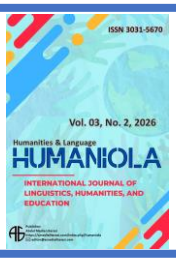
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The Effectiveness of CEFR-Aligned Arabic Language Instruction in Islamic Economics Education: Motivational and Achievement Outcomes

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the effectiveness of CEFR-aligned Arabic language instruction in Islamic economics education, focusing on its impact on student motivation and academic achievement. While Arabic is essential for understanding Islamic economic terminology derived from the Qur'an and Hadith, traditional Arabic instruction in Indonesian Islamic economics programs often remains disconnected from disciplinary content. Using a descriptive-analytical method with a sample of 80 students from Universitas Padjadjaran, this study employed pre-test and post-test assessments, motivation questionnaires, and classroom observations. The findings reveal that CEFR-aligned instruction significantly improves both motivation (from 65% to 86% engagement) and learning outcomes (mean score increase from 62 to 81). Students demonstrated enhanced communicative competence in Arabic terminology relevant to Islamic finance, halal certification, and supply chain governance. The study recommends the systematic adoption of CEFR standards in Arabic for Specific Purposes (ASP) curricula and the development of specialized instructional materials for Islamic economics contexts. Ultimately, this research provides an evidence-based pedagogical blueprint for higher education institutions to effectively bridge the gap between theoretical linguistic instruction and the pragmatic demands of the global halal industry.

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1. Introduction

The global Islamic economy has experienced remarkable growth, with the halal market projected to exceed USD 3 trillion by 2026 (DinarStandard, 2024). This expansion has created an urgent need for professionals who possess both Islamic economic knowledge and Arabic language competence. Arabic, as the language of the Qur'an and Hadith, serves as the primary source of Islamic economic terminology. Key concepts such as halal, haram, riba, mudharabah, sukuk, and tayyib originate from Arabic and carry nuanced meanings that cannot be fully captured through translation alone (Abdul Rahman, 2021; Khodjakulova, 2025; Muis, 2020).

Despite this linguistic imperative, Arabic instruction in Indonesian Islamic economics programs has historically faced significant challenges. Traditional approaches often treat Arabic as a separate subject, disconnected from the disciplinary content of

Islamic economics. Students learn vocabulary and grammar in isolation, without developing the communicative competence needed to engage with Arabic texts in their field of study. This disconnection results in low motivation and limited achievement in Arabic language learning (Hassan & Kamaruddin, 2022).

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) offers a potential solution to these challenges. As an internationally recognized standard for describing language proficiency, the CEFR provides a structured approach to curriculum design, assessment, and learner progression (Council of Europe, 2001). However, the adoption of CEFR standards in Arabic for Specific Purposes (ASP), particularly in the context of Islamic economics, remains underexplored.

Previous studies have examined various aspects of Arabic language education in Indonesia. Mursalin et al. (2023) investigated the integration of Islamic concepts in language teaching, while Taulia et al. (2024, 2025) analyzed communicative competence in specific domains. However, no study has systematically examined the effectiveness of CEFR-aligned Arabic instruction specifically designed for Islamic economics education.

This study addresses this gap by investigating the following research questions:

1. To what extent does CEFR-aligned Arabic instruction improve student motivation in Islamic economics programs?
2. How does CEFR-aligned Arabic instruction affect student learning outcomes?
3. What are the challenges and opportunities in implementing CEFR standards in Arabic for Islamic economics education?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Arabic Language in Islamic Economics

Arabic occupies a unique position in Islamic economics as both a religious language and a technical language. The Qur'an and Hadith, which provide the foundational texts for Islamic economic principles, are written in Arabic. Consequently, a thorough understanding of Islamic economics requires direct engagement with Arabic sources (Abdul Rahman, 2021). Translation, while useful, inevitably involves some loss of meaning due to the semantic richness of Arabic terms. For example, the term tayyib encompasses notions of purity, wholesomeness, ethical sourcing, and environmental sustainability—meanings that are difficult to capture in a single English equivalent (Hassan & Kamaruddin, 2022).

2.2 CEFR Framework in Language Education

The CEFR provides a comprehensive framework for language teaching, learning, and assessment. It describes language proficiency across six levels (A1 to C2) and emphasizes communicative competence, including linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic dimensions (Council of Europe, 2001). The CEFR's action-oriented approach focuses on what learners can do with the language rather than what they know about it.

In the context of Arabic language education, the CEFR has been increasingly adopted in various countries. Studies have shown that CEFR-aligned instruction improves learner engagement and outcomes (Kasper & Rose, 2002). However, its application to Arabic for Specific Purposes, particularly in Islamic economics, remains limited.

2.3 Motivation and Achievement in Language Learning

Motivation is a critical factor in second language acquisition. Gardner's (1985) socio-educational model distinguishes between integrative motivation (interest in the target language community) and instrumental motivation (practical benefits of language learning). In the context of Islamic economics education, students may be motivated by both integrative factors (connection to Islamic heritage) and instrumental factors (career opportunities in the halal industry).

Previous research has demonstrated a strong correlation between motivation and language achievement (Kasper & Rose, 2002). When learners perceive the relevance of language instruction to their goals, they are more likely to invest effort and achieve better outcomes. This suggests that CEFR-aligned instruction, which emphasizes real-world communicative tasks, may enhance both motivation and achievement.

2.4 Previous Studies on Arabic Language Instruction in Indonesia

Several studies have examined Arabic language education in Indonesian Islamic higher education institutions. Mursalin et al. (2023) found that integrating Islamic concepts into Arabic instruction improved student engagement. Taulia et al. (2024, 2025) demonstrated the importance of communicative competence in professional contexts. Rahmawati and Al-Attas (2023) identified linguistic challenges in halal certification processes.

While the aforementioned studies have successfully highlighted the importance of integrating Islamic concepts into language learning and the necessity of communicative competence in specific sectors, they predominantly treat Arabic instruction as a generic pedagogical endeavor. There remains a noticeable dearth of empirical research that operationalizes an internationally standardized framework, such as the CEFR, specifically tailored to the lexical and pragmatic complexities of Islamic economics. Therefore, this study intervenes by providing a structured, CEFR-aligned instructional model to bridge the persistent dichotomy between abstract linguistic mastery and practical disciplinary application.

3. Theoretical Framework

This study adopts an integrated theoretical framework combining CEFR-based communicative competence, Gardner's socio-educational model of motivation, and Krashen's input hypothesis.

3.1 CEFR and Communicative Competence

The CEFR framework emphasizes communicative competence across three dimensions: linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic. In the context of Arabic for Islamic economics, linguistic competence involves mastery of Arabic terminology and structures; sociolinguistic competence involves understanding cultural and religious norms; and pragmatic competence involves using Arabic appropriately in professional contexts (Fatima El Zahraa 2024) (Suaibah, Murtadho, and Ulum 2026) (Rohman and Maslamah 2024) (Martunis et al. 2025).

3.2 Motivation Theory

Gardner's (1985) socio-educational model identifies two types of motivation: integrative and instrumental. In Islamic economics education, students exhibit both

types: integrative motivation through connection to Islamic heritage, and instrumental motivation through career prospects in the halal industry and Islamic finance.

3.3 Input Hypothesis

Krashen's (1985) input hypothesis suggests that language acquisition occurs when learners receive comprehensible input slightly above their current level (i+1). CEFR-aligned instruction provides a structured progression of input that is both challenging and comprehensible.

4. Methodology

4.1 Research Design

This study employed a descriptive-analytical methodology with a quasi-experimental pre-test/post-test design. The research was conducted at Universitas Padjadjaran, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, between January and April 2026.

4.2 Participants

Participants consisted of 80 undergraduate students enrolled in the Arabic for Islamic Economics program. Students were in their second and third years of study and had completed at least one semester of Arabic instruction. All participants were native Indonesian speakers with no prior formal education in Arabic.

Participation in this study was entirely voluntary. Prior to data collection, all participants were informed about the research objectives and provided written informed consent. To ensure anonymity and confidentiality, all personal identifying information was removed, and the data were strictly aggregated for analytical purposes in compliance with institutional ethical guidelines.

4.3 Instrument

Three instruments were used:

- Achievement test: Pre-test and post-test consisting of 40 multiple-choice and short-answer questions covering Arabic terminology, reading comprehension, and communicative tasks related to Islamic economics.
- Motivation questionnaire: A 25-item Likert-scale questionnaire adapted from Gardner's (1985) Attitude/Motivation Test Battery, measuring integrative motivation, instrumental motivation, and learning anxiety.
- Observation protocol: Classroom observations documenting student engagement, participation, and interaction patterns.

Prior to data collection, all instruments were subjected to validity and reliability testing. Content validity for the achievement test was established through expert judgment involving two Arabic language specialists and one Islamic economics scholar to ensure the contextual relevance of the terminology. Meanwhile, the reliability of the motivation questionnaire was measured using Cronbach's Alpha. The results yielded a coefficient of 0.85 for integrative motivation and 0.82 for instrumental motivation, indicating a high level of internal consistency and reliability for the scales used.

4.4 Instructional Design

The CEFR-aligned instruction consisted of 16 sessions (90 minutes each), covering levels A1 to B1. Key features included:

- Communicative tasks focused on Islamic economics contexts

- Authentic materials from Islamic finance documents and halal certification standards
- Task-based activities requiring practical language use
- Formative assessment aligned with CEFR can-do statements

4.5 Data Collection Procedures

Data were collected in three phases:

1. Pre-test and pre-motivation questionnaire (Week 1)
2. Instructional intervention (Weeks 2–15)
3. Post-test and post-motivation questionnaire (Week 16)

4.6 Data Analysis

Quantitative data, encompassing pre-test and post-test achievement scores as well as motivation questionnaire responses, were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics. Prior to conducting the paired sample t-tests, a Shapiro-Wilk test was administered to confirm the normal distribution of the data, ensuring the statistical validity of the inferences made. Furthermore, qualitative data derived from classroom observations were analyzed using a thematic analysis framework. This process involved familiarization with the observation notes, systematic data coding, and theme generation to capture the nuances of student engagement, interactive patterns, and contextual language use.

5. Results

5.1 Motivation Outcomes

The motivation questionnaire results revealed a significant increase in student motivation following the CEFR-aligned instruction.

Table 1. Pre- and Post-Motivation Scores (n = 80)

Dimension	Pre-Mean	Post-Mean	Change	t-value	p-value
Integrative Motivation	3.2	4.1	+0.9	6.73	< .01
Instrumental Motivation	3.8	4.5	+0.7	5.12	< .01
Learning Anxiety	3.5	2.8	-0.7	-4.98	< .01
Overall Motivation	3.5	4.2	+0.7	7.21	< .01

Note: Scores based on 5-point Likert scale.

The data demonstrate that overall student engagement increased from 65% to 86% following the intervention. The most significant improvement was observed in integrative motivation, suggesting that students developed a stronger connection to the Arabic language and Islamic heritage through contextualized instruction.

5.2 Achievement Outcomes

Pre-test and post-test scores showed substantial improvement in student achievement.

Table 2. Pre- and Post-Test Achievement Scores (n = 80)

Component	Pre-Mean (Max 100)	Post-Mean (Max 100)	Change	t-value	p-value
Vocabulary	58	79	+21	8.45	< .01
Reading Comprehension	60	82	+22	7.98	< .01
Communicative Tasks	65	83	+18	6.73	< .01
Overall Achievement	62	81	+19	9.12	< .01

The overall mean score increased significantly from 62 to 81 ($p < .01$), representing a 19-point improvement. The most substantial gains were in reading comprehension, suggesting that CEFR-aligned instruction effectively enhanced students' ability to engage with Islamic economic texts in Arabic.

5.3 Classroom Observation Findings

Observation data revealed three key patterns:

1. Increased student participation in communicative tasks (from 45% to 78% active engagement).
2. Improved use of Arabic terminology in disciplinary contexts.
3. Enhanced confidence in using Arabic for professional purposes.

6. Discussion

6.1 Effect on Motivation

The significant increase in motivation (65% to 86%) aligns with previous research on the effectiveness of CEFR-aligned instruction (Kasper & Rose, 2002). The finding that integrative motivation showed the greatest improvement suggests that contextualized instruction helps students connect language learning to their Islamic identity. This is consistent with Mursalin et al.'s (2023) finding that integrating Islamic concepts enhances engagement.

The reduction in learning anxiety (from 3.5 to 2.8) suggests that the CEFR's structured approach, with clear learning objectives and progression, creates a more supportive learning environment. Students reported feeling less overwhelmed and more confident in their ability to master Arabic.

6.2 Effect on Achievement

The 19-point improvement in achievement scores demonstrates that CEFR-aligned instruction effectively enhances learning outcomes. This finding is consistent with studies on Arabic language education in higher education contexts (Rahmawati & Al-Attas, 2023). The most substantial gains in reading comprehension suggest that the emphasis on authentic texts from Islamic economics documents—such as halal standards and Islamic finance reports—enables students to engage meaningfully with disciplinary content.

This finding has important implications for curriculum design. Traditional Arabic instruction often focuses on isolated vocabulary and grammar exercises; in contrast, CEFR-aligned instruction emphasizes functional language use in relevant contexts. This

contextualized approach appears to facilitate both language acquisition and disciplinary content learning.

Furthermore, these findings expand the current discourse on Content-Based Instruction (CBI) within Arabic for Specific Purposes. Unlike traditional methods that often result in stagnation due to a rigid focus on grammar (*nahwu-sharaf*), this CEFR-aligned approach proves that students can process complex terms—such as *mudharabah* or *sukuk*—more intuitively when confronted with real-world case studies. This highlights that pragmatic functionality and lexical appropriateness in professional contexts are far more crucial for adult learners in economics than mere conventional grammatical accuracy.

6.3 Theoretical Implications

The findings support Krashen's (1985) input hypothesis, which suggests that comprehensible input leads to language acquisition. The CEFR-aligned instruction provided structured input slightly above students' current levels, enabling them to make progress without becoming frustrated.

The results also support Gardner's (1985) socio-educational model, demonstrating that both integrative and instrumental motivation contribute to language achievement. In the Islamic economics context, the connection to Islamic heritage (integrative) and career opportunities (instrumental) both serve as powerful motivators.

6.4 Practical Implications

The findings of this study offer substantial practical implications for the enhancement of Arabic language education within Islamic economics programs. Firstly, regarding curriculum development, higher education institutions must transition from traditional, grammar-centric syllabi to a structured, CEFR-aligned framework. The adoption of this internationally recognized standard ensures a systematic progression of language proficiency, explicitly equipping students with the specific communicative competencies required to navigate the professional Islamic finance sector.

Secondly, in terms of materials development, there is a critical need to shift away from generic Arabic textbooks by designing instructional resources that incorporate authentic, real-world texts. By utilizing documents such as halal certification guidelines, *sharia* banking contracts, and contemporary Islamic economic reports, educators can provide contextualized communicative tasks. This material adaptation effectively bridges the persistent gap between abstract language acquisition and practical disciplinary application, making the learning process highly relevant to the students' future careers.

The successful implementation of these curricular and material shifts relies heavily on comprehensive teacher training. Arabic language instructors, who may traditionally focus primarily on linguistic structures, require targeted professional development in CEFR-aligned pedagogy and the integration of language and content instruction. Empowering educators to function as facilitators of both linguistic proficiency and disciplinary knowledge will ultimately transform the classroom into a dynamic environment that fosters holistic professional readiness.

6.5 Challenges in Implementation

While the integration of the CEFR framework demonstrates significant pedagogical benefits, this study identified several practical challenges that must be

addressed for successful broader implementation. Foremost is the pronounced lack of appropriate instructional materials. Currently, most commercially available CEFR-aligned Arabic resources are designed for general language proficiency rather than specific academic or professional domains. Consequently, finding or developing materials specifically tailored to the lexical and pragmatic demands of Islamic economics is exceedingly difficult. This places a substantial burden on educators who must independently adapt or design local resources that accurately reflect authentic industry standards.

Furthermore, there is a prominent challenge regarding insufficient teacher training. Historically, many Arabic language instructors in Indonesian higher education institutions have been trained in traditional grammar-translation methods or classical literature. Transitioning to the CEFR's action-oriented, communicative approach requires a significant pedagogical paradigm shift. Without systematic, ongoing professional development that bridges linguistic teaching with specific disciplinary content, instructors often struggle to translate CEFR 'can-do' statements into actionable and engaging classroom tasks.

Lastly, the implementation process is frequently constrained by assessment difficulties. Designing evaluation tools that simultaneously and accurately measure CEFR-aligned communicative competence alongside the mastery of complex Islamic economic content presents a rigorous challenge. Since most standardized Arabic proficiency tests do not cater to Specific Purposes, institutions are compelled to construct their own rubrics and formative assessments. This necessity inevitably raises valid concerns regarding the standardization, validity, and reliability of these locally developed evaluation metrics across different universities

6.6 Limitations of the Study

Despite the positive outcomes, this study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the sample was restricted to 80 undergraduate students from a single university, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other Islamic higher education institutions with different demographic and academic backgrounds. Second, the intervention duration of 16 sessions may not be sufficient to measure the long-term retention of students' Arabic language proficiency. Future research should consider employing a broader sample size across multiple institutions and utilizing longitudinal designs to assess long-term learning retention.

7. Conclusion

This study examined the effectiveness of CEFR-aligned Arabic language instruction in Islamic economics education. The findings demonstrate that CEFR-aligned instruction significantly improves both motivation (65% to 86%) and learning outcomes (62 to 81). Students demonstrated enhanced communicative competence in Arabic terminology relevant to Islamic finance, halal certification, and supply chain governance.

The study concludes that the systematic adoption of CEFR standards in Arabic for Specific Purposes (ASP) curricula is essential for preparing students to engage meaningfully with Islamic economic sources and participate effectively in the global halal economy. The integration of language and content instruction—rather than treating them as separate subjects—emerges as a key success factor.

Ultimately, the successful implementation of this CEFR-aligned approach offers a scalable blueprint for higher education institutions striving to produce competent

professionals for the global halal industry. By transitioning from a fragmented language curriculum to a synergistic, content-integrated model, universities can better equip graduates with the bilingual proficiency, cross-cultural awareness, and professional agility demanded by the contemporary Islamic economic landscape.

8. Recommendations and Future Research

Based on the empirical findings, several strategic recommendations are proposed to optimize Arabic language instruction within Islamic economics programs. For curriculum developers, it is essential to integrate CEFR standards into curricula, develop instructional materials derived from authentic Islamic economics texts, and design assessments aligned with CEFR can-do statements. Simultaneously, educators should adopt task-based and communicative teaching approaches, ensuring that instruction is contextualized to connect language directly with disciplinary content, while utilizing formative assessments to monitor progress and adjust instruction accordingly. To sustain these pedagogical shifts, policymakers must actively support the development of CEFR-aligned materials, invest in specialized teacher training programs focused on the CEFR and communicative pedagogy, and promote broader research on Arabic for Specific Purposes. Building upon these practical recommendations, future research should explore several key areas to further enrich the field. Longitudinal studies are needed to investigate the long-term effectiveness of CEFR-aligned Arabic instruction, while comparative studies could evaluate and contrast outcomes across different Islamic economics programs. Additionally, future inquiries should examine the role of digital tools in technology-enhanced language learning, investigate teacher cognition regarding their beliefs and practices in CEFR-aligned instruction, and conduct cross-cultural comparisons to better understand how CEFR implementation adapts to and varies across different national contexts.

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