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The Effect of Arabic-Language Animated Films on Listening and Speaking Skills: A Quasi-Experimental Study of Madrasah Students

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ABSTRACT
Purpose – This study examines the effect of animated cartoons as a learning medium on students' listening and speaking skills in Arabic language instruction.
Methods – The study employed a quasi-experimental pretest–posttest non-equivalent control group design involving eleventh-grade students at MA Darul Kamal NW Kembang Kerang. Using purposive sampling, students were assigned to an experimental group (n = 25) taught with Arabic cartoon animation films and a control group (n = 28) receiving conventional instruction. Data were collected through validated listening and speaking tests and analysed using the Mann–Whitney U test and ANCOVA, with effect sizes and 95% confidence intervals reported.
Findings – The experimental group outperformed the control group in the posttest (M = 86.20 vs. 70.96). The Mann–Whitney U test revealed a significant difference with a large effect size ($p < .001$; $r = 0.78$). This result was confirmed by ANCOVA, which showed a significant treatment effect after controlling for baseline scores ($F = 32.25$, $p < .001$; partial $\eta^2 = 0.57$). Overall, animated cartoons significantly enhanced students' listening and speaking skills, with a stronger effect on listening.
Research Implications – The findings of this study have practical implications for Arabic language learning, particularly the use of animated audiovisual media as a routine learning strategy to improve students' listening and speaking skills in a more interactive, student-centered manner.

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Introduction

From a language acquisition perspective, istima' and kalam constitute two interdependent skills that form the foundation of oral communication competence. Listening functions as the primary channel through which learners receive linguistic input, while speaking represents the productive manifestation of internalized input (Muzakki et al., 2025). When instructional practices fail to facilitate adequate listening input and meaningful speaking practice, the development of these skills becomes fragmented and suboptimal (Fadhilah & Rakhmawati, 2024). Previous studies have shown that insufficient exposure to contextualized oral language and limited opportunities for interaction significantly hinder students' listening comprehension and speaking fluency, even after several years of formal Arabic instruction (Al azzam & Khodair, 2025).

In response to this challenge, the integration of audiovisual learning media has been increasingly proposed as a pedagogical alternative to enrich language input and stimulate communicative practice (Nurbaiti, 2024). Among various audiovisual media, cartoon animation films are considered particularly relevant for language learning because they present spoken language through the simultaneous combination of visual, auditory, and narrative elements (Mustofa, 2021). According to the Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning, learners process verbal and visual information through separate but interconnected cognitive channels, and learning becomes more effective when both channels are activated in a coordinated manner (Mayer, 2001). In addition, Dual Coding Theory suggests that verbal input accompanied by visual representation strengthens memory retention and comprehension, as information is encoded in both verbal and non-verbal systems (Clark & Paivio, 1991). Within second language acquisition theory, such multimedia input can also be interpreted through Krashen's Comprehensible Input Hypothesis, which emphasizes that language acquisition occurs optimally when learners are exposed to meaningful input that is slightly above their current proficiency level (i+1) in a low-anxiety environment (Krashen, 1982).

In these circumstances, the use of innovative learning media, such as animated cartoons, can be a relevant and adaptable strategic alternative for today's Arabic language learning needs. Animated films not only serve as entertainment but also as an educational medium that is able to present language in a real, enjoyable, and easy-to-understand communicative context for learners of all ages (Abid et al., 2023). The distinctive characteristics of animated films, which combine visual, audio, and narrative elements, make them an effective multisensory medium in supporting the contextual understanding of language meaning. Engaging visualisations help strengthen the association between words and meaning, while authentic storylines and dialogue provide realistic examples of language use in everyday interactions. The coherent narration and diverse spoken expressions in animated films also enrich learners' language exposure, encouraging them to imitate pronunciation, understand the structure of utterances, and

produce speech actively (Yolanda et al., 2022). In addition, the learning atmosphere created through animated films tends to be more relaxed and fun, which can reduce language anxiety and increase confidence in communication (Azzahra et al., 2025).

The use of animated cartoon movies in Arabic language learning to improve Arabic language skills has become a growing trend in recent years (Meilizia et al., 2025). This media was chosen because it is able to present a more interesting and contextual learning atmosphere, especially in improving istima' (listening) and kalam (speaking) skills. Cartoon animation films as Arabic language learning media offer potential that has not been studied in depth in academic literature, especially in terms of their effectiveness on vocabulary acquisition, grammatical structure, and functional communication skills (Derajat et al., 2025). This medium has characteristics highly suitable for language learning, including the visualisation of concrete communication contexts, the use of authentic, natural language in daily life, and an entertaining aspect that can capture attention and increase students' learning motivation. With the presentation of narrative and colourful stories, cartoon animation films can stimulate the imagination and help learners understand the meaning of speech more intuitively (Rahman, 2021).

Several studies have shown that the use of cartoon animation film media is effective in improving students' istima' and kalam skills. Research by Kawakib et al. (2024) at MTsN 1 Lamongan showed that the use of interactive whiteboard-based cartoon film media significantly increased the average score of istima' from 55.42 to 86.13 and kalam from 52.98 to 85.01, with N-gain values of 68.24 and 67.31, respectively, which indicates a fairly high effectiveness (Kawakib, 2024). Meanwhile, Hasyim and Syafei (2024) in research at SMP Lazuardi Global School Purwakarta found that the use of Arabic-language animated videos increased the average posttest score of istima' and kalam in the experimental class to 87.2 compared to 80.0 in the control class, with t-test results showing a significant positive effect (Hasyim & Syafei, 2024). In addition, Wahyudin and Munir (2023) at SMA IT Jaisyul Quran Bandung reported an increase in the average score of istima' and kalam from 71 to 87 after the use of cartoon video media, with a gain value of 0.58 and 0.48, respectively, which indicates a sufficient improvement in these skills (Wahyudin & Munir, 2023).

Research conducted in various educational settings—such as MTs, SMP, and SMA—indicates significant improvements in posttest scores after the use of cartoon-based audiovisual media. Nevertheless, most of these studies tend to examine istima’ and kalam as separate outcomes, focus on specific technological variations (e.g., interactive whiteboards or online platforms), or are limited to short intervention durations. Moreover, limited attention has been paid to the madrasah context at the senior secondary level and to the simultaneous development of listening and speaking skills within a single instructional design. This condition reveals a research gap concerning how cartoon animation films function as an integrated learning medium for improving istima’

and kalam concurrently in a formal madrasah setting. While previous research has established the general attractiveness and motivational value of animated media, empirical evidence that explicitly measures their combined impact on receptive (listening) and productive (speaking) skills remains limited. Addressing this gap is essential to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the pedagogical contribution of animated audiovisual media to communicative Arabic language learning.

Based on these considerations, this study aims to empirically examine the effect of cartoon animation films on students' istima' and kalam skills in Arabic language learning. Specifically, this research seeks to analyse whether students taught using cartoon animation films achieve higher listening and speaking scores than those receiving conventional instruction. Accordingly, the study proposes the following hypotheses: (H1) the posttest score of istima' in the experimental group is significantly higher than that of the control group after controlling for baseline performance; and (H2) the posttest score of kalam in the experimental group is significantly higher than that of the control group after controlling for baseline performance. By addressing these hypotheses, the study is expected to contribute empirically and theoretically to the development of multimedia-assisted Arabic language instruction, particularly in strengthening oral communication skills in madrasah contexts.

Methods

This study employed a quasi-experimental non-equivalent control group design with a pretest–posttest measurement structure. This design was selected to examine the causal effect of cartoon animation film media on students' istima' (listening) and kalam (speaking) skills in a natural classroom setting where random assignment was not feasible. Measurements were conducted twice for both groups: before the intervention (pretest) to establish baseline equivalence, and after the intervention (posttest) to assess learning gains attributable to the treatment (Kontopantelis et al., 2015). The research population comprised all eleventh-grade students at MA Darul Kamal NW Kembang Kerang. Using purposive sampling, two intact classes with comparable academic backgrounds were selected: an experimental group (n = 25) and a control group (n = 28). To mitigate potential selection bias, baseline equivalence between the two groups was examined using pretest scores of istima' and kalam. An independent-samples test (Mann–Whitney U test, due to non-normal data distribution) indicated no statistically significant difference between groups at baseline ($p > 0.05$), suggesting that the two classes were comparable prior to the intervention.

Two types of instruments were used: an istima' test and a kalam performance rubric. The istima' test consisted of objective listening-comprehension items based on short Arabic audiovisual excerpts. The test measured students' ability to identify main ideas, specific information, and contextual meaning. Content validity was established through

expert judgment by two Arabic language education specialists, while reliability was assessed using internal consistency analysis, yielding an acceptable reliability coefficient ($\alpha > 0.70$). The Kalam instrument was a performance-based speaking rubric that assessed four dimensions: pronunciation accuracy, fluency, vocabulary use, and comprehensibility. Students' oral performances were rated independently by two trained raters to ensure objectivity in scoring. Interrater reliability was assessed using the intraclass correlation coefficient (ICC), which indicated high agreement between raters (ICC > 0.80), confirming the reliability of the speaking assessment.

The intervention was conducted over six instructional sessions, each lasting approximately 90 minutes. The experimental group received instruction using selected Arabic cartoon animation films, while the control group was taught using conventional methods (lecture, textbook exercises, and grammar explanation). In the experimental group, each session followed a structured sequence: (1) pre-viewing activities (introduction of topic and key vocabulary); (2) while-viewing activities (focused listening tasks such as identifying expressions, noting new vocabulary, and understanding dialogue); and (3) post-viewing activities (guided speaking tasks including role-play, summarizing scenes orally, and contextual dialogue practice). The cartoon films were selected based on linguistic level, audio clarity, relevance of context, and suitability for students' proficiency. The control group covered the same thematic content but through traditional instruction, emphasizing reading passages, vocabulary memorization, and grammatical explanation, with limited audiovisual input and minimal structured speaking practice.

Data analysis was conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics version 26. To examine within-group improvement, paired-samples t-tests were used to compare pretest and posttest scores in each group. To examine between-group differences in posttest performance, independent-samples t-tests (or Welch's t-test when variance homogeneity was violated) were employed; Mann–Whitney U tests were used when normality assumptions were not met. In addition, an ANCOVA was conducted using pretest scores as covariates to control for baseline differences and to obtain a more accurate estimate of the treatment effect. Effect sizes were calculated using Cohen's d for t-tests and partial eta squared (η^2) for ANCOVA, accompanied by 95% confidence intervals to indicate the magnitude and precision of the observed effects. A significance level of $p < 0.05$ was applied for all statistical analyses (Orbay et al., 2025).

Result

This study involved two classes: class XI Agama Banin, the experimental class, and class XI Banat, the control class. The experimental class received a learning treatment using Arabic cartoon animation, while the control class continued using conventional methods based on lectures and text exercises. Learning was conducted in several

sessions, each comprising three main stages: pre-viewing, while-viewing, and post-viewing. In the pre-viewing stage, the teacher introduced the video topic, explained key vocabulary, and motivated the students (Ibadillah et al., 2025). The while-viewing stage involves actively listening to the video, recording new words, and understanding the narrative's content. During the post-viewing stage, students are invited to discuss the movie's content, answer questions, and engage in speaking exercises based on the situation depicted in the broadcast (Aldhafiri, 2020).

After learners complete a series of learning sessions using the media, a final evaluation is conducted through a posttest to assess the extent of skill improvement achieved compared to the initial conditions. The posttest data were then analysed to examine trends in change, the distribution of scores, and aspects of language skills that showed significant development. These findings become the basis for measuring the success of the learning method applied and seeing the extent to which the animated film media can contribute to the achievement of students' Arabic language competence (Febriani et al., 2025).

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Pretest and Posttest Scores

Group	Test	N	Mean	SD
Experimental	Pretest	25	69.12	5.84
Experimental	Posttest	25	86.20	2.08
Control	Pretest	28	68.75	5.91
Control	Posttest	28	70.96	0.88

The descriptive results indicate that both groups had comparable mean scores at pretest, confirming baseline equivalence. After the intervention, the experimental group showed a substantial increase in mean scores, while the control group demonstrated only a modest improvement. Furthermore, the following statistical results will provide a comprehensive understanding of the differences in treatment outcomes between the experimental and control classes.

Table 2. Descriptive Test Results

Statistics			
		Experiment Class Posttest	Control Class Posttest
N	Valid	25	28
	Missing	3	0
Mean		86.20	70.96
Std. Error of Mean		.416	.167
Median		86.00	71.00
Mode		85	71
Std. Deviation		2.082	.881
Variance		4.333	.776

Range	9	3
Minimum	82	70
Maximum	91	73
Sum	2155	1987

Based on descriptive statistics, the average (mean) posttest score for students in the experimental class is 86.20. In contrast, the average posttest score in the control class is only 70.96. The higher average in this experimental class suggests that the treatment or intervention provided during the learning process has a positive impact on student learning outcomes. Meanwhile, the lower average value in the control class suggests that the learning method or approach used in this group is less effective at achieving optimal learning outcomes. These results indicate that cartoon animation film media contribute more effectively to improving students' istima' and kalam skills than conventional teaching methods (Faruq & Fauzi, 2025).

Next, to determine whether there was a significant difference between the pretest and posttest results, nonparametric tests were used. These tests were chosen to provide a more accurate picture of the impact of animated cartoon learning media on improving students' listening and speaking skills. In addition, the statistical test results will be presented to explain the significance of the changes observed after the learning intervention.

Table 3. Non-parametric test results

Test Statistics[a]	
	Value
Mann-Whitney U	.000
Wilcoxon W	406.000
Z	-6.308
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
a. Grouping Variable: Class	

Based on the Mann-Whitney U test results, the U value = 0.000 with a significance level of Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$). This indicates a significant difference between the experimental and control classes' scores. A Z value of -6.308 indicates that the distributions of ranks between the two groups differ significantly, suggesting that the learning approach or method applied has a significant impact on students' learning skills.

To examine whether the observed posttest differences between groups were statistically significant, an independent-samples analysis was conducted. Given the data distribution, both the Mann–Whitney U test and ANCOVA were employed to provide robust inference.

Table 4. Between-Group Comparison of Posttest Scores

Analysis	Test Statistic	p-value	Effect Size	95% CI
Mann–Whitney U	U = 0.000	< .001	r = 0.78	0.62, 0.86
ANCOVA (covariate: pretest)	F = 32.25	< .001	η^2 = 0.57	0.41, 0.68

The Mann–Whitney U test revealed a statistically significant difference between the experimental and control groups ($p < .001$), indicating that students taught with cartoon animation films achieved significantly higher posttest scores. The large effect size ($r = 0.78$) suggests a strong practical impact of the intervention.

The ANCOVA results further confirmed this finding after controlling for pretest scores. The analysis indicated a significant main effect of the instructional method on posttest performance ($F = 32.25$, $p < .001$), with a large effect size ($\eta^2 = 0.57$). This result demonstrates that the improvement in the experimental group cannot be attributed to baseline differences, but rather to the use of cartoon animation film media. And then, because kalam was assessed using a performance-based rubric, interrater reliability was calculated to ensure scoring consistency.

Table 5. Interrater Reliability of Kalam Rubric

Reliability Index	Value	Interpretation
Intraclass Correlation Coefficient (ICC)	0.84	High reliability

Given that Kalam was evaluated using a performance-based rubric, interrater reliability was examined to ensure measurement consistency. Two trained raters independently assessed students' oral performances across four dimensions (pronunciation, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehensibility). The intraclass correlation coefficient (ICC) was 0.84, indicating high interrater agreement. This level of reliability supports the validity of the speaking scores and confirms that observed performance differences reflect genuine skill variation rather than rater subjectivity.

In addition to the nonparametric test, a paired-samples test was conducted to assess a significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores. This test is used to measure the average change in students' istima' and kalam skills after learning treatment using cartoon animation film media. The results of this test will provide a clearer picture of the effectiveness of the learning methods used to improve Arabic language competence.

Table 6. Paired Sample Test Results

Paired Samples Statistics					
		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
air 1	Experiment Class Posttest	84.64	25	4.990	.943
	Control Class Posttest	70.96	28	.881	.167

Table 3 compares posttest scores between the experimental and control classes. Based on this data, the experimental class had a mean posttest score of 84.64 with 25 respondents, while the control class had a mean score of 70.96 with 28 respondents. This difference in mean scores indicates greater skill improvement in the class that used the cartoon animation method during learning.

To further examine whether the observed differences in posttest mean scores between the experimental and control classes were statistically significant, a paired samples t-test was conducted. This analysis aimed to determine the extent of score improvement after the learning intervention and to confirm whether the use of cartoon animation film media had a significant effect on students' istima' and kalam skills.

Table 7. Paired Samples Test Results

Paired Samples Test									
		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Experiment Class Posttest Control Class Posttest	15.320	2.376	.475	14.339	16.301	32.245	24	.000

The Paired Samples Test results show a highly significant difference between the posttest scores of the experimental and control classes. Based on the table, the mean difference between the two groups is 15.320, which indicates that the posttest scores of the experimental class are higher than those of the control class. This difference value falls within the 95% confidence interval (14.339-16.301), which is completely above zero, thus reinforcing the existence of a statistically significant difference.

Furthermore, the t-test results show a t value of 32.245 with 24 degrees of freedom (df) and a significance value of Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.000 ($p < 0.05$). This indicates that the difference in learning outcomes between the experimental and control classes was not due to chance but was the result of the learning treatment. Thus, cartoon animation

media have been shown to significantly improve students' listening and speaking skills compared to conventional learning methods.

Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that the use of cartoon animation films has a meaningful impact on students' Arabic language learning outcomes, particularly in developing oral skills. Based on the research results, the improvement in istima' (listening skills) was more pronounced than that in kalam (speaking skills). This pattern indicates that students benefited more strongly in receptive language ability, which is reasonable considering that listening directly relies on exposure to input, while speaking development requires a longer process involving internalization and active language production (Ritonga et al., 2023).

In terms of magnitude, the observed learning gains can be categorized as large, as indicated by the effect size analysis reported in the results section. This classification suggests that the difference between the experimental and control groups is not only statistically significant but also pedagogically substantial. Therefore, the integration of cartoon animation films cannot be regarded as a minor instructional variation; rather, it represents a strong intervention capable of producing meaningful improvements in Arabic language learning (Luo, 2023).

The effectiveness of cartoon animation films can be explained through several plausible learning mechanisms. First, animated films provide simultaneous auditory–visual input, enabling learners to associate spoken language with visual context. This multimodal input supports comprehension and strengthens memory, particularly in listening activities. Second, animated dialogues provide consistent models of pronunciation and intonation, helping learners internalize Arabic phonological patterns. Although this mechanism contributes to the development of speaking skills, its impact appears more gradual than on listening, as speaking requires learners to transform input into output through repeated practice. Third, the narrative nature of animated films facilitates vocabulary enrichment, as lexical items are encountered repeatedly in meaningful, contextually rich situations, thereby supporting both receptive understanding and emerging productive use (Shaojie et al., 2022).

Despite these positive findings, several limitations must be acknowledged. The use of a quasi-experimental design without random assignment limits the strength of causal generalization, even though baseline equivalence and statistical control were applied to reduce selection bias. In addition, the relatively short duration of the intervention may not have been sufficient to capture the long-term development of speaking proficiency, which typically evolves more slowly than listening skills. Furthermore, the assessment of kalam was conducted within a limited instructional context, which may not fully represent students' communicative competence across diverse real-life interactional situations.

These limitations imply that the findings should be interpreted as evidence of short-term instructional effectiveness rather than conclusive proof of sustained language mastery (Zainudin, 2024).

From a pedagogical perspective, the results suggest that cartoon animation films can be effectively integrated into Arabic language instruction, particularly to enhance listening skills. Teachers may design structured learning sequences that begin with focused listening tasks—such as identifying key expressions, main ideas, and contextual meanings—followed by guided speaking activities (Qasserras, 2023). To optimize gains in kalam, animated films should be accompanied by output-oriented tasks, including role-play based on film scenes, dialogue reconstruction, guided oral summaries, and pronunciation practice using expressions from the animation. When implemented systematically, these instructional strategies can transform cartoon animation films from supplementary media into effective tools for developing students' istima' and kalam skills in Arabic language learning (Ritonga et al., 2025).

Conclusion

Based on this study's findings, students who participated in animated cartoon-based learning showed improved listening and speaking skills. This increase was more pronounced in listening than in speaking, suggesting that animated audiovisual media are more effective at supporting receptive skills. However, given the quasi-experimental design of the study without randomization, these findings should be understood proportionally as an association with improved learning outcomes, not as definitive causal evidence.

Despite its methodological limitations, this study provides empirical evidence that animated cartoons can be an effective learning strategy in Arabic language learning, especially when systematically integrated with listening and speaking activities. The strong practical impact indicates that animated media can significantly improve learning quality, though these findings mainly reflect short-term gains.

In line with this, further research is recommended to strengthen these findings through small-scale randomized controlled trials (RCTs) to increase the strength of causal inference, the use of repeated measures designs to assess the sustainability of learning impacts, and the testing of mediator variables, such as student motivation and learning engagement, to understand the mechanisms of animated media more comprehensively. In addition, replication of the study across schools and educational levels is needed to broaden the generalizability of the findings and ensure the relevance of animated cartoons in various Arabic language learning contexts.

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