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Reconstructing the Arabic Language Curriculum Based on the CEFR and Rusydi Ahmad Thuaimah's Perspective

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ABSTRACT

This study is motivated by identified issues in the Arabic Language Education (ALE) curriculum at STAIMS Yogyakarta, including unclear epistemological and methodological foundations, overlapping competency standards, and the lack of integration of linguistic, cultural, and social approaches in learning. This research aims to reconstruct the Arabic language curriculum by integrating the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) with the perspective of Rusydi Ahmad Thuaimah, focusing on developing receptive skills. This study employs a case study method with a mixed-methods approach (qualitative and quantitative). It adopts Richards' curriculum development model, which includes stages of needs analysis, situational analysis, setting objectives and graduate competency standards (learning outcomes), determining learning activities, selecting teaching materials, and conducting evaluations. The findings result in a curriculum integration that combines CEFR standards with Thuaimah's perspective, offering a systematic structure of language competencies while remaining grounded in cognitive, cultural, linguistic, and psychological values aligned with Islamic principles and the local Indonesian context. This study contributes to Arabic curriculum development by harmonising standards with contextual values, and thus may serve as a reference for other institutions facing similar challenges.

1. INTRODUCTION

The curriculum is a complex combination of educational components, including subject content, learning attributes, educational experiences, assessment, learning environment, student learning styles, instructional schedules, and academic programs (Okojie et al., 2022). Meanwhile, Kumar & Rewari (2022) analogise the world as a map representing the reality of the world and formulate ways appropriate for its users to understand and navigate the world. In this context, curriculum development is at the heart of all educational institutions' activities (Zeynali Tazehkandi et al., 2024). This process requires an in-depth analysis of what is considered powerful knowledge, and how this knowledge is selected and organised to suit the learning needs of learners. Therefore, Anisatin & Asmui (2023) emphasised that effective curriculum design should consider students' cognitive developmental stages, age, academic experience, and social background. Nonetheless, the curriculum often faces various challenges in educational practice.

In ALE, curriculum development encounters unique challenges. According to Permana & Syuhadak (2022), the Arabic curriculum lags behind other foreign languages due to its unclear epistemological and methodological foundations. In addition, the curriculum often overlaps with learning due to differences in competency standards (Pratama et al., 2024). Another challenge is the diversity of approaches within the curriculum, which now encompasses linguistic aspects and cultural and social contexts (Azizah et al., 2024). This challenge is experienced by STAIMS Yogyakarta, an Islamic higher education institution with an ALE Study Programme; this study programme needs to reconstruct its curriculum. Nurbayan et al. (2021) recommended the development of an international standard Arabic curriculum to produce competent graduates with 21st-century skills.

One of the increasingly adopted international language curriculum standards is the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). In recent years, CEFR has shifted the language learning paradigm with widespread recognition in Europe and growing popularity worldwide (Supunya, 2022). The CEFR provides comprehensive guidelines for curriculum development, syllabi, examination questions, and teaching materials (Jeon, 2022). The CEFR system consists of six levels, A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, and C2, each describing a structured and clear language ability qualification, thus preventing overlapping teaching materials (Muliastuti et al., 2023). Nurdianto & Ismail (2020) encourage a CEFR-based Arabic curriculum that integrates the cultural insights of the archipelago so that students can become Indonesian ambassadors in the international arena by promoting the beauty of Indonesia using Arabic.

The Arabic language curriculum can be developed by referring to experts such as Rusydi Ahmad Thuaimah, a Middle Eastern education figure who integrates theocentrism and anthropocentrism based on philosophical, cultural, and social foundations. The Middle Eastern community generally emphasises education on the normative aspects of religion, with the Qur'an and Sunnah as primary references (Permana & Syuhadak, 2022). Meanwhile, Thuaimah emphasises including principles encompassing cognitive, psychological, cultural, linguistic, sociological, and other relevant dimensions in curriculum development (Al-

Mubassyr, 2023). Therefore, this approach should be adopted in developing the ALE curriculum at STAIMS as an Islamic-based higher education institution.

Several previous studies have made significant contributions that serve as a foundation for this research. Zainuddin et al. (2022) emphasised the importance of integrating international standards with the views of linguistic experts in the Arabic language learning curriculum. Similarly, Hakim et al. (2021) highlighted the need for a writing curriculum developed based on the perceptions of students and lecturers, aligned with the CEFR framework. Alrababa'h et al. (2024) also contributed by evaluating the reading proficiency of non-native Arabic speakers based on CEFR levels. Meanwhile, Permana and Syuhadak (2022) assessed that a curriculum grounded in Rusydi Ahmad Thuaimah's perspective is relevant for native Arabic speakers and aligns with modern curriculum principles. Lastly, Hasanah et al. (2021) enriched the discourse by reconstructing the productive skills curriculum based on ACTFL and Douglas Brown's perspectives at UIN Malang. There is a research gap in reconstructing the Arabic curriculum by integrating CEFR international standards and Thuaimah's perspective as an Arabic linguist.

Based on the problems identified in the ALE curriculum at STAIMS Yogyakarta, such as unclear epistemological and methodological foundations, overlapping competency standards, and the need to integrate linguistic, cultural, and social approaches. This study aims to reconstruct the curriculum by incorporating the CEFR framework and the perspective of Rusydi Ahmad Thuaimah. The focus of the research is limited to the development of receptive skills. The findings are expected to offer solutions to existing curriculum challenges and serve as a reference for designing a more relevant, integrative, and practical Arabic language curriculum within Islamic higher education institutions.

2. METHODS

This research uses a case study method with a mixed method approach (qualitative and quantitative) to reconstruct the receptive Arabic curriculum based on CEFR and Thuaimah. This curriculum reconstruction process uses the Jack C. Richards model, which includes the stages of needs analysis, situation analysis, determination of goals and standards of graduate competencies (learning outcomes), determination of learning activities, determination of teaching materials, and evaluation (Richards, 2001). The locus of this research is STAIMS Yogyakarta ALE Study Programme, which focuses on developing receptive language skills. The sampling technique used was the total sampling method, in which all 39 ALE STAIMS Yogyakarta students became the research sample.

The needs analysis stage was carried out using both objective and subjective approaches to obtain comprehensive data. In the objective needs analysis, a closed-ended questionnaire based on a Likert scale was used, analysed using frequency techniques, and presented in tabular form (Cohen et al., 2018). The validity of the questionnaire instrument was examined through construct validity by involving experts to assess the relevance of the instrument to the research objectives (Sugeng, 2022). The questionnaire was distributed via Google Forms and shared through WhatsApp to reach the students efficiently. Meanwhile, the

subjective needs analysis was conducted through observation, interviews with several lecturers, including the Head of the Study Program and lecturers of *maharah qira'ah* and *istima'* courses and by reviewing curriculum documents, syllabi, and teaching materials used in the ALE Study Program at STAIMS Yogyakarta.

The data analysis technique in this study employed the Miles and Huberman model, which consists of three main stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing (Miles et al., 2014). In the data reduction stage, the researcher organised and simplified the collected data by categorising it according to themes relevant to the focus of the study, namely the reconstruction of the Arabic language curriculum based on CEFR and Thuaimah. The reduced data was then presented descriptively and in tabular form to provide a more precise and systematic visualisation of the research findings. In the final stage, conclusions were drawn based on the analysed data, accompanied by a verification process to ensure the consistency and validity of the findings.

The validity of this research data is determined through the triangulation of methods, data sources, and analytical perspectives. Data from interviews, observations, and document analyses validated methodological triangulation. Data sources were applied by collecting information from participants and institutional archives, while theoretical triangulation was done by analysing the findings using various linguistic and educational frameworks (Nyoto et al., 2025).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Results

The Head of ALE stated that the curriculum used is the KKNi curriculum, and several receptive skills courses have objectives and competency standards. For *maharah istima' li al-mubtadi'in*, students must accurately detect, grasp, and understand spoken words, sentences, or conversations. At the *maharah istima' al-mutaqaddim* level, students should infer textual and contextual information from listening materials and express it appropriately in Arabic. Meanwhile, *maharah qira'ah* is divided into *Al-Kutub Al-Turatsiyyah* and *Al-Kutub Al-'Ashriyyah*. Students are expected to read classical texts (heritage books) with correct *harakat* and profound comprehension of the former. In the latter, students should be able to read contemporary Arabic texts relevant to academic contexts, with accuracy in pronunciation and understanding. Basic and advanced Arabic courses are integrated with all four language skills. The introductory course aims to teach students to master the *qawaid* for effective communication and reading. In contrast, the advanced course ensures students possess comprehensive skills and can apply them appropriately in social contexts.

However, in learning receptive skills, there are still several problems that hinder the achievement of student competence. The lecturer of the *maharah qira'ah* course revealed that most students have difficulty understanding reading classical and modern Arabic texts because they have not mastered Arabic grammar adequately. On the other hand, the lecturer of *maharah Istima'* explained that students also experienced problems in

understanding contemporary vocabulary and were not used to listening to speech from native Arabic speakers. This finding is reinforced by the data from a Likert scale-based questionnaire completed by 37 out of 39 students as respondents. The results are presented in the following table:

Table 1. Questionnaire instrument for student needs analysis

No.	Questionnaire Instrument	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Still have difficulty in learning receptive skills	21.6%	48.6%	27%	2.7%	2.7%
2.	Receptive skills teaching materials used overlap in learning levels	13.5%	48.6%	24.3%	10.8%	2.7%
3.	Receptive skill teaching materials used overlap in learning levels.	24.3%	51.4%	10.8%	10.8%	2.7%
4.	The current curriculum has not fully helped students achieve competence in receptive skills	16,2%	56.8%	27%	2.7%	16.2%
5.	The curriculum needs to be redesigned according to international language standards	45.9%	35.1%	18.9%	2.7%	0%

3.2. Discussion

Needs analysis and Situation Analysis

Needs analysis is an essential instrument that curriculum developers use to identify students' needs to support effective academic and professional performance (Grazia Imperiale et al., 2023). In practice, needs analysis encompasses two main models: subjective and objective. Subjective needs are conceptual and are influenced by epistemological choices that reflect the values and interests of policymakers (Lam et al., 2023). In contrast, objective needs refer to factual field data, such as students' language skills, learning goals, expectations, and attitudes toward learning (Chero, 2021). Based on the needs analysis of the ALE curriculum at STAIMS, it was found that students face significant challenges in receptive skills, particularly in understanding active speakers and reading classical and modern Arabic texts. Moreover, the teaching materials tend to overlap, and the learning activities implemented have not effectively enhanced students' receptive skills. Further analysis indicates that the current curriculum does not optimally support the development of receptive competencies, thus necessitating the integration of an international standard-based curriculum to enhance students' abilities. This aligns with Park's (2022), view that needs analysis in language curriculum development plays a vital

role in identifying students' needs, addressing challenges, and serving as the foundation for selecting instructional materials to design a practical, relevant, and language skill-oriented curriculum.

In addition to needs analysis, situation analysis is also an important aspect of curriculum design, as it reveals the various external and internal contexts that influence the direction and effectiveness of curriculum development. Factors such as political, economic, social, and cultural dynamics at the institutional, national, and international levels have a significant role in determining curriculum policy and content (Kumar & Rewari, 2022). The current curriculum of the ALE Study Programme at STAIMS still refers to the KKNI-based national framework. Still, it has not yet shown the distinctiveness or comparative advantage that distinguishes it from similar institutions. Nevertheless, STAIMS has the potential for distinction through the Qur'anic approach applied in *tahsin* courses and the provision of *ma'had tahfidz* al-Qur'an facilities. According to Maryamah et al. (2023), this approach can serve as a stimulus in supporting the development of students' receptive skills, especially in listening and reading Arabic texts. Therefore, based on the findings from the needs analysis and situation analysis, it can be concluded that the development of the ALE curriculum needs to be directed towards the integration of the CEFR international standards and Thuaimah's perspective, to strengthen global relevance and local effectiveness in Arabic language learning.

Setting Objectives and Standards of Graduate Competence (Learning Outcome)

To formulate the objectives and Graduate Competency Standards in this curriculum reconstruction, by going through the main steps: reexamining the CEFR standards, reviewing the gradation of receptive skills from Thu'aimah's point of view, and reconstructing a contextual model that integrates both frameworks with students' needs based on needs analysis.

The CEFR is a comprehensive international standard in language education, offering a structured framework for proficiency levels, curriculum, and materials. Its implementation in Arabic language curricula guides proficiency development while integrating linguistic, cognitive, and cultural components. The CEFR defines a person's competence in a foreign language into six levels, namely A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, and C2 (Abdullah et al., 2023). Each level in the CEFR describes a specific and clear qualification of language ability. The details of the competence of each level in receptive skills are as follows:

Table 2. Receptive skill levels based on the CEFR framework

Level	Listening Skills	Reading Skills
A1	Able to recognise basic familiar words and expressions when spoken slowly.	Able to understand familiar names, simple words, and sentences in everyday contexts.

A2	Able to understand common phrases in familiar areas (e.g., family, shopping, work); grasp short, clear messages.	Able to read short texts and find specific info in ads, menus, and schedules; able to understand simple personal letters.
B1	Able to understand main points in standard speech on daily topics; able to follow basic radio/TV content.	Able to understand texts with everyday or work language; able to interpret personal letters describing events and feelings.
B2	Able to follow extended speech and complex discussions on familiar topics; able to understand most TV and films in standard dialect.	Able to read articles and reports on contemporary issues; able to understand modern literary prose.
C1	Able to understand lengthy, complex speech even when not structured; able to follow films and shows effortlessly.	Able to understand complex factual/literary texts; able to interpret technical content outside one's field.
C2	Able to fully comprehend spoken language, including fast native-level speech.	Able to read nearly any written text, including abstract and technical literature.

After finding the standard of receptive skills from the CEFR perspective, the next step is to read Thu'aimah's thoughts. Thu'aimah offers a holistic perspective on Arabic learning by highlighting cognitive, psychological, cultural, linguistic, and sociological principles. These are structured into three hierarchical levels of language skills development, as shown in the table below:

Table 3. Receptive Skill Levels of Rusydi Ahmad Thu'aimah's Perspective

Level	Listening skills	Reading skills
Low	Basic listening mechanics	Basic mechanics of reading (recognition)
	Grammatical competence	Grammatical competence
	<i>Fahm al-masmu'</i>	<i>Fahm al-maqru'</i>
Intermediate	Higher-order thinking	Critic
		Interaction (<i>tafa'ul</i>)
Top	Listening Trends	Reading habits and interests
	Listening values	Reading Culture
	Listening Culture	

Table 2 outlines Thu'aimah's three levels of receptive skill learning. The low level emphasises mastering fundamental mechanical aspects as a foundation for language learning (Thu'aimah, 2004). It focuses on recognition, or sensory perception, by decoding language symbols in sound and written forms. Students are expected to accurately match spoken words with their written forms and distinguish them from similar words at this stage. This foundational process is key to developing more advanced linguistic skills

(Ṭu'aimah, 1986).

Students are expected to demonstrate more advanced language abilities at the intermediate Arabic receptive skills learning level. This includes grammatical competence, comprehension, higher-order thinking, listening, critical reading, and interactive reading skills (Ṭu'aimah, 2004). Grammatical competence involves understanding Arabic structures and their functions, while comprehension focuses on recognising meaning relations within texts. Higher-order thinking in listening entails interpreting and critically evaluating information. Critical reading enables students to assess texts, express opinions, accept logical ideas, reject illogical ones, and relate new information to prior knowledge (Ṭu'aimah, 1986). Additionally, interaction with texts is an intellectual process that includes identifying problems, seeking solutions through reading, and critically responding, engaging emotions and reasoning (Zainuddin et al., 2022).

The Higher Level in Arabic language learning emphasises the importance of cultural understanding and awareness of the context in which language skills are used. At this level, individuals are expected to use the language mechanically and understand the values, attitudes and traditions that underlie its use in real life (Ṭu'aimah, 2004). Furthermore, this culture includes the Arabic culture and the culture of the student, as cross-cultural interaction becomes an integral part of language use (Munir, 2022). This level can only be achieved after learners have mastered the basic and intermediate levels, where complex linguistic skills and deep cultural understanding are holistically integrated.

The next step is to reconstruct receptive Arabic language learning in the ALE study programme by integrating CEFR standards with Thuaimah's framework, contextualised to student and institutional needs as identified in the needs and situation analyses. This reconstruction process involves four key components in setting objectives and learning outcomes: CEFR, Thuaimah's perspective, needs analysis, and situation analysis. The determination of the goals and learning outcomes of each of these courses is based on a combination of the CEFR and Thuaimah's perspective, so that the following matrix appears:

Table 4. Reconstructing Reading Skills

Course Content	Goals and Learning Outcomes		Skills Area
	CEFR	Thuaimah	
Basic Arabic	A1	Low level	Listening & Reading
Advanced Arabic	A2	Low level	Listening & Reading
<i>Mahara istima' li al-mutawasith</i>	B1 dan B2	Intermediate level	Listening
<i>Mahara istima' li al-mutakammil</i>	C1	Top level	Listening
<i>Maharah Qiraah : Al-Kutub Atthurotsiyyah</i>	B1 dan B2	Intermediate level	Reading

Setting Learning Activities and Teaching Materials

Language learning activities are structured activities designed to develop language skills through a communicative and action-oriented approach (Aronsson, 2023). While learning materials are essentially the main component of the curriculum, which is realised in the form of subjects or fields of study that cover specific content and topics (Azhari, 2018). The determination of learning activities and materials in this study is based on indicators and learning activities, considering the results of student needs analysis. Therefore, the learning activities and materials were designed to support the achievement of the learning objectives presented in the table below:

Table 5. Reconstruction Of Learning Activities And Teaching Materials

Course Content	Indicator	Activities Learning	Teaching Materials
Basic & Advanced Arabic	Recognises basic vocabulary and instructions	Listen and read simple daily texts	Greeting dialogue, activity poster, advertisement, description
	Recognising numbers, time and greetings	Number, time, and conversation practice	Dialogue on time, numbers, introductions
	Creating simple sentences	Daily vocabulary listening and reading practice	Vocabulary of home, school, and public places
<i>Mahara istima' li al-mutawasith</i>	Understand grammatical patterns and main ideas	Listening to dialogue/welcome, group discussion	Audio of daily activities, speeches, and discussions
	Analyse the relationship between sentences	Write logical connections from complex dialogues	Standard Arabic dialogue structure
	Respond logically to information	Simulated discussion and oral feedback	Simple academic discussion
<i>Mahara istima' li al-mutakammil</i>	Understand and assess cultural values	Arabic culture discussions and lectures	Arab modern culture audio
	Linking Arabic and local culture	Reflection on cultural value comparison	Arabic culture vs local culture

	Develop creative arguments and responses	Develop and present arguments and simulated dialogues	Social issues, education, and local traditions
	Understand the Arabic grammar	Read a scripted text, identify the structure	Heritage book excerpt
Qira'ah: Al-Kutub Turats	Summarise and analyse the content	Reflection and simulation of interactions based on Turat's texts	Paragraf argumentative form turast
	Relating classical values to the modern context	Reflection & simulation of interaction from Turat's texts	Classical cultural values relevant today
	Understand the content of contemporary texts	Reading and discussion of modern culture articles	Contemporary Arabic culture article
Qira'ah: Al-Kutub Ashriyyah	Analyse and evaluate cultural values	Write reflections and analyse academic paragraphs	Education articles, Arabic technology
	Relate and summarise the content of global texts	Global-local comparison discussion	Arabic articles on global issues and education

Evaluation

Evaluation is an activity regularly carried out by educational institutions to optimise student achievement of the learning objectives that have been formulated (Chalista et al., 2024). Evaluation in this curriculum reconstruction is based on the competency levels and types of evaluation recommended by Thuaimah, as follows:

Table 6. Evaluation Of Receptive Skills

Level	Listening skills	Listening Evaluation	Reading Skills	Reading Evaluation
Low	Basic listening mechanics	Question Answering Test	Basic reading mechanics (recognition)	Cloze Test and Oral Reading Test
Intermediate	Grammatical competence	Sentence Structure Identification Test	Grammatical competence	Sentence Structure Analysis Test

	<i>Fahm al-masmu'</i>	Question Answering Test, Audio Resume,	Fahm al-maqrū' and Criticism	Text Resume and Text Critique Test
	Higher-order thinking	Tes Criticism Audio	Interaction	Error Analysis Test and Problem-Solving Test
Top	Listening Trends	Group Discussion Test	Reading habits and interests	Oral Exam Cultural
	Listening values	Cultural Value Analysis Test	Reading Culture	Value Analysis Test

This curriculum reconstruction involves systematic stages, including the formulation of objectives, selection of content, design of learning activities, and determination of an evaluation model aligned with three key concepts in curriculum development: input, process, and output. This approach emphasises classical humanism in the input, progressivism in the process, and reconstructionism in the production. According to Richards et al. (2023), these three orientations give rise to different curriculum design models: forward design begins with the input, central design focuses on the process, and backwards design starts with the desired output. Therefore, the success of this curriculum reconstruction depends on the consistency of implementation and adherence to appropriate guidelines (Zulfa, 2020).

The findings of curriculum reconstruction with CEFR standards are supported by the research of Kaewkamnerd et al. (2023), who emphasised the importance of needs analysis in CEFR-based curriculum design. CEFR is considered effective in overcoming the problem of overlapping learning materials because it provides structured and measurable competency development. This is also reinforced by the findings of Li et al. (2024), which showed a positive correlation in the acquisition of receptive skills at each student level. In contrast, the study by Alrababa'h et al. (2024), which tested the ability of non-native speaking students using the CEFR standards, found no significant impact attributed to demographic variables. Meanwhile, the integration of Thuaimah's perspective in curriculum construction is in line with the views of Nurmala et al. (2024), who argue that curriculum objectives should consider the specific needs of learners. In addition, a study by Wildatul Muyasiroh et al. (2024), which implemented the treatment of reading difficulties based on Thuaimah's concept, proved to improve students' academic and mental aspects at school.

4. CONCLUSION

The reconstruction of the Arabic language curriculum based on integrating the CEFR international standards and Rusydi Ahmad Thuaimah's concept offers a comprehensive learning framework by combining global and local aspects in a balanced manner. This collaboration allows the curriculum to have a systematic structure of language competence

while being rooted in cognitive, cultural, linguistic, and psychological values by the Islamic context and Indonesian locality. Developing this curriculum goes through systematic stages, including needs analysis, formulation of learning objectives, preparation of teaching activities and materials, and evaluation tailored to the characteristics of STAIMS Yogyakarta institutions. Theoretically, the results of this study contribute to developing an integrative framework-based curriculum design relevant for Arabic language learning in higher education. In addition, this model has the potential to be adopted by other institutions that face similar problems in teaching receptive skills. Nevertheless, this study has limitations as it only focuses on receptive aspects and has not been tested in a real implementation. Therefore, further development that includes productive skills and implementation trials is recommended to measure the effectiveness of the curriculum model comprehensively.

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