



Reforming Arabic Education in Indonesian Madrasahs: A Comparative Review of KMA Decrees No. 183/2019 and No. 347/2022

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ABSTRACT

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This study aims to identify key differences and evaluate the implications of Arabic language curriculum reform in Indonesian madrasahs by comparing two major regulations: KMA No. 183/2019 and KMA No. 347/2022. Employing a qualitative content analysis approach, the research draws primarily on official curriculum documents and supporting policy texts. The findings reveal a paradigm shift from a standardized and prescriptive model under KMA 183/2019—characterized by detailed objectives, content, methodology, and assessment—towards a more flexible, context-sensitive framework introduced in KMA 347/2022, which emphasizes curricular autonomy and localized adaptation in line with the Merdeka Curriculum. While the former simplifies implementation through clear guidance, it limits teacher agency. In contrast, the latter fosters innovation but demands higher pedagogical competence. Key differences identified include a more flexible curriculum structure, increased teacher autonomy, differentiated instruction, and localized content adaptation. This study contributes to the discourse on Arabic education reform by offering critical insights into the challenges and potentials of decentralizing curriculum design. Future research should investigate the practical impact of this shift across various educational levels and regions, focusing on teacher preparedness, infrastructure support, and student learning outcomes to guide more context-responsive curriculum development.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Arabic language curriculum is a structured plan encompassing learning objectives, content, teaching methods, and evaluation strategies designed to develop receptive and productive language skills (Dacholfany et al., 2023). Etymologically, the word curriculum comes from the Arabic root *nahj*, meaning a clear path or method (Anisatin & Asmui, 2023). While definitions of curriculum may vary among scholars, it is generally seen as a systematic guide for achieving educational goals (Ghofur et al., 2019). In Arabic language education, the curriculum emphasizes instructional content and meaningful linguistic experiences that promote listening, speaking, reading, and writing proficiencies. As a dynamic component of education, the curriculum requires continuous updates to keep pace with technological advancements, cultural shifts, and the evolving needs of learners (Adam & Wahdiah, 2023).

The Arabic language curriculum has undergone significant reforms in Indonesia, particularly in madrasahs, transitioning from KMA No. 183 in 2019 to KMA No. 347 in 2022. These changes align with the national Kurikulum Merdeka (Independent Curriculum), aiming to enhance the quality of instruction through more adaptable and contextualized goals and assessments (Azzahra & Muhajir, 2023). However, challenges, such as teacher preparedness, infrastructure, and consistent policy implementation, persist. A comparative study of these two KMAs is essential to understand their strengths and limitations. This can guide future curriculum development and ensure students' Arabic language competencies align better with contemporary educational needs (Mokoagow et al., 2021).

Arabic education in Indonesian madrasahs is vital in developing students' linguistic and religious understanding. As institutions entrusted with disseminating Islamic knowledge, madrasahs utilize Arabic to interpret the Qur'an, Hadith, and classical Islamic texts (Siregar et al., 2024). Despite this importance, Arabic instruction in many madrasahs remains suboptimal due to outdated methods and insufficient pedagogical innovation. Recognizing this, the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs issued KMA No. 183/2019 and KMA No. 347/2022 to revitalize the Arabic curriculum (Erihadiana & Nurdin, 2021). This research aims to assess and compare both policies to better understand their impact on the practice and outcomes of Arabic education in madrasahs.

Despite the goals of these reforms, Arabic instruction in madrasahs continues to face various hurdles (Bahrudin et al., 2021). Many educators still rely on traditional, rote-based methods that do not effectively foster practical communication skills (Hasan, 2020). In an era where digital literacy is essential, this outdated approach limits students' ability to use Arabic in meaningful contexts (Ardiansyah & Muhammad, 2020). The curriculum often prioritizes memorization over functional language use, leaving a gap between students' knowledge and real-world application (Lewicka & Waszau, 2017). This issue highlights the need for updated teaching methods and materials that address students' actual communicative needs and reflect the digital and globalized world they are living in (Ramadhanti Febriani & Bedra, 2023).

KMA No. 183/2019 and KMA No. 347/2022 each offer strategic solutions to these challenges. While KMA 183 emphasizes competency-based instruction focusing on core language skills, KMA 347 is more forward-looking, incorporating global trends, especially in digital integration and learner-centred pedagogy. These policies also stress the importance of continuous teacher development and resource enhancement. Their implementation is intended to modernize Arabic education and prepare students to use it effectively in professional and social settings, making Arabic learning more relevant and goal-oriented.

Several previous studies relevant to this research provide valid comparisons in analyzing the implementation of the Arabic language curriculum based on KMA policies. Hidayatulloh and Mardiyah found that KMA 183/2019 and KMA 165/2014 share similarities in subjects and the 2013 Curriculum principles, with KMA 183 refining Basic Competencies to meet 21st-century educational demands by emphasizing critical and innovative thinking at higher cognitive levels (C4–C6) (Hidayatulloh & Mardiyah, 2022). Aini highlighted similarities in general themes but noted that KMA 183 features additional topics and a more structured grammatical approach (Aini, 2022). Alwi explained that KMA 347/2022, an amendment to KMA 183, enhances Arabic instruction with updated methods, revised materials, digital integration, and holistic assessment (Alwi, 2023). Nurcholis et al. observed that KMA 183 aligns well with CEFR standards, improving Arabic language proficiency for non-native speakers (Nurcholis et al., 2024). Similarly, Tasliman et al. emphasized that the MI curriculum under KMA 183 and 184/2019 is integrative, competency-based, and contextually relevant to Islamic and general education (Tasliman et al., 2024).

This study brings novelty by directly comparing the two Arabic language curriculum policies—KMA No. 183/2019 and KMA No. 347/2022—at the primary (MI), junior secondary (MTs), and senior secondary (MA) levels in Indonesian madrasahs. While several previous studies have discussed Arabic education policy in general, few have conducted a detailed comparative analysis across these three educational levels. This research examines the goals, content, learning methods, and assessment strategies outlined in both regulations to identify their similarities, differences, and practical implications for Arabic language teaching at each level. The study provides fresh perspectives and concrete recommendations for improving Arabic language instruction by offering level-specific insights into implementing both policies. Consequently, this research plays a significant role in informing and shaping future educational policy development in Indonesia, particularly within Islamic education.

The scope of this study focuses on analyzing the implementation of KMA No. 183/2019 and KMA No. 347/2022 at the Madrasah Tsanawiyah and Madrasah Aliyah levels, with an emphasis on Arabic language instruction. It does not cover broader aspects of Islamic education or national educational policy. Furthermore, the study is limited to exploring how these policies affect curriculum structure and teaching methodology without delving into wider social or institutional influences. Data is collected qualitatively through interviews with teachers, administrators, and students and a review of relevant policy documents, providing a grounded understanding of how curriculum changes are perceived and enacted at the grassroots level. To ensure the comprehensiveness of the findings, interviews were conducted

with key informants, and policy documents were reviewed to ground the study in both practical and theoretical perspectives. This methodology allows for a detailed understanding of how curriculum changes are perceived and enacted at the grassroots level, providing valuable insights into the real-world implications of the two curricula.

Therefore, this study seeks to answer the following research question: How do KMA No. 183/2019 and KMA No. 347/2022 differ in shaping Arabic language curriculum implementation in Indonesian madrasahs?

2. METHODS

This study employs a descriptive-comparative qualitative method to analyze and compare two key curriculum policy documents: KMA No. 347/2022 and KMA No. 183/2019. The research identifies the structural, thematic, and pedagogical orientations embedded in these documents, particularly examining curriculum components such as language skills emphasized, instructional design, learning objectives, and their alignment with national education standards. The choice of this method is justified by its suitability for exploring the structural and philosophical shifts between the two policies, which is essential for understanding the development of Arabic language education in Indonesian Madrasahs.

Primary data in this study refers to authoritative textual documents—specifically the two KMA decrees—which serve as the core objects of qualitative content analysis. Expert validation was conducted by interviewing eight sources, including curriculum developers, Arabic language education lecturers, and madrasah teachers, to enrich the interpretation and provide context-based insights.

Data were collected using documentary analysis techniques involving the systematic identification, selection, and categorization of curriculum documents sourced from the official archives of the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Musthafa & Hermawan, 2018). A structured document analysis sheet was used to extract and categorize curriculum documents' data, focusing on learning objectives, content themes, teaching strategies, and assessment criteria.

These documents were analyzed using a pre-determined thematic framework, allowing for structured coding of key elements such as curriculum goals, core materials, and competency standards. The data analysis followed the Miles and Huberman model, which includes three main stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing (Sugiyono, 2014). Curriculum components were extracted, tabulated, and compared to highlight similarities and differences, and conclusions were drawn based on thematic convergence and policy implications. To ensure the credibility and validity of the findings, triangulation was applied by cross-referencing with relevant academic literature, expert opinions, and previous studies related to curriculum analysis.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The reform of Arabic education in Indonesian madrasahs is marked by significant shifts between KMA Decree No. 183 of 2019 and KMA Decree No. 347 of 2022. While KMA 183/2019 emphasized a thematic-integrative approach focusing on spiritual and sociocultural aspects, KMA 347/2022 introduces a new paradigm that prioritizes language skills development and

21st-century competencies. This reform is driven by the need to align Arabic language education with global developments, technological advancements, and the demand for improving the competitiveness of madrasah graduates at both national and international levels.

The primary goal of Arabic language instruction under KMA 183/2019 was to produce students with strong moral character and an understanding of classical religious texts (Farid & Hatami, 2022). In contrast, KMA 347/2022 adds a communicative and contextual dimension, emphasizing students' ability to use Arabic daily actively. This shift reflects a change in educational philosophy—from a normative-transmissive model to a communicative and functional one (Thieme et al., 2022). It influences the learning direction, steering it toward more practical applications and outcomes focused on real-world competencies rather than passive text comprehension.

A key difference between the two decrees is the emphasis on language skills. KMA 183/2019 primarily focused on reading (*qirā'ah*) and writing (*kitābah*), while KMA 347/2022 promotes a balanced development of all four language skills: listening (*istimā'*), speaking (*kalām*), reading, and writing. The structure of learning outcomes in KMA 347/2022 is organized into progressive competency levels, allowing for a more structured and measurable assessment of student language development over time.

Regarding instructional design, KMA 183/2019 tends to rely on traditional, memorization-based, and grammar-focused methods. Conversely, KMA 347/2022 encourages activity-based learning and the application of communicative language teaching (CLT) (Darmawan & Achadi, 2024). Learning materials in the new curriculum have also been updated, incorporating content that reflects students' daily contexts and utilizing digital media to support autonomous learning (Ediyani et al., 2020). This marks a progressive step toward aligning Arabic instruction with the characteristics of the digital-native generation.

KMA 183/2019 defined broad and general competency standards, making it challenging to assess student learning outcomes precisely. In contrast, KMA 347/2022 articulates more detailed and specific competency standards, accompanied by measurable indicators. The assessment model has also shifted—from knowledge-based evaluation to performance- and attitude-based assessment. Evaluations are conducted through written tests and observations, projects, and portfolios that reflect students' holistic achievement of competencies.

KMA 347/2022 demonstrates a more substantial effort to align the Arabic curriculum with Indonesia's National Education Standards, particularly in core and basic competencies consistent with other subjects (Anas et al., 2023). This curriculum also adopts the principle of integration across subjects, positioning the Arabic language not as an isolated discipline but as part of character development, literacy, and numeracy. This synchronization aims to enhance the relevance of Arabic instruction and strengthen interdisciplinary learning in madrasahs.

Despite the innovations in KMA 347/2022, several challenges arise in its practical implementation. Many teachers are unfamiliar with communicative approaches and lack

adequate training in modern teaching methods and media (Roidah & Nafisah, 2024). Furthermore, limited infrastructure in many madrasahs hinders the effective adoption of activity-based learning. Teachers' perspectives on the reform are mixed; some welcome the changes, while others struggle to adapt to the new demands and expectations set by the updated curriculum.

The changes introduced by KMA 347/2022 have significant implications for the quality of Arabic language education in Indonesia. If implemented consistently and supported by ongoing teacher training, the curriculum can enhance students' communicative competence and prepare them to use Arabic actively in various contexts. Future policy development should consider teacher readiness, availability of appropriate learning resources, and flexible assessment systems. Moreover, collaboration between policymakers, educators, and training institutions is crucial for the success of Arabic curriculum reform in madrasahs.

The comparison between KMA No. 183/2019 and KMA No. 347/2022 reveals distinct strengths and weaknesses. KMA No. 183/2019 offers a structured, detailed approach, ensuring consistency across madrasahs with clear guidelines on content and assessment. However, its rigidity may limit adaptability to students' individual needs. In contrast, KMA No. 347/2022 promotes flexibility, allowing schools to tailor content based on student characteristics and needs, fostering creativity and student-centred learning. While this modern approach aligns with 21st-century competencies, it risks inconsistency in implementation and may lack clear guidelines. Both curricula offer valuable frameworks, but their effectiveness depends on each madrasah's specific context and challenges.

Arabic Language Curriculum Based on the Decree of the Minister of Religious Affairs (KMA) No. 183 of 2019

The Arabic language subject is designed to encourage, guide, develop, and nurture students' abilities and foster a positive attitude toward Arabic receptively and productively. Receptive skills refer to the ability to understand spoken language and reading materials. In contrast, productive skills refer to the ability to use the language as a means of communication both orally and in writing. Proficiency in Arabic and a positive attitude toward the language are crucial in helping students understand the primary sources of Islamic teachings, namely the Qur'an and Hadith, and Arabic texts related to Islam (Ardiansyah & Aziz, 2019). Therefore, Arabic holds a significant position in Indonesia's education system.

According to the Decree of the Minister of Religious Affairs (KMA) No. 183 of 2019, Arabic language instruction at the levels of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI), Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs), and Madrasah Aliyah (MA) is designed with three primary objectives. First, it aims to develop students' ability to communicate effectively in Arabic orally and in writing (Roziqin & Istiqomah, 2021). This includes mastery of the four fundamental language skills: listening (*istima'*), speaking (*kalam*), reading (*qira'ah*), and writing (*kitābah*) (Firdaus et al., 2023). Second, the curriculum seeks to raise students' awareness of the significance of Arabic as a foreign language, emphasizing its role as a key tool in accessing and studying Islamic sources such as the Qur'an and Hadith and its function as a medium for international communication.

Third, the instruction intends to foster an understanding of the deep connection between language and culture, broadening students' cultural perspectives. In this context, learners are expected to acquire comprehensive language competence, including grammatical accuracy, discourse understanding, strategic language use, sociolinguistic awareness, and cultural sensitivity.

In summary, KMA 183/2019 offers a clear framework to build students' linguistic competence in Arabic while reinforcing its religious and intercultural functions. For teachers, this objective mandates using Arabic not only as a subject but as a medium for broader Islamic understanding, which requires enhanced pedagogical preparation. It places Arabic as a key to religious and global engagement for students. At the same time, madrasah principals emphasise the need for institutional support in aligning curriculum goals with teaching practices.

The scope of Arabic language materials, based on KMA No. 183 of 2019, consists of themes in the form of oral and written discourse presented through simple expositions or dialogues. These themes include self-identity, school, family, home, hobbies, professions, religious life, and the environment (Karenina & Buana, 2022). This is complemented with communicative functions.

Regarding learning implementation, as stipulated in KMA No. 183 of 2019, the Arabic language subject employs learning models and methods tailored to the characteristics of students and the subject matter. The selection of thematic and/or integrated thematic approaches, scientific approaches, inquiry and discovery processes, project-based learning, and problem-based learning is adapted according to the characteristics, competencies, and educational levels (Ismail et al., 2021). Meanwhile, Arabic learning outcomes must be assessed using authentic and comprehensive evaluation, employing various complementary assessment techniques. The results must reflect the student's listening, speaking, reading, and writing abilities.

The Arabic language curriculum based on KMA No. 183 of 2019 is designed to provide a balanced and comprehensive approach to Arabic language education, aiming to develop receptive and productive student skills. The curriculum aligns with the broader goals of Islamic education in Indonesia by emphasizing the importance of Arabic as a tool for understanding Islamic texts and as a means of international communication (Amer & Al-Rababah, 2020). Moreover, integrating thematic learning and modern pedagogical approaches such as project-based and problem-based learning ensures that students are engaged in a dynamic and contextually relevant learning experience. The focus on authentic and comprehensive assessment methods reflects an effort to capture the actual proficiency of students across the four language skills, ensuring that learning outcomes are theoretical and practically applicable.

Ultimately, the KMA 183/2019 curriculum framework strives to bridge theory and practice, ensuring that Arabic education is intellectually enriching and functionally sound. While ambitious in vision, successful implementation relies heavily on teacher capacity, student motivation, and institutional readiness, demanding collaborative efforts from all

school stakeholders.

Arabic Language Curriculum in Madrasah Based on Decree No. 347 of 2022

The document KMA No. 347 of 2022, which provides guidelines for implementing the Independent Curriculum (Kurikulum Merdeka) in madrasahs, addresses explicitly the Arabic language and Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum (Nur'aini & Al Farisi, 2023). While the document does not expressly list the goals of Arabic language instruction, it emphasizes that Arabic learning in madrasahs (MI, MTs, and MA) focuses on fostering communication competencies using Arabic to study Islamic teachings from authentic sources and preserve religious knowledge. The scope of the Arabic language curriculum in madrasahs consists of both oral and written discourse designed to develop Arabic language competencies (Syakur et al., 2023).

Additionally, the content of the Arabic curriculum is structured around three main objectives. First, it aims to develop students' ability to communicate effectively in spoken and written Arabic, covering four essential language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. This ensures that students can use Arabic to understand religious teachings and engage in everyday interactions within their immediate environment and globally. Second, it introduces linguistic elements through oral and written discourse on social life, health, notable Islamic figures, and significant historical events (Richards, 2017). This content helps strengthen the four language skills while broadening students' understanding of various subjects. Third, it focuses on studying complex speech acts and their social functions, emphasizing the use of language in specific situations within the family, community, and broader contexts, including national and global levels. The curriculum also includes plans for assessment, complete with appropriate instruments and evaluation methods.

In this curriculum, Arabic language instruction is centred on the students, making them the primary beneficiaries of this educational policy. According to KMA No. 347 of 2022, the Arabic language curriculum accommodates students' developmental stages and current achievements, considering their learning needs and reflecting the diversity of their characteristics and development (Alwi, 2023). As a result, the learning process becomes meaningful and enjoyable. Teachers are encouraged to select and use various teaching methods and models, such as inquiry-based learning, project-based learning, problem-based learning, and differentiated instruction, to help students develop 21st-century competencies. Differentiated instruction in Arabic language learning is an approach that tailors teaching to meet each student's individual needs, interests, and abilities, ensuring that all students can learn effectively and reach their full potential in mastering Arabic.

Furthermore, this curriculum emphasizes evaluation as an assessment of learning at the end of the process and as part of the learning process (Soleman et al., 2020). The focus is on assessment as learning and assessment for learning, aiming to help students understand that the process is more important than the outcome. Therefore, the evaluation system in the Arabic language curriculum based on KMA No. 347 of 2022 incorporates diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments. Diagnostic assessment helps identify students'

strengths and weaknesses before or during the learning process, enabling teachers to adjust their teaching strategies and provide necessary support. Formative assessments, conducted during the learning process, monitor student progress and offer feedback that aids in improving their understanding, such as quizzes and homework. On the other hand, summative assessments are conducted at the end of the learning period to evaluate students' achievement based on established standards, such as final exams or significant projects. Together, formative and summative assessments complement each other by improving the learning process and providing an overall picture of students' learning outcomes (Darmawan & Achadi, 2024).

In short, this comprehensive assessment system encourages a continuous feedback loop that benefits all parties: teachers receive real-time insights to improve instruction, students develop metacognitive awareness of their learning, and principals can monitor curriculum implementation through evidence-based evaluations.

The Arabic language curriculum under KMA No. 347 of 2022 reflects a modern, student-centred approach emphasizing communication, cultural understanding, and comprehensive language proficiency (Alwi, 2023). This curriculum adapts to the diverse needs of students and aims to make the learning process more engaging and relevant. Integrating various teaching models, such as project-based and inquiry-based learning, provides a dynamic learning environment that encourages critical thinking and real-world application of language skills. Moreover, the emphasis on differentiated instruction ensures that students with different learning styles and ability levels can succeed in mastering the Arabic language. The innovative approach to assessment, focusing on the learning process rather than just the outcomes, helps shift the focus from mere academic results to meaningful, continuous improvement in students' language abilities. This curriculum represents a significant shift towards a more holistic, adaptable, and future-oriented approach to Arabic language education in Indonesian madrasahs.

Ultimately, KMA 347/2022 marks a significant shift toward responsive, personalized, and process-driven Arabic language education. It challenges teachers to be facilitators of individualized learning, encourages students to become active participants in their educational journey, and requires madrasah leaders to enable professional development and resource provision that support this transformation.

Similarities and Differences in Arabic Language Learning Curricula Based on KMA Number 183 of 2019 and KMA Number 347 of 2022

Goals of Arabic Language Learning

Based on the presentation of the goals of Arabic language learning as outlined in the previous section, we can conclude the similarities and differences in terms of learning objectives as follows:

Table 1. Comparison of Arabic Language Learning Curricula in KMA 183 and 347

No	Aspect	KMA No. 183 of 2019	KMA No. 347 of 2022	Similarities
1	Learning Objectives	Three specific objectives are outlined.	One general objective that combines two purposes.	Both aim to equip students with Arabic language skills to understand Islamic teachings and ensure competency in Arabic communication.
2	Cultural Competence	Includes a specific objective for developing cultural competence.	It does not include an objective for developing cultural competence.	Both curricula aim for cultural understanding through the learning of Arabic.

The comparison of the goals of Arabic language learning between KMA No. 183 of 2019 and KMA No. 347 of 2022 highlights both consistency and refinement in curriculum design. Both curricula share a foundational goal: to develop students' Arabic language skills to understand Islamic teachings and achieve communicative competence. However, KMA No. 183 of 2019 is more detailed, explicitly formulating three distinct learning objectives, including developing cultural competence—an aspect absent in the 2022 curriculum (Alwi, 2023). On the other hand, KMA No. 347 of 2022 simplifies the objectives into one broad formulation, likely in line with the flexible and student-centred approach of the Merdeka Curriculum. This shift reflects a pedagogical trend toward integrated and less prescriptive frameworks, though it may risk overlooking the explicit promotion of intercultural awareness.

Content of Arabic Language Learning

Generally, the goals of Arabic language content in madrasahs (MI, MTs, MA) are the same in KMA No. 183 of 2019 and KMA No. 347 of 2022. The Arabic language material is designed to train students' language skills, both oral and written. The ultimate aim is for students to be proficient in the language, communicate in Arabic, and use Arabic to understand Islamic teachings. This goal aligns with the overall goals of Arabic language learning in madrasahs according to the curriculum. Another similarity between the two curricula is the form of presentation or delivery of content, which includes oral and written discourse in paragraphs or dialogue texts, whether complex or straightforward. However, there is a difference in the scope of Arabic language content. In KMA No. 183 of 2019, the content scope is more detailed and extensive compared to KMA No. 347 of 2022, which presents a more general scope. KMA No. 347 of 2022 allows madrasahs more freedom to select and develop learning materials, including Arabic, based on their specific needs and

characteristics. This aligns with the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum, which provides room for creativity and flexibility in managing education. By simplifying the curriculum, the goal is for students to focus on the most important and relevant material, enhancing learning effectiveness (Zarkasyi et al., 2023).

Additionally, a clear difference in the number of themes for Arabic language subjects between the two curricula is evident. In KMA No. 183 of 2019, the total number of themes for each level and semester is clearly stated: 35 themes for MI, 19 for MTs, and 18 for MA. In contrast, KMA No. 347 of 2022 does not provide specific details about the number of themes for Arabic language learning at each level; it only mentions the general scope of Arabic content. The detailed content for Arabic language learning is outlined separately in the Director General of Islamic Education Regulation No. 3211 of 2022 document on Learning Outcomes for Islamic Education and Arabic Language in the Merdeka Curriculum for madrasahs (Aini, 2022).

To conclude, the specificity found in KMA 183/2019 supports standardized planning and uniform implementation, whereas the flexibility in KMA 347/2022 calls for localized curriculum design. For teachers, this means shifting from textbook dependence to curriculum development; for students, it promotes engagement through relevant themes; for madrasah leaders, it necessitates strengthening policy literacy and coordination between documents.

Both curricula share a common educational objective—to develop students' Arabic language skills, both spoken and written and to enable them to access Islamic teachings through Arabic texts. Another similarity lies in content delivery formats, with both employing oral and written discourse forms such as paragraphs and dialogues. However, the key difference lies in the scope and specificity of content: KMA No. 183/2019 offers a detailed, centralized structure with clearly defined themes, while KMA No. 347/2022 offers a broader, decentralized framework, in line with the Merdeka Curriculum's values of creativity and adaptability.

Furthermore, the absence of detailed themes in KMA No. 347/2022 is addressed through the complementary regulation issued by the Directorate General of Islamic Education, reinforcing the interdependence of policy documents for successful curriculum implementation.

Ultimately, these differences reflect a paradigm shift in curriculum policy—from prescriptive standardization to adaptive autonomy. This demands that teachers act not just as instructors but as curriculum designers, students become co-constructors of knowledge, and madrasah principals take on strategic roles as instructional leaders and policy interpreters.

Methods of Arabic Language Learning

The methods of Arabic language learning in madrasahs, as outlined in KMA No. 347 of 2022 and KMA No. 183 of 2019, share some similarities and differences. Both curricula offer similar learning approaches, including inquiry, project-based, and problem-based learning (Al-Rafi'i et al., 2024). Additionally, both emphasize that the selection of teaching methods

should align with the characteristics of students. However, KMA No. 347 of 2022 emphasizes each madrasah's contextual needs and characteristics.

The key difference between the two curricula lies in the instructional approach. KMA No. 347 of 2022 promotes flexibility through differentiated instruction, allowing teachers to adapt content and methods based on students' needs, interests, readiness, and learning styles. This flexible approach encourages using varied strategies in the classroom, enabling a more personalized learning experience. As a result, students are given opportunities to learn at their own pace and according to their unique profiles, aligning with the Merdeka Curriculum's inclusive vision. Teachers are positioned as curriculum designers, adapting their instructional plans dynamically in response to classroom diversity.

In contrast, KMA No. 183 of 2019 adopts a more structured and standardized approach to Arabic language instruction. It emphasizes the scientific and discovery learning models, which engage students in activities such as observing, questioning, collecting information, analyzing, drawing conclusions, and communicating findings. This method promotes active and meaningful engagement with Arabic, especially in academic and structured settings. The goal is to deepen students' understanding through systematic inquiry and cognitive development. While this method supports comprehensive learning, it may offer less flexibility in addressing diverse learner needs than the newer approach.

While both curricula share foundational teaching models, KMA 347/2022 represents a shift toward adaptive, student-centred instruction, empowering teachers to personalize learning paths and engage students more meaningfully. This change requires teachers to have strong pedagogical design skills, students to take greater ownership of their learning, and madrasah principals to facilitate professional development and ensure institutional readiness for more autonomous curriculum implementation.

Assessment of Arabic Language Learning

The assessment of Arabic language learning in madrasahs, as outlined in KMA No. 347 of 2022 and KMA No. 183 of 2019, shows both similarities and differences. Both curricula generally use similar assessment techniques for Arabic language learning, including seven techniques: observation, performance, project, written tests, oral tests, assignments, and portfolios (Fitria & Baroroh, 2023). Both emphasize objective and fair assessment principles, ensuring that the evaluation of students is conducted transparently and equitably.

However, the key differences lie in the types and approaches to assessment. KMA No. 183 of 2019 employs authentic assessment, which integrates real-world tasks that demonstrate meaningful application of knowledge and skills in Arabic. In contrast, KMA No. 347 of 2022 introduces three types of assessment: diagnostic, formative, and summative, each serving different pedagogical purposes—diagnostic to identify learning readiness, formative to monitor progress, and summative to evaluate outcomes.

There has also been a fundamental shift in the philosophy of assessment. KMA No. 183 of 2019 balances three perspectives: evaluation of learning (evaluating learning outcomes), assessment for learning (to support learning improvement), and assessment as learning

(engaging students in the assessment process) (Ainin, 2021). Teacher feedback plays a central role in this model to enhance student performance and reflection.

In contrast, KMA No. 347 of 2022 emphasizes "assessment as learning" and "assessment for learning", aligning with the Merdeka Curriculum's learner-centred paradigm, which views the learning process as more important than the outcome. This approach promotes student agency, encouraging learners to reflect, assess themselves, and take ownership of their development.

In summary, while both curricula maintain fairness and use diverse assessment techniques, KMA 347/2022 marks a pedagogical shift toward a process-oriented model. For teachers, this requires stronger formative assessment literacy and skills in providing feedback that empowers students. Students are expected to become active participants in their learning journey, while madrasah principals must support a culture of continuous assessment through professional development and flexible evaluation systems. This evolution in assessment reflects broader educational reforms prioritizing lifelong learning competencies and learner autonomy.

The reform of the Arabic language curriculum in Indonesian madrasahs, as reflected in the comparison between KMA No. 183 of 2019 and KMA No. 347 of 2022, demonstrates a significant paradigm shift in education. This reform signifies an administrative change and reflects a more profound transformation in the philosophy, approach, and orientation of Arabic language instruction in madrasah environments. It represents a response to global demands, technological developments, and the need to enhance the competitiveness of madrasah graduates in the 21st century. The following can be seen for a comparison table of the Arabic language learning curriculum based on KMA 183/2019 and KMA 347/2022:

Table 2. Comparison of Arabic Language Curriculum Based on KMA 183/2019 and KMA 347/2022

No	Aspects	KMA 183/2019	KMA 347/2022
1	Learning Objectives	3 objectives: 1) Skill in Arabic; 2) Communication Competence; 3) Cultural Competence Development	1 objective with two parts: 1) Skill in Arabic; 2) Communication Competence
2	Content of Arabic Language Material	Detailed scope of material: 35 themes for MI, 19 for MTs, and 18 for MA	General material scope, freedom for schools to select and develop content
3	Teaching Method	Structured approach: Scientific and Discovery learning	Flexible approach; Differentiated learning
4	Assessment Methods	Authentic assessment: Observations, Performance, Project, Written Test, Oral Test, Assignments, Portfolio	3 types of evaluation: Diagnostic, Summative, Formative

Firstly, in terms of learning objectives, both curricula emphasize Arabic as a primary tool for understanding Islamic teachings and as a means of communication. However, KMA 183/2019 articulates its objectives in three aspects: communicative competence, awareness of the importance of Arabic, and cultural competence. In contrast, KMA 347/2022 simplifies its goals into a single general statement, which, although more flexible, risks downplaying the importance of the cultural dimension in Arabic language teaching. This indicates that KMA 347/2022 leans more toward the integrated and adaptive approach characteristic of the *Merdeka Curriculum* but may risk losing explicit emphasis on intercultural values (Zarkasyi et al., 2023).

Secondly, a striking difference is also evident in the learning content structure. KMA 183/2019 presents a more detailed framework, including specific themes for each educational level. Meanwhile, KMA 347/2022 adopts a more flexible and contextual approach. While this flexibility may encourage innovation and local adaptation, the lack of clarity regarding the number of themes in KMA 347/2022 can lead to overly broad variations in implementation. This calls for the support of supplementary regulations, such as the Director General of Islamic Education Decree No. 3211 of 2022, to ensure consistency in learning outcomes across madrasahs.

Thirdly, there has been a fundamental methodological shift from the normative-transmissive approach in KMA 183/2019 to a communicative-functional approach in KMA 347/2022. The application of differentiated instruction methods in KMA 347/2022, which allows teachers to tailor strategies based on student needs and characteristics, signals a stronger orientation toward more personalized and student-centred learning. This marks a progressive response to learner diversity and demands that teachers be well-prepared to design inclusive learning experiences.

Fourthly, while both curricula utilize similar assessment techniques, KMA 347/2022 emphasizes formative and diagnostic assessments as an integral part of the learning process, highlighting the concept of *assessment as learning*. This reflects a new orientation toward evaluation as a reflection and continuous improvement tool rather than merely measuring outcomes. This approach aligns with 21st-century educational practices that prioritize the development of students' critical and reflective thinking processes.

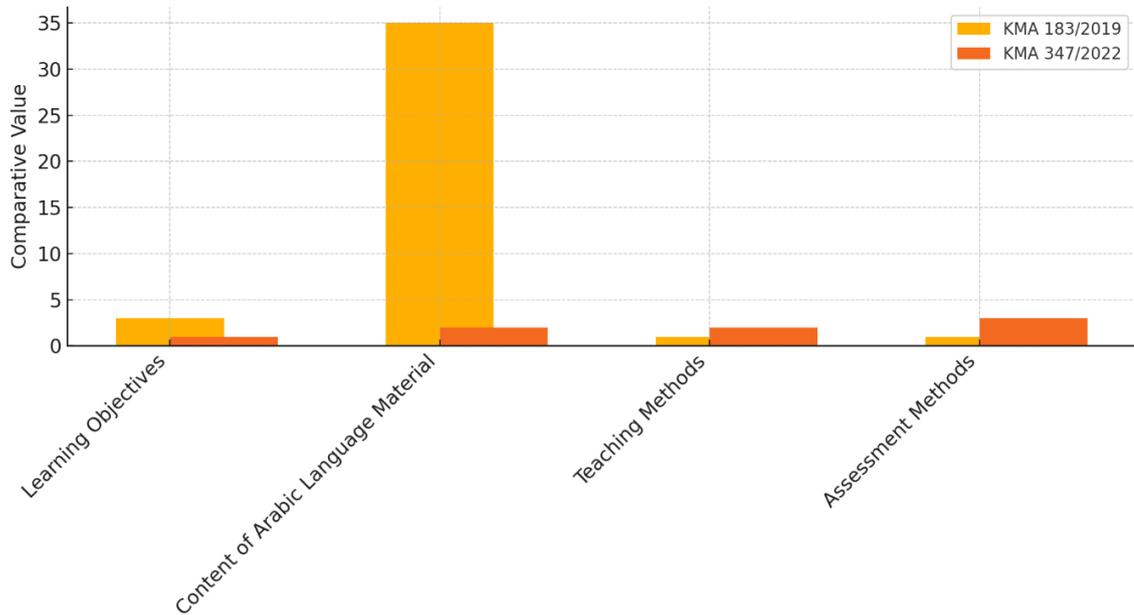


Figure 1. Comparison of Arabic Language Curriculum: KMA 183/2019 vs KMA 347/2022

Nevertheless, the implementation of the new curriculum faces a range of challenges. Many teachers are still unfamiliar with the communicative approach and have not received sufficient training in using digital learning media or active learning methods. Moreover, infrastructure limitations in many madrasahs pose significant obstacles to activity- and technology-based instruction. Disparities in teacher readiness and perception of the reform indicate that successful implementation of the new curriculum depends on sustained systemic support, including comprehensive teacher professional development and adequate facilities and resources.

Overall, the Arabic language curriculum reform through KMA 347/2022 offers a more modern, communicative, and contextual direction for learning Arabic. If supported by comprehensive teacher training policies, the availability of relevant resources, and a flexible and holistic evaluation system, this curriculum holds great potential for enhancing students' communicative competence in Arabic. Therefore, collaboration among policymakers, educators, and training institutions is crucial in ensuring the successful transformation of Arabic language education in Indonesian madrasahs.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis presented, it can be concluded that KMA No. 347 of 2022 offers a more flexible and contextual approach to the Arabic language curriculum, allowing madrasahs and teachers to adapt instruction to the needs of students and local characteristics. As a result, the role of teachers as instructional designers becomes increasingly vital, demanding high professional competence in developing innovative and relevant teaching materials. Meanwhile, KMA No. 183 of 2019 presents a more systematic and standardized curriculum structure, detailing clear objectives, content, methods, and evaluation. This

facilitates implementation at the school level but tends to position teachers more as curriculum implementers rather than developers.

Both curriculum models have their respective strengths, and their success largely depends on the readiness of human resources and the support of sustainable educational policies. Therefore, synergy between policymakers, educational institutions, and educators is essential to ensure the effective and adaptive implementation of the Arabic language curriculum in response to changing times. Therefore, the Arabic language curriculum must be more comprehensive and extensive to equip students with literacy competencies adequately. In terms of content and delivery, it is essential that Arabic language learning is presented in a communicative, expressive, functional, inspirational, and challenging system so that Arabic is perceived as an easy and enjoyable language while still maintaining its connection to the Indonesian cultural context. For future research, it is recommended to explore the effectiveness of curriculum implementation across various levels and regions of madrasahs, including analysis of teacher readiness, the availability of supporting infrastructure, and the impact on student's learning outcomes, to provide a more comprehensive basis for curriculum policy development that addresses real needs in the field

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