

**Application of the CEFR Concept in Arabic Language Learning in  
Madrasah Aliyah eL-Bas (Bina Anak Sholeh Institute) Ciamis**

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**ABSTRACT**

This study aims to determine the CEFR-based assessment carried out in Arabic language learning at MA eL-Bas Ciamis. This research uses qualitative methods with data collection techniques using observation, interviews, and documentation. The results obtained from this study show that CEFR-based assessment in Arabic language learning at MA El-Bas Ciamis is used to determine students' Arabic proficiency and makes teachers simple in carrying out the assessment process for students. Teachers are facilitated in evaluating Arabic learning at the end of education.

Keywords: Arabic Assessment, CEFR, Madrasah Aliyah

**ABSTRAK**

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui penilaian berbasis CEFR yang dilakukan dalam pembelajaran bahasa Arab di MA eL-Bas Ciamis. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode penelitian kualitatif dengan teknik pengumpulan data menggunakan observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi. Adapun hasil yang diperoleh dari penelitian ini adalah bahwa penilaian berbasis CEFR dalam pembelajaran bahasa Arab di MA El-Bas Ciamis digunakan untuk mengetahui kemahiran bahasa Arab siswa, dan membuat guru menjadi sederhana dalam melakukan proses penilaian terhadap siswa, serta guru dipermudah dalam mengevaluasi pembelajaran bahasa Arab di akhir pembelajaran.

Kata Kunci: Penilaian Bahasa Arab, CEFR, Madrasah Aliyah

**Introduction**

The importance of educators' ability is to create and develop teaching materials included as pedagogic competencies as stated in Regulation of the Minister of National Education No. 16 of 2008 concerning academic quality standards and teacher competencies. The existing deeds show that Arabic teaching materials in the form of books or modules issued by the government are still very difficult to apply in schools for teachers and students. The difficulty is reviewed from the level of material

that is complicated and difficult, even if the material is not on the level of language development, thinking, emotions, and psychology of students, the material is too broad, etc (Nurdianto & Ismail, 2020).

English, as an international language and the most widely spoken language in the world, has inspired other languages. One of which is Arabic for foreign speakers; it is known from his famous Arabic book, namely: Standard Arabic An Elementary-Intermediate Course. This shows that English has been successful in its language learning. So many other countries want to adopt a standard system of English learning to be applied to their language learning for foreign speakers. The standard English learning system is the Common European Framework of Reference for language (CEFR) created by the European teacher council in the 1990s.

In general, the CEFR is designed to be applied to any language so all languages can use this frame of reference. The country that has adopted this standardization framework include France, Germany, Italy, Spain, and others. More than 40 countries of the world use the terms of reference that have been created by this European council. So it is not surprising that Arabic learning in Europe uses the CEFR framework as evidenced by the publication of the book Standard Arabic An Elementary-Intermediate Course by Eckehard Schulz, et al. Even the concept of CEFR is also used in teaching Indonesian for Foreign Speakers (BIPA) (Kurniasih, 2021). This shows that the CEFR can be used in the teaching of any language, including Arabic. This is because the CEFR is language-neutral based, so this system can be applied in the learning of various foreign languages.

There are many web-based online learning designed using CEFR such as [www.academicourses.co.id](http://www.academicourses.co.id), [modern-standard-Arabic ic.net](http://modern-standard-Arabic.ic.net), and [Arabic.seu.edu.sa](http://Arabic.seu.edu.sa). In addition, this CEFR has also been translated into Arabic under the title *al-Itthor al-marja'i al-aurubi al-amm lilughotin*. CEFR as a language standard in Europe gives new hope to Arabic language learners in Indonesia (Ridlo, 2022). As the diversity of English incorporated by the CEFR standardization was born, toefl, TOEC, and IELTS were born as official international standards.

This study aims to determine the use of CEFR-based Arabic learning teaching materials in Madrasah Aliyah eL-Bas (Bina Anak Sholeh Institute) Ciamis. The selection of the research site was based on several reasons including Madrasah Aliyah

eL-Bas (Sholeh Child Development Institute) Ciamis, which is a Madrasah that teaches Arabic at an entry level. This can bridge the application of CEFR B1 level to learners' Arabic language learning. The teaching materials used by Madrasah Aliyah eL-Bas (Bina Anak Sholeh Institute) Ciamis are the Book of Tamyiz, the KMA 183 Arabic package book, the *Nahwu Wadhih* book, the *Jurumiyah* book, the *Amtsilah Tashrifiyah* book, to make it easier for students to learn and improve understanding of Arabic. Based on the description above, the authors conducted a study to assess the extent of learners' abilities after learning to use *Madrasah Aliyah*-level CEFR-based Arabic teaching materials to improve Arabic language skills.

### **Research Methods**

This research uses qualitative descriptive methods. The qualitative descriptive method is a method used to describe data in the form of words instead of numbers. According to (Sugiyono, 2018) qualitative method is method that try to explain objects as they are. Data collection techniques in this study are observation, interview and documentation. Observations were made at Madrasah Aliyah eL-Bas (Bina Anak Sholeh Institute) Ciamis. Research data analysis techniques use interactive models that include, data reduction, data presentation, and data verification (Miles & Huberman, 2009).

### **Results and Discussion**

#### **CEFR-Based Assessment in Arabic Language Learning**

The Common European Framework of Reference for Language is a general framework used to measure the ability of foreigners to speak English in Europe. This framework was created by the European Assembly, formulating, and laying the foundation of competence and curriculum up to its examinations. There are six levels from beginner to advanced; these six levels are divided into three main ability categories, namely beginner, intermediate, and advanced. The lowest level is A1, and the highest level is C2. The entry level is composed of A1 and A2, the intermediate level is composed of B1 and B2, and the advanced level is composed of C1 and C2. The European-tested CEFR for English for foreigners can be applied in other languages.

The CEFR-level assessment in Arabic language learning began around 2010. In Saudi Arabia, through the Arabic Language Education institute for non-Arab speakers (*Ma'had Ta'lim Al-Lughah Al-Arabiyyah Li Ghairi Al-Nathiqin Biha*) under Ummul Qura

Makkah University has implemented the CEFR in his academic transactions. The Saudi Electronic University of Arabia, in the online Arabic language proficiency exam, has also implemented this. Meanwhile, countries in the Middle East have not been seen implementing the CEFR in Arabic language learning for non-Arabic speakers. In CEFR theory-based Arabic language learning, it is necessary to maintain the synchronization of various horizontal basic competencies with four Arabic language skills. In addition, vertical synchronization with other competencies so that there is a balance at each level (Rohman & Rosyadi, 2021).

From the competence of achievement of each level translated to the skills of Arabic and the competence of knowledge of Arabic, each level has its own explanation. Like the *maharah istima'* (listening) competency standards for levels A1 and A2 to C2, so do other skills. Likewise, with the theme of the discussion of each level. Meanwhile, the Arabic proficiency test can be done after each learning at each level.

This is done to find out that students who do not pass the exam can get guidance for the success of the learning process. Ability tests include two kinds; written exams and oral exams, both theoretical and practical. The ability to communicate becomes important in his assessment. Vocabulary enrichment and variations in sentence redaction arrangements are important to give judgments (Pratama, Bin Abdul Hakim, & Setiadi, 2021).

In terms of evaluation, the CEFR aims to fully measure a person's ability to speak. One of them is to ensure that the test results are in accordance with the learner's real language skills. One of the advantages of this framework is that it can measure the extent to which students learn languages and can also determine at what level students learn languages. So that in terms of learning materials, this framework is able to adapt the teaching material to the level of the learner.

The CEFR provides a description of proficiency levels that allow learners' progress to be measured at each level. In addition, according to fauziah, the foreign language learning system based on the CEFR is different from the traditional foreign language learning system in several ways. First, CEFR-based foreign language teaching uses a communicative competency model, so that language teaching focuses on communicative activities involving contexts and situations. Second, CEFR-based

foreign language learning aims to be able to communicate in everyday situations in countries that use the target language. Third, the foreign language learning syllabus referring to the CEFR emphasizes the functioning of the language and other common aspects of the language, such as grammar and vocabulary necessary in everyday communication.

More specifically, the CEFR brings some basic principles that must be carried out in language learning. These principles are language activities, language processes, text, domains, language learning strategies, and linguistic tasks. Through such a principle of language learning, CEFR has an important function, namely as a tool to measure the level of ability of foreign language learners, to make the foreign language learning system more transparent at the international level, and for foreign language learning in multilingual societies. To carry out this function, the CEFR divides the abilities of foreign language learners into three major levels, namely A, B, and C. Then each of these levels is divided into A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, and C2.

#### **CEFR-Based Arabic Assessment in MA El-Bas Ciamis**

Indonesian society with its various dialect characteristics has more or less influenced Arabic learning both in terms of phonology (*ashwat*), vocabulary (*mufrodat*), writing (*kitabah*), syntax (*nahwu*), morphology (*sharf*), and semantics (*balaghah*). These six elements are part of Arabic in front of other foreign languages. It is clearer that this problem goes back to the learner of Arabic when he encounters the six elements above feeling difficulties. Problems of Arabic learning are elements that hinder the implementation of successful Arabic learning; these problems include Linguistic Problems, namely Phonetic Problems/Sound Systems, Vocabulary, Writing, Morphology (*Sorof*), Syntax (*Nahwu*), Semantics (*Balagah*).

Non-Linguistic problems, including the elements of teachers/educators, students, teaching materials, and media/infrastructure, as well as sociocultural differences between Indonesia and Arabia, certainly have different social conditions that are problems in learning Arabic. The factor that influences the level of difficulty of learning Arabic is not only returning to Arabic itself, but other factors are greater in dominance such as factors; low interest in learning Arabic, no background in Arabic, unsupportive classroom environment, material/curriculum used, difficulty understanding Arabic material, the class environment is not conducive, the

impression of Arabic is difficult to learn and falls into the authority of Arabic courses with other courses.

Based on the results of an interview with an Arabic teacher at MA El-Bas Ciamis, through the interview, the following data were obtained (Wawancara Misbahuddin, 2022).

- a. Arabic language assessment before using CEFR theory was less effective and innovative especially in the creation of assessment instruments.
- b. After using the CEFR theory in the assessment of Arabic language learning, it becomes easier for teachers to find out the level or level of Arabic language proficiency.
- c. The CEFR theory in the assessment of Arabic language learning has become easier and simpler.

The results of the interview showed that the Common European Framework of Reference for Language (CEFR) pays great attention to the condition of its students. The CEFR provides a description of proficiency levels that allow learners' progress to be measured at each level. In addition, the foreign language learning system based on the CEFR differs from the traditional foreign language learning system in several ways. First, CEFR-based foreign language teaching uses a communicative competency model, so that language teaching focuses on communicative activities involving contexts and situations. Second, CEFR-based foreign language learning aims to be able to communicate in everyday situations in countries that use the target language. Third, the foreign language learning syllabus referring to the CEFR emphasizes the functioning of the language and other common aspects of the language, such as grammar and vocabulary necessary in everyday communication.

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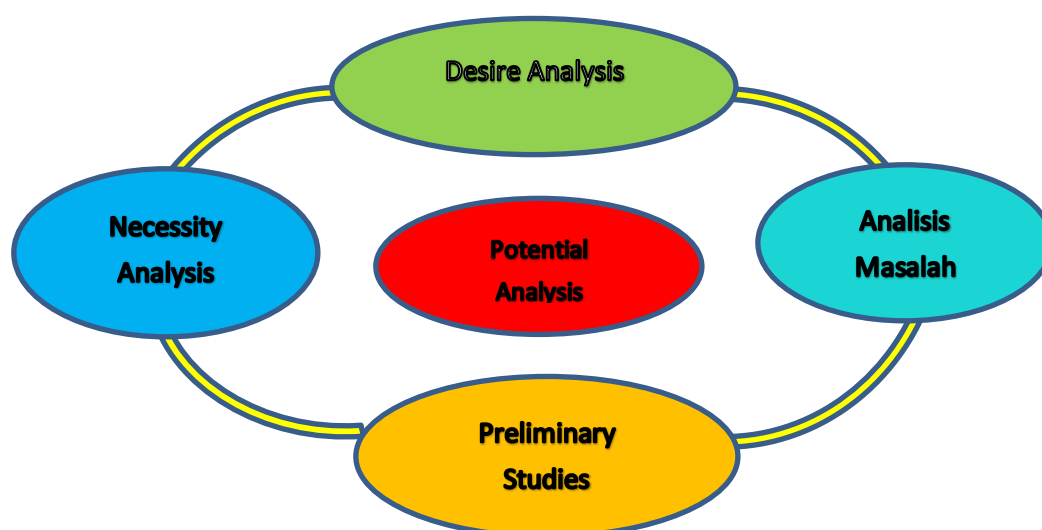
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### Minimum Concepts and Conditions in the Application of the CEFR

Adopted from Borg & Gall the first step to implement CEFR-based Arabic language learning in schools is with preliminary studies in order to obtain preliminary data that is in accordance with the conditions in the field. According to Lilianan Muliastuti There are four analyses to conduct preliminary studies, namely desire analysis, necessity analysis, problem analysis, and potential analysis (Riyadi Hs, 2020).

- a. Desire analysis is a goal that will be achieved after learning Arabic. There are three groups that must be identified in the analysis of desires, namely students as objects, teachers as implementers, and managers/governments as policy givers and facilitators in an institution, so that desire analysis will be formed integratively between students, teachers, and managers.
- b. The analysis of necessity in this case is by analyzing the CEFR itself in order to find a match between the existing theory and the facts in the field.
- c. Analysis of problems in Arabic learning internally and externally.
- d. Analysis of CEFR-based Arabic learning opportunities in di era 4.0. This is done to make it easier for stakeholders to make the right decisions in its implementation so as to minimize errors that will occur.

Figure 1. Preliminary Studies



CEFR-based Arabic language learning can be designed after preliminary studies, which will be initially output as a CEFR-based curriculum. The curriculum, as a set of plans and arrangements regarding all the dynamics of Arabic language learning, will be the initial foundation for making syllabuses and teaching materials based on the CEFR. After the creation of the syllabus and teaching materials, teachers can implement CEFR-based Arabic language learning by determining methods and media that are in accordance with student conditions. The following is a scheme for the design of the CEFR ar language learning model. The implementation of CEFR-based Arabic language learning is not as easy as turning the hand, but it requires very persistent effort and struggle (Bin Abdul Hakim, Setiadi, Tajuddin, & Yani, 2021).

Therefore, the existence of a team of CEFR-based Arabic language learning designers is needed so that it must involve many experts in the field of Arabic language education for non-Arabic speakers, experts in educational evaluation, insight and culture of Arabia and the archipelago, Islamic treasures, psychology experts, cultural experts, *nahwu-sharf* and *balaghah* experts, experts in the field of Arabic language proficiency development and other experts in the field of Arabic. In CEFR-based Arabic language learning is new and rare in Indonesia. Research on the CEFR in Arabic at the international level is still dominated by countries in the Middle East in small numbers. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has implemented in some still limited universities, the Saudi Electronic University and in a national test institute called Qiyas.

The university has published an online Arabic program that can be accessed by students from various countries around the world. The implementation of the CEFR program in Arabic language teaching requires several things that are the minimum requirements. The urgent need to carry out CEFR-based Arabic language learning in Indonesia starts from the following: The availability of a CEFR-based Arabic learning curriculum with insights into Indonesian culture. This is because it is adapted to the place of the learner, Arabic as the language of instruction for learning, as well as an object. So that Arabic language learners from Indonesia are able to become Indonesian ambassadors both in Middle Eastern countries and the



international world, explaining the beauty of Indonesian panoramas and their content using Arabic.

The CEFR has been used in English since its inception, so it is important to translate it into Arabic by keeping the meaning of the substance of the content conveyed intact and understandable. The substance of the CEFR content includes the basic competencies that every learner must have at every level. Translating Arabic proficiency competencies at each level and how they are achieved is important to understand. Teaching staff's understanding of the CEFR. It is important for Arabic teachers to receive training and workshops on teaching Arabic with the CEFR. An understanding of the CEFR of educators' basic capital before transforming material to learners.

The difference between CEFR and other methods such as ACTFL is understood holistically, not partially. Efforts to carry out activities to get a complete understanding of the CEFR can be achieved with Forum Group Discussions (FGD), mini-seminars, international conferences of CEFR in Arabic, and research related to the Arabic CEFR. Availability of material. This step can be achieved after the CEFR Arabic learning curriculum has been provided. Of course, in accordance with the CEFR Arabic curriculum, it does not take teaching materials that are compiled and taught by methods other than the CEFR. If it happens, it is difficult to evaluate the process of learning activities to the test of learning outcomes. At this stage, the material is systematically arranged and integrated with each other. That is, not learning listening skills is separate from other skills but rather integrated into a whole. The grammatical theory is not studied separately in a separate book but rather becomes part of the learning series in each learning objective.

The completeness of learning media makes CEFR a modern foreign language learning. Thus it is not appropriate to learn CEFR Arabic in a conventional way centred on educators, whereas its students become listeners and passive. All learning materials from educators, starting from the opening, delivering the material and closing, do not provide opportunities for learners to provide feedback such as questions, confirmation of the material presented and practice. In addition, conventional learning that distances from technology makes millennial generation students also get bored quickly and leave Arabic. Involve experts in learning Arabic

for non-Arabs. Language teaching for Arabic and non-Arabic speakers are different in many ways, so special methods are needed that are assessed according to the conditions in the archipelago.

### **CEFR Opportunities and Challenges in Arabic Language Learning**

In English, CEFR-based learning is not new because this implementation has been for a long time, in contrast to Arabic. Middle Eastern countries that make Arabic an official means of communication in the country do not yet have an agreement on measuring Arabic language skills for non-Arabic speakers, let alone other countries such as Indonesia. However, it is not an obstacle for Arabic language learners in Indonesia, especially Muslims, to develop existing theories to be adapted to the conditions of their culture and society. There are several opportunities and challenges that must be considered if CEFR-based Arabic learning is used in Indonesia. Here's the challenge:

- a. International standard curriculum. The Common European Framework of Reference for Language (CEFR) is a foreign language learning framework that can be used in several languages other than English that are used internationally. As the concept of learning foreign languages between one another has similarities in addition to differences. So his acceptance side is greater because he is not a method that applies to one language only.
- b. Avoid repetition of the material when learning Arabic. this is because the CEFR is arranged based on 6 levels with integrated learning materials between competencies in Arabic. The learner at a certain level does not repeat what has been learned at the level below him and the material is not learned at his upper level.
- c. International certificates. As the CEFR is an international framework, the certificates provided are also of international standard which is very possible to be used in educational or work institutions that require an international standard Arabic proficiency certificate.
- d. The learning material is adjusted to the level of the learner. Therefore, Arabic language skills are the standard for determining the level, not the age of the student. It could be that new students in college have reached the C1 level

because they have the Arabic language skills obtained before entering university.

- e. Communicative and applicative. Learning Arabic is not boring because it requires students to apply the theories they get. CEFR Arabic hones the skills of its learners in many exercises according to the learning objectives of each level taken. How to apply the theory of *nahwu* in communication skills either oral through speaking (*maharah kalam*) or writing through writing (*maharah kitabah*) articles from simple to advanced level.
- f. Minimizing disagreements in arabic rule theory. Like learning the ability to understand the rule of *nahwu*, participants get a theory that the majority of Arab linguists agree on by not displaying differences and debates of their fellow opinions.
- g. Non-formal Arabic language course institutions can use the CEFR framework in their Arabic learning without having to create their own curriculum and not necessarily be quality tested.
- h. Religious base schools in Indonesia can easily teach Arabic with this method with level limits such as for students of *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah* (MI) only up to level A1, *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* up to level A2 and *Madrasah Aliyah* up to level B1. By itself, when entering the Islamic Religious College (PTAI), students continue to learn Arabic at the B2 level and above. Meanwhile, the challenges that must be faced by applying the Arabic CEFR in Indonesia are as follows:
  - a. Provision of CEFR-based international standard curriculum. In this case, the role of the government becomes important with the support of several parties, both formal educational institutions such as Islamic universities in Indonesia and professional Arabic teaching organizations (IMLA), the Association of Arabic Language Education Study Programs (PPPBA) and the Association of Arabic Language and Literature Study Programs (PPBSA).
  - b. Presenting material as an integrated and applicable teaching material. Theory-based Arabic learning and dissent in Arabic rules gives the impression that learning Arabic is difficult and convoluted. The

selection of language and vocabulary that is appropriate for Indonesians is an important thing to pay attention to.

- c. Provision of teaching resources that are familiar with the Arabic CEFR. This is to adjust between teaching materials to avoid incompatibility between the two. Teachers are also required to teach the teaching material instead of including new things outside the teaching material so that it becomes overlapping and repetition of the material and even complicates the participants' understanding of the material being studied.
- d. The implementation of training for both teachers and students about the characteristics of CEFR in Arabic language learning, thus providing an idea that learning Arabic is easy.
- e. Build national and international networks. This CEFR-based learning and test provider institution establishes national and international cooperation that the holder of this CEFR certificate has Arabic language skills as written in the certificate and can be accounted for.
- f. Support from the wider community in Indonesia by applying the CEFR-based Arabic learning system in formal and non-formal educational institutions.
- g. The lack of Arabic language course institutions in Indonesia, which until now is still dominated by English-language courses. In Indonesia, there are no less alumni from universities in the Middle East who can be involved in educational institutions. The existence of alumni organizations has not been optimal in preparing prospective new students in Arabic language skills before going to study in the Middle East.
- h. The role of educational institutions such as madarasah and PTAI is also still minimal in using an integrated Arabic curriculum that can be used by various groups. This avoids creating a special curriculum at a certain level and making other curricula at different levels by different parties.

Arabic language learning in Indonesia needs to adapt to conditions that are different from 50 years ago during the early days of independence. The

differences can be summarized in the frame of the Arabic curriculum that is accepted by the international world.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the results of research and discussion, it can be concluded that the Arabic language assessment before using the CEFR theory is less effective and innovative, especially in making assessment instruments. After using the CEFR theory in the assessment of Arabic language learning, it becomes easier for teachers to find out the level or level of Arabic language proficiency. The CEFR theory in the assessment of Arabic language learning has become easier and simpler.

The Common European Framework of Reference for Language (CEFR) is integrated and systematized in 6 levels, the lowest A1 and the highest C2 with the order A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, and C2. The CEFR also prepares pre-A1 Arabic learning. The learning of each level is not based on age but Arabic language skills. The Indonesian government in this case, neither the Ministry of Religion nor the Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education has an integrated Arabic curriculum from beginning to end like English. Therefore, it is also necessary to be serious about MA El-Bas Ciamis providing innovations in the formulation of assessment of Arab language learning, one of which is by using the CEFR theory.

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