et al., 2022). In other words, short videos not only convey information but also create a more engaging learning experience.

If analyzed further, the effectiveness of these two platforms lies not only in the medium itself but also in the design of engaging learning content that uses simple language. Effective content is generally brief, clear, uses relevant visuals, and provides examples of vocabulary usage. Conversely, material that is too complex or disorganized can actually reduce learning effectiveness. This indicates that teachers or content creators play a crucial role in determining how successfully these media are utilized (Bahri et al., 2022; Priantiwi & Abdurrahman, 2023).

### **Challenges and Limitations**

On the other hand, despite the many benefits, using TikTok and Instagram Reels also has some drawbacks. One major issue is the risk of distraction, since these platforms are primarily designed for entertainment. In this context, it's easy to get sidetracked by content unrelated to learning objectives. Additionally, not all available content is high-quality, so we need digital literacy skills to identify accurate and relevant information. These findings align with research highlighting the importance of using social media wisely in an educational context (Ilham et al., 2024).

According to the findings summarized in Table 1, many studies show nearly identical results, indicating that the use of social media in the form of short videos has a positive effect on language learning. TikTok helps expand vocabulary through simple and effective microlearning, while Instagram Reels helps develop more complex language skills, such as speaking and grammar comprehension. This trend is also consistent across different language contexts – short videos have been shown to help students understand, remember, and engage more deeply while learning languages such as English and Japanese, suggesting that the short-video approach is broadly effective, including for Arabic language learning (Salma et al., 2025). Additionally, there is a recurring pattern across the reviewed studies indicating that the success of using these platforms heavily depends on content design that is engaging, appropriate, and meets students' needs, with teachers and content creators playing a crucial role in ensuring effective implementation (Priantiwi & Abdurrahman, 2023).

Overall, this discussion demonstrates that TikTok and Instagram Reels are not merely entertainment platforms but complement each other as effective tools in the process of

mastering Arabic vocabulary. TikTok is better suited for the initial stages of vocabulary introduction and comprehension (Mu'izzudin et al., 2024; Mufliha et al., 2025), while Instagram Reels is more effective for practice and developing productive language skills (Simamora et al., 2024; Rachmawati & Purwananti, 2026). By combining both platforms and using them carefully and purposefully, Arabic language learning can become more engaging, relevant, and effective in enhancing students' vocabulary mastery.

## CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this study indicate that short-form video platforms such as TikTok and Instagram Reels are effective in supporting Arabic vocabulary mastery, particularly in vocabulary introduction and reinforcement stages. Their short, engaging, and visually rich format makes learning more accessible, enjoyable, and suitable for digital native learners. TikTok is especially effective for brief and focused vocabulary learning, while Instagram Reels better supports contextual language use and speaking practice in everyday situations. Therefore, both platforms can be strategically combined to complement each other in Arabic language learning. However, their effectiveness depends on content quality, digital literacy, and the active role of teachers as facilitators and content curators. These findings suggest that teachers and curriculum designers should integrate short-video platforms into structured and goal-oriented learning activities. Overall, short-form videos provide an engaging and flexible approach to vocabulary learning while offering opportunities for further research on long-term effectiveness and instructional content standards in Arabic language education.

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