

Utilization of digital media in Indonesian language learning at the Universitas Pejuang Republik Indonesia: Opportunities and challenges

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Abstract

This research explored the use of digital media in Indonesian language learning at the Universitas Pejuang Republik Indonesia (UPRI), focusing on both the opportunities and challenges. It used descriptive qualitative methods, which involved in-depth interviews with lecturers and students, participant observation, and document analysis. The findings reveal that digital media, including e-learning platforms, interactive videos, and language learning apps, have enhanced access to materials, increased learning flexibility, and created more engaging experiences. However, the research identified challenges, including inadequate technological infrastructure, limited digital literacy, and pedagogical hurdles to maintaining humanistic interactions. Furthermore, online learning tends to reduce student focus and active participation, requiring strategies like microlearning, gamification, and collaboration to boost motivation. The research emphasizes the need for a blended learning model that combines digital tools and face-to-face interactions, along with targeted training for both lecturers and students to optimize the use of digital media. This research provides valuable insights into developing digital language-learning strategies in higher education.

Keywords

Digital literacy, digital media, higher education, Indonesian language learning, online learning

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Introduction

The development of digital technology has brought about significant transformations in various aspects of life, including education. In the context of Indonesian language learning in higher education, this technological advancement has created a new paradigm that demands adaptation from all educational stakeholders. The digital revolution has changed the way material is delivered and opened new possibilities for developing language competency (Rakhmat, 2007).

At Universitas Pejuang Republik Indonesia (UPRI), digital transformation in Indonesian language learning is beginning to be seen through various technology integration initiatives. Online learning platforms such as Moodle and Google Classroom have become alternative media that complement face-to-face learning processes. This change aligns with the demands of the Society 5.0 era, where human-centric technology is a fundamental requirement in education. The use of interactive multimedia, such as instructional videos, podcasts, and digital simulations, introduces a new dimension to the delivery of language materials that have previously been considered conventional (Nugroho, 2005).

However, this transformation has not been without obstacles. A gap remains between the potential of available technology and the capacity to utilize it optimally. Some lecturers have struggled to transition from conventional methods to digital approaches, while some students face literacy challenges. In the era of the 4.0 industrial revolution, digital media has become a crucial component in supporting the learning process, including the learning of the Indonesian language. The use of digital media, such as e-learning, interactive videos, language applications, and online collaborative platforms, offers significant opportunities to increase students' effectiveness, creativity, and engagement in learning. However, adopting this technology also presents various challenges, including the digital divide, a lack of technological literacy, and pedagogical challenges in designing content that meets learners' needs.

The Universitas Pejuang Republik Indonesia (UPRI), as an educational institution committed to advancing the quality of learning, needs to explore the use of digital media in teaching Indonesian. Language learning requires a dynamic and interactive approach, so integrating digital media can be an innovative way to enhance students' language competency. The characteristics of language learning, which emphasize the development of four core skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—require a learning environment that provides various stimuli and adequate practice opportunities. Digital media offers the potential to create a richer, more varied language-learning ecosystem than conventional methods. Through digital platforms, students can access various authentic learning resources, such as recordings of original conversations, current news articles, and literary works, in engaging multimedia formats.

The development of digital technology has given rise to various specialized tools for language learning, allowing students to practice more intensively and personally. Artificial intelligence-based applications, for example, can provide instant feedback on pronunciation errors that are difficult to detect in traditional learning. Adaptive learning systems can adjust the material and difficulty level according to each student's individual development, something that is nearly impossible to achieve manually in large classes. Virtual reality spaces are

increasingly used to simulate real-life communication situations, allowing students to practice conversation in various social contexts without the psychological pressure often present in face-to-face training (McQuail, 2010).

The ability of digital media to record and analyze learning processes also offers a revolutionary advantage in Indonesian language learning. Learning analytics features embedded across various digital platforms enable a more comprehensive, data-driven evaluation approach than conventional methods. Every student interaction with learning materials—from the duration of content access to the frequency of practice attempts to consistent error patterns—is digitally recorded and can be analyzed to yield valuable insights. This quantitative data complements traditional qualitative assessments by providing an objective picture of student progress, often missing from paper-based evaluations.

Digital systems can generate detailed individual progress reports that pinpoint specific areas where a student is progressing or struggling in their Indonesian language acquisition. For example, algorithmic analysis can identify a student who consistently makes errors in specific diction or struggles with complex sentence structures. This early detection enables more targeted interventions and personalized learning, which were previously difficult in large classes with diverse ability levels (Maulidiyanti & Suciati, 2019).

Beyond simply recording results, digital media can document the entire learning process in a longitudinal manner. Lecturers can track how a piece of writing progresses through various stages of revision or how students' discussion skills improve over time using recordings of online discussion forums. This process-based approach aligns well with the cumulative nature of language learning, which requires continuous practice. Digital recordings also allow students to engage in self-reflection by comparing their current work or performance with previous work, fostering metacognitive awareness, an essential component of self-regulated learning (Glava & Glava, 2011).

The analytical capabilities of digital media also open new opportunities in language education research. Anonymous datasets from hundreds of students can be analyzed to identify common error patterns, assess the effectiveness of various teaching methods, or examine the relationship between practice frequency and improvement in competency. Findings from this kind of big data analysis can provide an empirical basis for more effective pedagogical decision-making and curriculum development.

However, optimally utilizing the analytical capabilities of digital media requires new skills from educators. Lecturers need to develop competencies in interpreting analytical data and translating it into appropriate learning strategies. Ethical challenges also arise regarding data privacy and the responsible use of sensitive information about students' learning processes. Furthermore, it is important to remember that quantitative data from digital systems is only one part of a holistic assessment of language learning, which should also consider qualitative and humanistic aspects that cannot be fully measured digitally. Lecturers can track student progress more systematically using collected digital data, such as the frequency of participation in online discussions, improvements in practice scores, or frequently repeated error patterns. These learning analytics enable a more prescriptive approach to supporting students experiencing specific difficulties. Furthermore, students benefit from digital systems' ability to maintain a portfolio of their language development over time, which can serve as a source of reflection and motivation for continued improvement of their competency (Giovanni, 2017).

The interactivity offered by digital media also opens new opportunities for developing speaking and writing skills. Structured online discussion forums can increase the participation of shy students who are typically reluctant to speak in face-to-face classes. Collaborative tools such as shared documents and virtual discussion boards facilitate a more dynamic writing process through peer feedback and iterative revision. Even newer technologies, such as sophisticated chatbots, are increasingly used as virtual conversation partners, always available to help students practice their dialogue skills.

However, the effectiveness of digital media in language learning depends heavily on how it is integrated with the appropriate pedagogical approach. Technology should serve as a tool to achieve learning objectives, not as a substitute for the fundamental role of the lecturer in guiding the learning process. The design of learning activities needs to consider the balance between digital media and direct human interaction, because the affective and social aspects of language learning cannot be entirely replaced by technology. The primary challenge for educators is to create learning experiences that capitalize on the benefits of digital media while preserving the essence of language learning as a dynamic, contextual process of human communication. However, to achieve optimal results, an in-depth analysis of the opportunities and challenges that may be faced is necessary.

Methodology

This research used a qualitative, descriptive approach to analyze the use of digital media in Indonesian language learning at Universitas Pejuang Republik Indonesia (UPRI). The qualitative approach was chosen because it can provide a profound understanding of social phenomena in their natural context, particularly the complexity of implementing digital technology in language learning. Descriptive methods were used to provide a comprehensive picture of how digital media is integrated into learning, including usage patterns, stakeholder responses, and various factors that influence its effectiveness (Arikunto, 2010).

Data collection was conducted through technical triangulation, including in-depth interviews with Indonesian language lecturers and students involved in digital-based learning. These interviews focused on respondents' actual experiences with various digital platforms, the challenges they faced, and their perceptions of the impact of these platforms on the learning process. Participatory observations were also conducted of learning activities in both face-to-face and virtual environments to capture the dynamics of interactions.

Data analysis was conducted thematically using the interactive approach outlined in Miles and Huberman's model, beginning with data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The analysis focused on identifying patterns of digital media use, gaps between expectations and the realities of implementation, and supporting and inhibiting factors from various perspectives. Data validity was maintained through source triangulation and member checking, with research findings verified across several participants to ensure accurate interpretation.

This research is limited to the context of Universitas Pejuang Republik Indonesia (UPRI) during a specific period, so generalizations of the findings should be made with caution. However, a more profound examination of this specific case study can provide valuable insights into best practices and challenges that similar higher education institutions

may face in integrating digital media for language learning. The research findings are expected to contribute both theoretically to the development of language-learning models in the digital era and practically to policymakers at Universitas Pejuang Republik Indonesia (UPRI) as they develop more effective learning development strategies.

The methodological implications of this research suggest that a qualitative approach with descriptive methods is suitable for uncovering the complexity of digital-based educational phenomena, particularly in the context of language learning, which emphasizes aspects of communication and human interaction. This method helps researchers understand the technical aspects of using technology, as well as the social, cultural, and psychological factors that influence the effectiveness of digital media in language education. V. The qualitative approach was chosen because it can provide a profound understanding of the phenomena studied from the participants' perspectives, thereby revealing opportunities and challenges in a holistic manner.

Data collection was conducted through semi-structured interviews with lecturers teaching Indonesian language courses and students involved in digital-based learning. Furthermore, participant observation was conducted to directly observe the implementation of digital media in the classroom, such as the use of e-learning platforms, instructional videos, and supporting applications. Supporting documents such as syllabi, semester learning plans, and digital teaching materials were also analyzed to strengthen the research findings.

The data obtained were then analyzed interactively through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing in a cyclical, reflective process. Data reduction involved selecting, focusing on, and simplifying the raw data collected from interviews, observations, and documents into core themes relevant to the research focus. This process involved thematic coding of the data to identify emerging patterns related to the use of digital media in Indonesian language learning at UPRI. The coded data were then grouped based on conceptual similarities to facilitate the identification of relationships among the variables and phenomena under study.

The data is presented in a descriptive narrative format, complemented by matrices and diagrams that visualize relationships among the findings categories. This presentation offers researchers a more comprehensive overview of the phenomenon and identifies gaps that require further investigation. In the context of this research, the data presentation focuses on three main aspects: lecturers' digital media usage patterns, students' responses to digital-based learning, and the factors that support and inhibit the effectiveness of implementation.

Conclusions were drawn through a rigorous verification process to ensure that the available data fully supported the interpretations developed. Interview findings were validated through triangulation with observations and document analysis, while tentative conclusions were continuously tested through discussions with colleagues and member checking with research participants. This analysis process was iterative, with researchers continually moving back and forth between the raw data, analytical categories, and relevant theories to build a more profound understanding of the phenomenon under study.

The data analysis in this research also considers the specific context of Universitas Pejuang Republik Indonesia (UPRI) as the research site, ensuring the resulting findings are contextually relevant. However, they may be relevant to similar institutions. The data interpretation process explicitly considers the unique characteristics of Universitas Pejuang

Republik Indonesia (UPRI) students, the institution's academic culture, and the available technological infrastructure. This analytical approach allows researchers to describe surface phenomena and to understand the more profound meaning of digital media use as experienced by key actors in the learning process. Source triangulation techniques were used to validate the data by comparing the results of interviews, observations, and document analysis. This research focuses on the Universitas Pejuang Republik Indonesia (UPRI) context, resulting in in-depth and contextual findings that cannot be broadly generalized. Through this method, it is hoped that optimal strategies for utilizing digital media will be identified, along with the obstacles to be overcome to improve the quality of Indonesian language learning.

Findings

The research on the use of digital media in Indonesian language learning at the Universitas Pejuang Republik Indonesia (UPRI) yielded several findings from interviews, observations, and document analysis. Digital media, including e-learning platforms (Moodle, Google Classroom), learning videos, podcasts, and language apps (Quizizz), have been utilized to create a more dynamic and engaging learning environment.

Digital media use by lecturers and students

Most lecturers at Universitas Pejuang Republik Indonesia (UPRI) have integrated e-learning platforms to share materials, assign tasks, and conduct online discussions. These platforms have helped disseminate course content and enhance communication between lecturers and students. Additionally, lecturers used these platforms to provide students with immediate access to lecture notes, quizzes, and resources that complement classroom instruction. Students, on the other hand, responded positively to digital learning, as it provides more flexibility, allowing them to access materials at their convenience. This flexibility also allows them to learn at their own pace, especially for students who may need more time to absorb the material. They also found that digital platforms were more interactive, thereby increasing engagement and creating a more student-centered learning environment.

Challenges in implementation

However, integrating digital media presents challenges. Lecturers have faced difficulties in creating engaging digital content that aligns with specific learning outcomes. Some lecturers are still in the early stages of transitioning from traditional to digital teaching methods, requiring them to invest time in learning how to use new tools effectively. Additionally, there are significant obstacles, including unstable internet connectivity, limited technical proficiency, and a lack of advanced digital tools to enhance learning experiences. These issues hinder the consistent and effective use of digital media across all courses. Students also face barriers, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, who struggle with inconsistent internet access and with using digital tools. These challenges make it more difficult for them to fully participate in the learning process, creating a digital divide that impacts their academic success. Furthermore, students tend to be more passive in online discussions than in in-person

interactions. This issue stems from the lack of direct interaction, which is crucial for active engagement in language learning, and from the increased temptation to be distracted during online sessions.

Opportunities for digital media use

The research identified significant opportunities for enhancing language learning through digital media. One of the most notable advantages is the flexibility offered by digital platforms, which allow students to access materials at any time and from anywhere. This flexibility enables students to review and engage with content at their pace, accommodating those with varying time commitments or learning styles. Digital natives, who are more accustomed to technology-based learning environments, greatly benefit from this flexibility, as it aligns with their preferences for asynchronous learning. Digital media also offers a more immersive and interactive learning experience. Language learning apps, animated videos, and digital simulations provide students with more engaging ways to grasp complex language concepts visually and interactively. These resources break down language barriers and engage students in ways traditional textbooks cannot, enabling better retention and understanding. By incorporating gamified elements, multimedia, and interactive activities, digital media can make language learning more enjoyable and effective, motivating students to learn more actively.

Personalised learning through digital media

Another opportunity lies in its potential for personalised learning. The use of learning analytics systems enables lecturers to track students' progress in real-time and provide more targeted, individualized feedback. This adaptive learning technology adjusts content and difficulty levels to meet each student's individual needs, making the learning process more effective and efficient. Personalised learning helps students progress at their own pace, ensuring each student receives the support they need. This is especially beneficial in a classroom with diverse skill levels, as students who are struggling can receive additional practice and support. At the same time, those who excel can move on to more advanced topics. Tailoring content and assessments to individual students enhances learning outcomes and promotes a more inclusive educational environment. Lecturers can effectively intervene by focusing on specific areas of difficulty as students' progress, ensuring that no student falls behind.

Access to richer resources

Digital media also provides students with access to a wide range of resources beyond traditional textbooks. They can explore digital journals, online language corpora, audio recordings, and literary works. This access broadens their understanding of the Indonesian language and literature, and strengthens their linguistic identity, particularly in the context of globalisation. The diversity of available materials enhances students' linguistic and literary insights, helping them develop a more comprehensive understanding of the language. In addition to enhancing their learning, these resources enable students to engage with authentic

language usage, including real-world conversations, current events, and literary works that reflect contemporary language trends. The availability of multimedia resources also facilitates students' connection between theoretical knowledge and real-life applications, thereby enhancing their ability to understand and utilise language in diverse contexts. Moreover, students can access a broader range of materials tailored to their interests, helping them stay engaged and motivated throughout the learning process.

Discussion

Research at Universitas Pejuang Republik Indonesia (UPRI) reveals both opportunities and challenges in integrating technology into Indonesian language learning. While the integration of digital platforms has enhanced flexibility, engagement, and access to resources, it also presents several challenges, particularly in terms of infrastructure, digital literacy, and pedagogical adaptation. The following discussion elaborates on the implications of these findings, emphasising the potential of digital media to reshape language education while addressing the challenges it presents.

Digital media use by lecturers and students

One of the primary findings of the research is that most lecturers at Universitas Pejuang Republik Indonesia (UPRI) have integrated e-learning platforms such as Moodle and Google Classroom into their teaching practices. This integration has facilitated the sharing of materials and assignments, allowing for ongoing communication between lecturers and students. The use of these platforms aligns with the broader trend in education, where digital tools are increasingly used to create more flexible and accessible learning environments (Castro, 2019). By leveraging e-learning platforms, lecturers can provide students with real-time access to course materials, assignments, and feedback, enhancing the learning experience.

Students, in turn, have responded positively to these changes, particularly appreciating the flexibility that digital platforms offer. Flexibility in learning is essential in higher education, where students often juggle multiple responsibilities, including part-time jobs and extracurricular activities. The capacity to access educational resources at any time and from any location corresponds with the requirements of the contemporary digital-native generation, which is accustomed to on-demand information access (Maulidiyanti & Suciati, 2019). The interactive nature of these platforms has further contributed to increased engagement, as students can actively participate in online discussions and collaborative projects. This shift from passive to active learning aligns with Nugroho's (2005) findings, which argue that digital tools enhance learner interaction, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills.

However, despite students' positive response, the findings also reveal several challenges in implementing digital media in the classroom. Lecturers continue to struggle with designing engaging digital content that aligns with specific learning outcomes. This challenge highlights the importance of receiving proper pedagogical training in the effective use of digital tools. While some lecturers have made strides in integrating technology into their teaching, others remain unfamiliar with the more advanced features of digital platforms, limiting their potential to enhance the learning experience. This issue highlights the importance of ongoing

professional development for educators to ensure they are equipped with the necessary skills to utilise digital tools fully (Arikunto, 2010).

Challenges in implementation

The integration of digital media into language learning is not without its obstacles. One significant challenge is the inadequate technological infrastructure at UPRI, particularly in terms of internet connectivity. The research found that many students, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, face difficulties in accessing digital resources due to poor internet connections or the lack of digital devices. This digital divide is a significant barrier to equal access to education and has been widely discussed in the literature on digital learning (Effendy, 2003). In a globalised world where digital technologies play a crucial role in education, addressing the digital divide is essential to ensuring that all students have equal opportunities to succeed.

In addition to infrastructure issues, both lecturers and students face challenges related to digital literacy. Many students are skilled at using social media and entertainment apps, but they often lack proficiency in using digital tools effectively for academic purposes. This gap in digital literacy is particularly problematic in language learning, where students need to engage with specialised applications and resources that are not always intuitive or user-friendly. Similarly, lecturers may lack the technical expertise to integrate digital media effectively into their teaching practices. The lack of comprehensive training on digital tools and pedagogical methods for online teaching has been identified as a significant obstacle in the successful integration of technology in higher education (Bagus & Nareswari, 2021).

Moreover, the passive nature of online learning compared to face-to-face interactions can lead to reduced student engagement. The absence of direct interaction with peers and lecturers in a physical classroom environment often leads to decreased participation in online discussions. This issue is particularly pertinent in language learning, where active engagement in discussions and collaborative activities is essential for developing communication skills. The findings suggest that students are more likely to become passive in online discussions, as the lack of social presence makes it easier for them to disengage from the learning process. This issue emphasises the need to implement instructional strategies that foster active participation in online settings, such as collaborative learning, gamification, and microlearning (Doll & Torkzadeh, 1991).

Opportunities for digital media use

Despite the challenges, the research also identified several significant opportunities for enhancing language learning through digital media. One of the most promising aspects of digital media is its ability to offer greater flexibility in learning. The ability to access materials anytime and anywhere is particularly beneficial for students who may face time constraints or other personal commitments. This flexibility aligns with the needs of digital natives, who expect learning environments to be adaptable and accessible (Latip, 2020). The use of digital media also allows students to engage with content at their own pace, revisiting materials or completing assignments as needed. This personal approach to learning has the potential to

improve student outcomes by catering to individual learning preferences and needs (Azwar, 2004).

In addition to flexibility, digital media offers a more immersive and interactive learning experience. The use of language-learning apps, animated videos, and digital simulations provides students with dynamic, engaging ways to grasp complex language concepts. For example, language-learning apps that include interactive quizzes or games can help reinforce vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation in engaging ways. The use of multimedia resources also enhances comprehension by presenting information in various formats, making it easier for students to understand abstract linguistic concepts (Rakhmat, 2007). This multimodal approach is critical in language learning, where students benefit from exposure to diverse forms of input, including spoken, written, and visual materials.

Furthermore, digital media offers access to a broader range of learning resources than traditional textbooks. Students can explore digital journals, online language corpora, speech recordings, and literary works to enrich their understanding of the Indonesian language and culture. This access to authentic resources is particularly valuable in language education, as it exposes students to real-world language use, including contemporary slang, idiomatic expressions, and cultural references that are often missing from traditional textbooks. The availability of such resources helps students strengthen their linguistic identities and deepen their appreciation of the language in a globalised context (McQuail, 2010).

Personalised learning through digital media

The research also highlights the potential of digital media to support personalised learning. The use of learning analytics systems enables lecturers to track student progress in real-time, providing more targeted, individualized feedback. These systems provide valuable insights into student performance, including the time spent on assignments, the frequency of practice attempts, and the types of errors made. This data can be used to adjust the content and difficulty of assignments, ensuring that each student receives the support they need to succeed (Giovanni, 2017). Personalised learning is critical in language education, where students come from diverse backgrounds and have varying levels of proficiency.

Adaptive learning technology, which adjusts the difficulty level of content based on student performance, also plays a key role in enhancing the learning experience. This technology ensures that students are not overwhelmed by content that is too difficult or bored by material that is too easy. Instead, they are challenged at an appropriate level, which promotes motivation and engagement. The ability to tailor content to individual learning needs also ensures that students receive timely and relevant support, improving their overall academic success (Arikunto & Yuliana, 2008).

Access to Richer Resources

Ultimately, the research revealed that digital media offers students a significantly richer and more diverse range of learning resources compared to traditional textbooks. Students can explore digital journals, audio recordings, and literary works that reflect the richness of the Indonesian language and culture. This access to authentic resources enhances students' understanding of language and strengthens their linguistic and cultural identity. Furthermore, the ability to explore materials beyond the classroom fosters a sense of autonomy in learning,

as students can take charge of their educational journey and explore topics that interest them (Nugroho, 2005).

This access to diverse resources also prepares students for the challenges of the globalised world, where the ability to engage with information from various sources and formats is crucial. In the context of Indonesian language learning, this exposure to diverse materials helps students gain a broader perspective on language use, making them more adaptable and proficient in real-world communication (Fajar, 2009).

The integration of digital media in Indonesian language learning at Universitas Pejuang Republik Indonesia (UPRI) presents both opportunities and challenges. While digital platforms offer flexibility, engagement, and personalised learning, their successful implementation requires overcoming challenges related to infrastructure, digital literacy, and pedagogical adaptation. By providing comprehensive training for both lecturers and students, ensuring equitable access to technology, and fostering a balanced approach to teaching, Universitas Pejuang Republik Indonesia (UPRI) can harness the full potential of digital media to enhance language learning outcomes. The findings of this research contribute valuable insights into the evolving role of digital media in education and provide a roadmap for other higher education institutions seeking to integrate technology into their language programs.

Conclusion

This research on the utilisation of digital media in Indonesian language learning at the Universitas Pejuang Republik Indonesia (UPRI) highlights both the transformative potential and the challenges of integrating digital technologies into language education. The findings suggest that digital media, including e-learning platforms (e.g., Moodle and Google Classroom), language-learning apps (e.g., Quizziz), and multimedia resources (e.g., podcasts and videos), offer significant opportunities to enhance student engagement, flexibility, and access to diverse learning materials. These platforms provide a more interactive and immersive learning experience, catering to the needs of digital-native students and offering personalised learning pathways through adaptive technologies.

However, the research also identifies several key challenges that hinder the optimal use of digital media. These include problems with technology infrastructure, differences in digital literacy between teachers and students, and the fact that online learning is less active, which makes it less likely that students will participate. Additionally, the lack of adequate training for lecturers and students in leveraging advanced digital tools limits the effectiveness of these technologies in achieving desired learning outcomes. To overcome these challenges, it is crucial to invest in infrastructure development, provide ongoing training for educators, and foster a balanced pedagogical approach that combines digital tools with human interaction.

In conclusion, while digital media holds significant potential for improving Indonesian language learning at UPRI, its full benefits can be realised only through a comprehensive, strategic approach. Addressing the digital divide, enhancing digital literacy, and adopting pedagogical practices that integrate both technological advancements and humanistic learning values are essential components of this approach.

Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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