

Enhancing Arabic Language Proficiency through Nested Curriculum Integration: A Qualitative Case Study at Diniyyah Puteri Padang Panjang, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Purpose – The limited time allocated for Arabic language instruction within the Ministry of Religious Affairs curriculum encouraged Diniyyah Puteri Padang Panjang to implement curriculum integration to enhance students' Arabic proficiency. This study aims to explain the implementation of the integration between the 2019 Ministerial Decree Curriculum (KMA) and the Diniyyah Arabic Center (DAC) Curriculum.

Design/methods/approach – This study employs a qualitative approach with a case study method. Data were collected through classroom observations, in-depth interviews with four Arabic teachers, the principal, and the head of DAC, as well as documentation techniques. Data analysis was conducted through data collection, condensation, presentation, and conclusion drawing.

Findings – The findings reveal that the curriculum integration at Diniyyah Puteri adopts a Nested Curriculum model characterized by: (1) Integrated learning objectives, including Arabic language skills and linguistic elements; (2) Learning materials that include both the official Ministry textbooks and supplementary resources such as Arabic camp programs, vocabulary enhancement, and muhadatsah mastery; (3) Time allocation combining two hours of formal instruction with non-formal learning within school and dormitory settings; (4) Learning activities that span classroom, dormitory, and school environment practices. The integration model contributes significantly to improved speaking and reading skills, as evidenced by students' increased interaction with native speakers and their readiness for further studies in the Middle East.

Research implications – Despite these advancements, the integration model faces challenges related to the lack of a structured instructional system, indicating the need for systematic development in curriculum design and implementation frameworks.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 16 April 2024

Revised 28 May 2025

Accepted 30 June 2025

KEYWORDS:

curriculum integration, nested curriculum, arabic language learning



Jurnal Pendidikan Islam

1. Introduction

One of the educational institutions in West Sumatra, namely Diniyyah Puteri Padang Panjang, has implemented curriculum integration in Arabic language learning. This initiative aims to enhance students' proficiency in the Arabic language. The integration of Arabic language curricula at the national and local levels represents a positive collaboration in improving Arabic language learning outcomes among students. Based on previous studies, a foundational examination is necessary regarding the integration between the Ministry of Religious Affairs curriculum and the Diniyyah Arabic Center (DAC) curriculum implemented at the Diniyyah Puteri Padang Panjang School. The development of the Arabic language curriculum under the auspices of DAC serves as an added value to Arabic language



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How to Cite: Febriani, S. R., Asrori, I., & Sutaman. (2025) Enhancing Arabic Language Proficiency through Nested Curriculum Integration: A Qualitative Case Study at Diniyyah Puteri Padang Panjang, Indonesia, 14(1), 129-147.
<https://doi.org/10.14421/jpi.2025.141.129-147>

instruction conducted under the Ministry of Religious Affairs' curriculum. This reflects a positive contribution to educational innovation, particularly at Diniyyah Puteri Padang Panjang, West Sumatra, since its establishment in 1923.

The implementation of the integrated curriculum has been carried out at Diniyyah Puteri for 13 years. This indicates the success, consistency, and sustainability of the system in optimizing the learning outcomes of Arabic. This effort aligns with the goal of addressing challenges and absorbing global skills based on the demands of the global labor market. The Indonesian government, under the Ministry of Education, has restructured the national curriculum to meet global skill requirements. These skills, known as 21st-century skills, include critical, creative, collaborative, and communicative thinking abilities (Ainin, 2017). These competencies play a crucial role in preparing human resources that are adaptable, competent, and knowledgeable at a global level. The skills encompass cooperation, communication, critical thinking, and creativity (Freeman, 2016; Halvorsen, 2018). These provisions can be developed and implemented through instructional strategies in classroom teaching, including Arabic language instruction.

To produce excellent human resources, effective management of Arabic language learning is needed—one that accommodates these competencies and can be structured within a learning curriculum (Yusuf, 2019). Existing data also show that Arabic language learning remains teacher-centered, as seen in the tendency of teachers to apply lecture methods in delivering classroom material (Hamdy, 2020). This condition indicates that students often feel bored when instructional strategies are predominantly teacher-centered, compounded by the limited application of 21st-century skills, thus resulting in suboptimal Arabic learning outcomes. Therefore, teachers require an Arabic teaching curriculum that accommodates the demands of global skills (Rouf, 2016).

The Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia has decided to design an Arabic language curriculum with a focus on functional and applicative grammar as a communicative medium. This is stated in the Decree of the Minister of Religious Affairs Number 183 of 2019 under the section on the Characteristics of the Arabic Language Curriculum. The development of educational curricula directed through curriculum integration to achieve the desired objectives is considered necessary, such as the implementation of national and local curriculum integration. The implementation of both curricula within a single institution encourages the use of diverse strategies in Arabic language instruction. Consequently, educational strategies are not solely teacher-centered but involve interaction and collaboration processes, thereby enhancing students' autonomous learning activities under the supervision of teachers (Ali et al., 2022).

The curriculum is a crucial element and determinant of institutional success in the educational domain. Teachers design the educational process through curriculum components to achieve the intended educational goals. Inter-institutional collaboration in developing scientific knowledge is integrated into the adoption of 21st-century skills within the educational process. Based on these skill requirements, the need to communicate using foreign languages becomes a critical element. This is because one of the functions of language is to serve as a tool for communication between individuals and their surrounding communities.

Arabic has become one of the international languages of communication used by the United Nations Forum (Mustofa & Febriani, 2021). This fact aligns closely with the functions of Arabic language instruction in the Ministry of Religious Affairs' curriculum, namely to deepen Islamic sciences and serve as a medium of communication between individuals and communities (Utami, 2020). Based on these dual functions, various efforts have been made to enhance Arabic language proficiency, such as the implementation of curriculum integration. Several models are available for applying curriculum integration, one of which is the Nested Curriculum. This model focuses on integrating several skill aspects, such as learning materials connected to thinking and organizing skills, combining cognitive,

affective, and psychomotor domains, as well as integrating process skills, attitudes, and communication abilities (Sa'adah & Suyono, 2020). In implementing this curriculum integration, teachers can utilize both classroom and extracurricular spaces, and activities must be assessed to meet the curricular goals of the subject (Asmar & Suryadarma, 2021). Previous research also reveals that the nested curriculum model is effective in learning, such as improving critical and creative thinking skills and fostering students' spiritual intelligence (Robin, 2009). Furthermore, nested curriculum can also create learning activities that integrate skills, knowledge, and social collaboration in the form of experiential learning and training (Resnick, 2010).

The implementation of curriculum integration has been widely adopted by various schools, including integration between national, local, and international curricula. One of the earlier studies on curriculum integration is the integration of the 2013 Curriculum with the Salaf Islamic Boarding School Curriculum, which produces graduates who are grounded in both modern and traditional education (Munjat, 2017); the integration of the Ministry of Religious Affairs' curriculum with the Al-Azhar Curriculum, which produces graduates cooperative with foreign curricula and students who seek education by adopting the Al-Azhar curriculum (Ahmad & Rahayu, 2020); the integration of the Ministry of Religious Affairs' curriculum with the Cambridge curriculum, which effectively enhances English language proficiency (Maudina & Hasanah, 2020); and the integration of the Ulul Albab Curriculum with Arabic language learning at the university level (Khoiruddin, 2019). These previous studies indicate the necessity of curriculum integration to achieve superior outcomes in the cognitive, emotional, and psychomotor domains of learners.

The application of curriculum integration results in diverse instructional strategies, such as designing institutional (local) curricula and implementing the Ministry of Religious Affairs' (national) curriculum. Based on this fact, Arabic language learning outcomes can reach an excellent standard. This is evident from the high level of innovation in teachers' instructional strategies, students' enthusiasm in using foreign languages, particularly Arabic, and the development of student creativity through engaging teaching activities. Through curriculum integration, this study aims to identify the implementation of curriculum integration between the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Diniyyah Arabic Center curriculum based on four aspects: learning objectives for Arabic, learning materials, study time, and Arabic language learning activities.

2. Methods

This study employed a qualitative research design using a case study method to examine a phenomenon within a specific research object (Yin, 2003). The researcher investigated the integration of the Arabic language learning curriculum at Diniyyah Puteri Padang Panjang due to the distinctive nature of its local curriculum developed under the auspices of the Diniyyah Arabic Center (DAC). This reflects a unique research object that requires in-depth exploration, particularly given the strong learning outcomes evidenced by graduates continuing their studies abroad. The DAC curriculum, under an autonomous division, represents a distinct feature not found in other schools. This uniqueness is marked by the implementation of the integrated national and local curriculum for over 13 years. The data in this study consists of several elements related to research questions concerning curriculum objectives, learning materials, instructional activities, and study time.

Data sources are defined as the subjects from which data are derived, referring to how the researcher obtains information that is processed into the necessary data for the study (Arikunto, 2002). These sources also reinforce data collected through various data collection techniques. The data sources in this research are divided into two categories: primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include observations, interviews, and documentation. Secondary sources consist of reading materials that support the findings, such as articles, legal regulations, and curriculum integration

theories documented in books. Through these data sources, the results of this study can be comprehensively and objectively concluded from multiple perspectives.

The data in this research include educational objectives, teaching materials, learning activities, study time, and students' language proficiency. The primary data sources used are the Ministry of Religious Affairs curriculum documentation, the Diniyyah Arabic Center curriculum documentation, the Head of Diniyyah Arabic Center, the school principal, teachers, learning processes, time allocation documentation, and lesson plans (RPP) for grade XII. Arabic language learning activities are based on the management of teaching activities structured under both the Ministry of Religious Affairs' curriculum and the Diniyyah Arabic Center curriculum. Secondary sources include written materials such as articles, books, scientific journals, and previous research related to Arabic language learning curricula. With this variety of data sources, the research findings can be analyzed from multiple angles, thereby strengthening the validity of the results and effectively answering the question of how the nested curriculum integration is implemented at Diniyyah Puteri Padang Panjang.

To analyze the data in this study, the researcher employed Miles and Huberman's theory, as illustrated in the following figure.

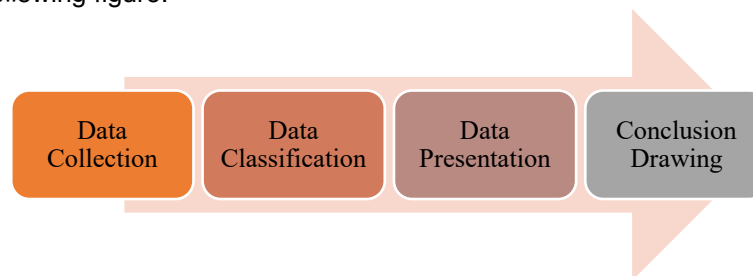


Figure 1. Data Analysis Techniques

Based on the research objectives, the researcher conducted the following steps in the process of data analysis as described below. First, data collection. The researcher collected data through observation, recording various activities related to Arabic language learning at Diniyyah Putri Padang Panjang. Information from documents was gathered through documentation of the integrated curriculum between the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Diniyyah Arabic Center Curriculum. Meanwhile, interview data were obtained in the form of interview transcripts with selected informants.

Second, data classification. In classifying the data, the researcher reduced the data relevant to the research problems and applied a coding technique. This process was used to sort data that matched and aligned with the research needs. In this context, the researcher focused on data related to the implementation of the integration of the Arabic language learning curriculum under the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Diniyyah Arabic Center curriculum.

Third, data presentation. The next step was to present the data. Data presentation is the process of displaying and organizing the data, which includes identification, classification, organization, and systematic, objective, and comprehensive explanation, followed by interpretation at the final stage. The researcher also examined linguistic-related data. Data concerning the integration of Arabic language learning under the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Diniyyah Arabic Center curriculum were reviewed using the curriculum integration theory of Robin Forghaty.

Fourth, drawing conclusions. The final step was to draw conclusions. In this step, the researcher concluded the research findings according to the subject classification and its interpretation. Moreover, the researcher considered the problems by re-examining audiovisual data, listening to the recordings

multiple times, transcribing the audio recordings into written form, and reviewing the observational results against the recorded data.

3. Results and Discussion

Based on the series of analytical steps undertaken, this study is able to illustrate the integration of Arabic language learning curricula through both national and local curricular frameworks.

3.1. Objectives of Arabic Language Learning

The objectives of Arabic language learning within the curriculum of the Ministry of Religious Affairs are stipulated in Decree No. 183 and 184 of 2019 issued by the Ministry of Religious Affairs. These objectives are also adopted by Diniyyah Puteri Padang Panjang, an educational institution that prioritizes the national curriculum as defined by the central government. The development of the Arabic language curriculum aims to prepare students to acquire proficiency in Arabic as a global communication tool and as a medium for learning religious sciences from their original sources. Arabic is generally utilized through a continuous learning process that engages with Islamic sources such as the Qur'an and Hadith.

The instructional goals articulated in the Ministry of Religious Affairs curriculum further clarify the aims of Arabic language teaching, as follows:

- a. To develop communication skills in Arabic related to the four core competencies: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.
- b. To foster interest in Arabic as a foreign language, especially as a medium for accessing Islamic educational sources and as a means of international communication.
- c. To cultivate an understanding of the relationship between language and culture while broadening cultural horizons. Consequently, students are expected to possess linguistic competencies that include phonological awareness, grammatical knowledge, vocabulary acquisition, and cultural elements.

Based on the previously stated objectives of Arabic language learning, the curriculum of the Ministry of Religious Affairs focuses on the development of both oral and written Arabic language skills. Earlier data show that the 2019 Arabic language curriculum objectives, as outlined by the Ministry, emphasize the achievement of basic competencies in analyzing and presenting concepts, forms, and functions related to each thematic unit, thereby enhancing students' critical thinking abilities and their communicative Arabic proficiency.

With regard to classroom instruction, the learning objectives encompass several areas of Arabic language skills, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The implementation of learning objectives in the national curriculum is presented in class based on instructional plans tailored to each skill. These objectives are categorized into distinct components. The instructional objectives for listening skills are divided into five parts: 1) Students can identify word sounds they hear, 2) Articulate words, phrases, or sentences they hear, 3) Write down words, phrases, or sentences they hear, 4) Answer questions related to the utterances they hear, and 5) Express the content of the utterances they hear.

The objectives for speaking skills include: 1) Students can read dialogue texts related to the overall topic; 2) Understand dialogues related to the topic; 3) Perform dialogues fluently; 4) Conduct dialogues fluently; and 5) Present material accurately in front of the class.

As for the reading skill objectives, these are divided into: 1) Students can read texts fluently and correctly; 2) Translate texts for each topic accurately; 3) Answer written questions for each topic; and 4) Express the content of the texts for each topic.

The objectives for writing skills consist of: 1) Understanding the rules of adjectives and compound words (adjectives and aggregation); 2) Distinguishing between adjectives and compound words; 3) Writing words, phrases, or sentences according to the rules of adjectives and compound words; and 4) Answering questions related to adjectives and compound words.

Based on the above data, it can be concluded that the Arabic language learning objectives within the national curriculum under the Ministry of Religious Affairs are classified into three categories: general objectives, objectives based on basic competencies, and instructional objectives based on language proficiency skills.

Meanwhile, the Arabic language learning objectives at the Diniyyah Arabic Center focus on language practice. The program contributes to improving students' skills by increasing instructional hours beyond regular classroom time. By categorizing learning objectives according to each skill area, teachers can better focus on the desired achievement indicators, as explained by Ms. Riri, an Arabic language teacher:

"The learning objectives in class align with the requirements of the Arabic language curriculum of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, which are based on core competencies. At Diniyyah Puteri, the Arabic language curriculum is further developed under the auspices of the Diniyyah Arabic Center."

The focus of Arabic language learning objectives at Diniyyah Puteri Padang Panjang is to enhance students' language skills, particularly in speaking and reading, as Ms. Riri further noted:

"The direction of Arabic language instruction emphasizes reading and speaking skills, as the majority of the study materials consist of reading texts and speaking exercises."

From the previous data, it is evident that the Arabic language learning objectives at the Diniyyah Arabic Center aim to develop mastery in speaking and reading skills. The instructional objectives at this institution are aligned through a shared focus, namely, enhancing language proficiency related to speaking and reading skills. It is expected that the learning objectives within the Diniyyah Arabic Center curriculum support the achievement of the Ministry of Religious Affairs' curriculum goals.

To achieve the objectives of Arabic language learning at this school, the following steps are implemented:

- a. Managing the Diniyyah Arabic Center in accordance with the vision of Diniyyah Puteri Padang Panjang and in alignment with the goals of the Diniyyah Arabic Center.
- b. Designing a curriculum at the Diniyyah Arabic Center that fosters the development of the four core language skills.
- c. Providing language training and professional development for all Arabic language teachers.
- d. Creating a language-rich environment.
- e. Organizing language-based activities such as Arabic language camps, muhadharah (speech activities), and muhadatsah (conversation sessions).

The learning objectives of Arabic language education through the Ministry of Religious Affairs Curriculum and the Diniyyah Arabic Center Curriculum demonstrate curriculum integration, specifically in the development of Arabic language proficiency. Based on this integration, the Diniyyah Arabic Center curriculum enhances students' experiences across all language-related activities. In this context, Arabic curriculum integration at Diniyyah Puteri Padang Panjang refers to the national curriculum from the Ministry of Religious Affairs and is rooted in the local curriculum developed by the Diniyyah Arabic Center.

In its implementation, Arabic language instruction in the classroom indicates that the instructional goal is to improve Arabic language proficiency in accordance with specific topics. The objectives of Arabic language learning at the Diniyyah Arabic Center also focus on advancing students' Arabic language skills. However, the 2019 Curriculum adds a broader goal, positioning

Arabic language education as a means of preparing learners to acquire Arabic as a tool for global communication and to understand religious sciences from authentic sources.

Several standards for achieving instructional objectives have been implemented as follows: First, Arabic language proficiency is assessed and evaluated on a daily, weekly, monthly, and annual basis. Second, teachers engage in discussions at the Diniyyah Arabic Center office after completing the instructional process with their respective groups, assessing attendance, discipline, ability, and student engagement in the learning process. Third, teachers convene on Fridays for weekly learning evaluations. After the morning muhadatsah activities, teachers review the Arabic language program carried out over the week and provide feedback to students who did not participate in all activities, subsequently informing the director of the Diniyyah Arabic Center. Fourth, the Diniyyah Arabic Center administers midterm examinations and provides a complete subject card for each subject taught to measure students' abilities in both vocabulary and language skills. Fifth, the Center holds semester one and two examinations for the subjects taught by instructors to students. Sixth, the examinations include both oral and written tests. The oral test aims to measure students' communicative competence in Arabic, while the written test assesses their understanding of the instructional content.

The integration of curricula into Arabic language learning objectives according to the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Diniyyah Arabic Center curricula can thus be outlined as follows.

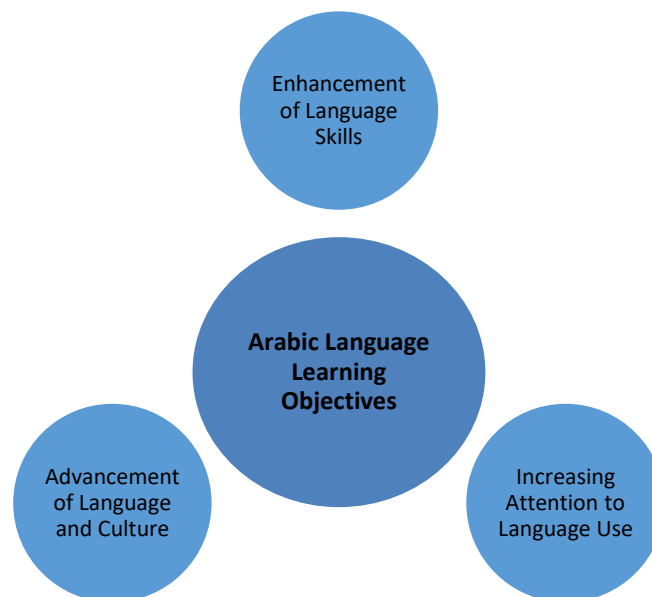


Figure 2. Arabic Language Learning Objectives at Diniyyah Puteri Padang Panjang

Arabic language instruction at this school aims to develop students' proficiency in both spoken and written Arabic. As shown in Figure 2, there is an integration of the Arabic language curriculum in the development of language skills. The objective of speaking skills is to guide students to become proficient in speaking Arabic, while the mastery of reading skills is intended to enable students to acquire scientific information from Arabic texts as learning resources.

The various objectives of Arabic language instruction at Diniyyah Puteri demonstrate an integration in learning goals. As stated in one theory regarding the determination of learning objectives, the Arabic language curriculum is capable of responding to the needs of international

communication and the use of digital technology (Arifin et al., 2021; Xuan, 2017). This aligns with the integrated objectives of the Arabic language learning curriculum, which focus not only on improving Arabic language proficiency but also on fostering cultural development and increasing attention to the Arabic language by establishing various language-rich environments. This is further supported by the statement that in curriculum planning, it is necessary to set organizational goals (Ali et al., 2022). Planning is defined as the process of thinking about objectives and activities based on specific methods (Fatah, 2023), and it involves three main activities: setting goals, selecting programs, and determining the resources to be used (Hamalik, 2010).

In this context, in determining learning objectives, the curriculum of the Ministry of Religious Affairs serves as a foundational reference in the development of Arabic language learning objectives within the local curriculum, ensuring no contradiction between the two. Based on this, Diniyyah Puteri Padang Panjang establishes learning objectives grounded in students' needs while still adhering to national goals. The curriculum developed at the national level includes documents from the Ministry of Religious Affairs, and to achieve these objectives, supplementary curricula are necessary to support the attainment of learning goals. This is supported by the assertion that for an integrated curriculum objective, alignment between the objectives of curriculum integration and the organization of curriculum content is essential (Tohri et al., 2022).

3.2. Learning Materials

The implementation of curriculum integration in the teaching materials is evident in the textbooks used during instruction. This can be described as follows:

The textbooks provided by the Ministry of Religious Affairs are published by the Directorate of Curriculum, Infrastructure, Institutional Affairs, and Student Affairs (KSKK). These teaching materials consist of several sources, such as study books from the Ministry of Religious Affairs and supplementary materials like dictionaries and other reference books. These books are used by students as follows:

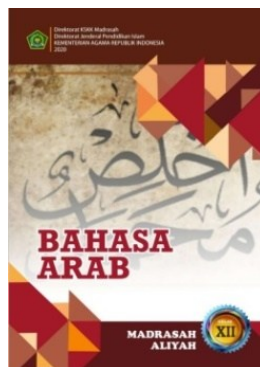


Figure 3. Learning Materials

Teachers utilize the textbooks shown in Figure 3 to develop students' Arabic language skills. The learning materials used in the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kemenag) curriculum consist of five chapters encompassing several themes such as Ar-Riyaadhah, Asy-Syabaab, Asy-Syi'rul-'Arabi, Al-Hadhaarah Al-Islaamiyah, and ad-Diraasah Fil-Jaami'aah. The content of each theme begins with an explanation of basic competencies, indicators of competency achievement, and a concept map. Following these explanations, the book presents material based on the sequence of language skills, namely listening, reading, writing, and speaking.

In the listening section, the textbook content includes illustrated vocabulary introduction, vocabulary recognition, and dialogue introduction (hiwar). In the reading skills section, the book

The Arabic grammar book consists of 21 pages. It is divided into several instructional sections related to parts of speech: nouns, verbs, imperative verbs, prohibitive verbs, particles, pronouns, and demonstrative nouns. Each topic begins with a definition, followed by example sentences, and translation of the examples. This book complements the content found in the Ministry of Religious Affairs curriculum, thereby facilitating an integrated learning experience for students.

Vocabulary learning materials are found in the book *Ahsin Lughatak*, which comprises 74 pages. It contains 480 vocabulary items related to nouns and verbs, including antonyms, synonyms, and singular, dual, and plural forms. The book also provides conversational sentence examples to enhance students' speaking proficiency.

As for conversation materials, the Diniyyah Arabic Center provides a book that contains vocabulary and example sentence usage. The vocabulary is thematically organized around students' daily activities, such as verbs, nouns, and their practical applications. Several books within the Diniyyah Arabic Center curriculum program aim to improve speaking skills, including the book *Bicara Bahasa Arab*. This book is a compilation of learning materials related to daily activities such as introductions, family, hobbies, holidays, and more. It contains 104 pages consisting of 60 conversation topics.

The Arabic camp program within the Diniyyah Arabic Center curriculum is supported by a specialized teacher's book. The objective of this book is to enhance students' understanding of Arabic grammar. It consists of 43 pages and presents grammatical material. These learning materials are published by the Diniyyah Arabic Center and depict everyday dialogues covering topics such as introductions, family, and daily routines, using an expressive model. The conversation books also provide instructional examples related to how questions are constructed in Arabic.

There are 17 instructional sections for enhancing reading skills, such as sentence explanation, verb usage, and illustrative examples. The Arabic grammar book includes general rules used in conversation, such as learning nouns, verbs, and particles along with examples.

The content used in the Diniyyah Arabic Center program aligns with students' learning material needs. For example, for the instructional needs of Grade XII concerning *Fi'il Majhul*, teachers in the Diniyyah Arabic Center program utilize randomly selected materials that correspond to the Ministry of Religious Affairs curriculum requirements.

The Arabic language curriculum development at the Diniyyah Arabic Center involves the creation of learning materials through the production of textbooks and learning content designed specifically for student needs. The learning materials in the Ministry of Religious Affairs textbook consist of components such as vocabulary, listening skills, reading skills, grammar study, writing skills, and speaking skills. Meanwhile, the learning materials developed in the Diniyyah Arabic Center curriculum consist mainly of speaking skills and the mastery of Arabic grammar and vocabulary.

The integration of learning materials in this curriculum is evident in the inclusion of grammar elements. For example, active and passive verb content is found in the second chapter of the textbook, which also discusses the present tense. The same subject of active and passive verbs is addressed on page seven of the Diniyyah Arabic Center book. Another example is the learning material on present tense verbs, which appears in both the Ministry of Religious Affairs book and the Diniyyah Arabic Center's specialized books, *Kemah Bahasa* and *Tata Bahasa Praktis*.

As for the speaking skill component, the learning materials in the Ministry of Religious Affairs book include themes such as sports, youth, Arabic poetry, Islamic culture, and university

life. These are integrated into the book *Tahadduts bil-'Arabiyyah* in a dedicated chapter on university life, with conversations about campus directions and how to enroll. This material plays a significant role in developing speaking skills in the Diniyyah Arabic Center book. Students are able to develop conversation patterns based on examples provided in each chapter.

Simultaneously, the integration of vocabulary instruction is reflected in the university expansion topic in the Ministry of Religious Affairs book. The relevant vocabulary can also be found in *Ahsin Lughatak*, which includes various vocabulary items related to “university” and the learning environment. Based on the integration of instructional content between the Ministry of Religious Affairs book and the Diniyyah Arabic Center books, student learning is strengthened through vocabulary, speaking skills, and grammar components.

From a theoretical perspective, the integration of instructional materials across these two curricula indicates that the curriculum integration process also informs the selection of instructional content. The components of curriculum integration development reflect a nested curriculum model, which is a holistic approach targeting various combinations of skills and dimensions of knowledge within a single subject (Easterday et al., 2014). This is evident in the implementation of Arabic language learning materials at Diniyyah Puteri, which reflect integration across various skill areas and linguistic elements. Furthermore, language curriculum development requires the consideration of several factors, ranging from instructional goals and content to specifications of educational activities and assessment techniques. In curriculum planning, a minimum framework must consider the following principles: (1) Content selection: what is to be learned and taught, (2) Instructional strategy development: how to teach, (3) Sequencing decisions: the order of content, and (4) Diagnosis of students’ strengths and weaknesses. Based on these points, textbooks become a crucial element, as curriculum integration can be detected through the textbook content (Istiqomah & Al-Badrani, 2020).

The adoption of diverse instructional materials also aims to ensure that the curriculum is implemented effectively and in an integrated manner. In this regard, the implementation of curriculum integration at Diniyyah Puteri does not always align with the materials provided. This is due to the annually varying needs of students, making Arabic language skill development at the school highly dependent on the specific subject requirements, which are still limited. On this basis, curriculum development follows an integrated process of planning, organizing, implementation, monitoring, and improvement (Ritonga et al., 2021).

3.3. Learning Time

Diniyyah Puteri Padang Panjang School applies an integrated curriculum to teach Arabic. Accordingly, the learning time differs between the implementation of the Ministry of Religious Affairs curriculum and the Diniyyah Arabic Center curriculum. The description of curriculum integration at this school is as follows.

The allocated time is stipulated in the 2019 Decree of the Ministry of Religious Affairs. The allocated learning time for Arabic in the Ministry of Religious Affairs curriculum is 2 x 45 minutes or 90 minutes per week. This data is supported by the school principal’s statement as follows:

“The Arabic teaching time under the curriculum of the Ministry of Religious Affairs is 90 minutes per week.”

Based on this data, the teaching time for Arabic is limited. The required competencies for students include language components and language skills. Therefore, it requires additional learning time beyond this curriculum.

Meanwhile, the implementation of the Diniyyah Arabic Center curriculum has a designated schedule. Arabic language instruction at the Diniyyah Arabic Center includes 30-minute vocabulary

instruction in the morning before the formal lessons begin, a weekly Arabic lecture lasting approximately two hours, and a two-week camping activity. The designated daily schedule runs from 07:00 to 15:00, except on Fridays, along with a single camping activity after the final examination period. Additionally, scientific excursions and “Ansyat-Al-Akbar” events are conducted, allocated for a full day each year.

Practically, Arabic learning time at this school does not only take place in formal classes but also in informal settings and language environments. Accordingly, students learn Arabic within a school environment that necessitates habituation to Arabic. Thus, students can engage in Arabic learning without time constraints. The integration of the Ministry of Religious Affairs curriculum and the Diniyyah Arabic Center curriculum contributes to the development of students’ linguistic skills and language comprehension.

Based on the aforementioned information, the Arabic curriculum at the Diniyyah Arabic Center supports Arabic language learning at Diniyyah Puteri Padang Panjang. The limited school time provides only two hours of learning per week. Instructional activities at the Diniyyah Arabic Center consume significantly more time compared to in-school learning. As stated by the head of the madrasa, Mrs. Yusmaneli:

“The Diniyyah Arabic Center curriculum supports Arabic language learning in class. At school, the time allocated for Arabic learning is limited. We have 17 subjects under the Ministry of Religious Affairs curriculum and limited time for each of those subjects. For Arabic in Grade X, we have only 4 hours, and for Grades XI and XII, 2 hours weekly. This alone is insufficient to achieve student proficiency. Therefore, the Diniyyah Arabic Center curriculum provides a daily Arabic teaching program.”

The preceding data indicate curriculum integration in terms of learning time. Arabic learning time supports students’ language skills under both curricula. The implementation of the Ministry of Religious Affairs curriculum is limited; however, the time provided in the Diniyyah Arabic Center curriculum adds additional opportunities for students to practice Arabic.

The availability of learning time within the Ministry of Religious Affairs curriculum is highly limited, which necessitates specific time beyond formal instructional hours to ensure student success in Arabic learning. As explained in other research findings, limited learning time can hinder student achievement (Putri et al., 2021). The need for additional time is also urgent in enhancing students’ Arabic language proficiency. The Nested Curriculum model directs an integrated curriculum approach within disciplines that focus on learning skills (Peeters, 2018; Sobri et al., 2021). Therefore, the Arabic learning time required to master various Arabic language skills is necessary to achieve the desired educational goals (Rouf, 2016). Previous research also supports the notion that time limitations in learning can be addressed through curriculum integration (Oliveira et al., 2020). This reinforces that the integration of national and local curricula can serve as an alternative solution to support the limitations of formal learning time.

3.4. Learning Activities

The learning activities within the curriculum of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Diniyyah Arabic Center can be described as follows. Arabic language instruction under the Ministry of Religious Affairs curriculum is formal and teacher-centered, as stated by Ms. Riri:

“Arabic teaching activities tend to be teacher-centered, such as the teacher explaining and discussing the material with students, as well as conducting question-and-answer sessions.”

The teacher maintains control of the classroom by delivering material through lecture methods and question-and-answer sessions. For listening skills, the teacher uses techniques such as vocabulary listening and reading aloud to the students. In speaking skills, students practice directly, such as by engaging in dialogue with their peers. As Ms. Sulasmi explained:

“Training in direct dialogue learning, where students memorize conversations and speak with their classmates in front of the class.”

For reading skills, students read texts directly, and the teacher provides feedback on their reading performance. Students listen to the teacher reading a text and translating it; afterward, the students are asked to read the same text and practice translating it. The implementation of the Ministry of Religious Affairs curriculum at Diniyyah Puteri Padang Panjang takes the form of formal classroom activities. Teachers utilize formal classes due to the limited instructional time provided.

As for writing skills, instructional activities involve students writing directly on the board, followed by the teacher correcting their written work.

Arabic language learning activities in the Diniyyah Arabic Center program are student-centered. Students can develop their language abilities through informal activities such as at home, in Arabic-speaking environments, and through language competitions, as depicted in the following:



Figure 5. Language Competition

Figure 5 illustrates the language competition activities. These consist of quiz contests, poetry performances, and Arabic speeches. Such competitions are held during the Language Month, typically in November. These events serve to enhance students' Arabic language skills.

Other activities include language games, such as vocabulary guessing games. The vocabulary used in these games is contextual, including words related to daily activities and commonly used vocabulary in dormitories, classrooms, and school environments, such as dormitory-related words, school tools, daily routines, and other categories. These language games are conducted outside formal classrooms, such as in school yards or open environments, aiming to prevent students from experiencing fatigue from formal learning.

Additionally, Arabic language learning activities in the Diniyyah Arabic Center curriculum include daily routine language exercises (*muhadatsah*) in the morning. The *muhadatsah* activity in Figure 12 shows learning outside the formal classroom, held in open areas. Initially, the teacher provides the vocabulary needed for the conversation, followed by sample conversations in the form of question-and-answer sentences. Students then repeat and elaborate the vocabulary and examples into different sentence forms.

In the application of the Diniyyah Arabic Center curriculum, instruction is not confined to classrooms alone but involves various means of utilizing the school environment. There is an element of curriculum integration in Arabic language learning activities. This highlights the presence of support activities that enhance language skills within the Diniyyah Arabic Center curriculum. While classroom instruction is restricted by time, Arabic language instruction at the Arabic Language Center is not bound by such constraints. As Ms. Sulasmi stated:

“The autonomous department (Autonomous Division) supports all school activities according to their areas of expertise. For example, DAC is linked to Arabic language activities for students, teachers, and staff at Diniyyah Puteri Padang Panjang.”

The development of students' language skills is distributed across several instructional activities. As Ms. Anija noted:

“The Diniyyah Arabic Center supports Arabic learning because it offers more activities. While the school provides a few hours per week, the DAC curriculum has independent time allocation and more than one instructional model compared to school. This approach supports Arabic language instruction in school. So it has its own approach.”

Based on the above data, Arabic language learning activities at Diniyyah Puteri are integrated through collaborative learning activities in both formal and non-formal settings, such as classrooms, dormitories, and school environments. This integration is also characterized by the varied strategies applied by teachers in teaching Arabic. In reality, classroom instruction is limited to only two periods per week, and thus, the limitations of formal classroom strategies are supported by extracurricular activities in the broader school environment. For instance, speaking strategies can be implemented during muhadatsah sessions in the morning or through contextual applications in activities such as Arabic Camp and art performances like Nasyar al-Akbar. Uril also stated that the success of Arabic learning activities is not attributed to a single factor but is supported by complementary activities such as diverse teaching strategies (Bahruddin et al., 2022). Moreover, varied learning activities provide students with enriched learning experiences (Mahmudi et al., 2019). On this basis, reinforcing extracurricular activities becomes a support system for the limitations of formal classroom learning through the use of diverse learning strategies.

Based on previous data regarding the integration of Arabic language learning curricula from the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Diniyah Arabic Center, this integration process leads to a Nested Curriculum model. The Nested Curriculum model integrates curricula within a single discipline, with particular emphasis on the coherence of learning skills that teachers aim to cultivate in students within an educational unit in order to master the subject matter (content). Therefore, several standards are formulated, including instructional objectives, teaching materials, learning time, instructional implementation, and learning activities for both curricula, developed based on student needs, with curricular integration between them.

Both curricula reflect the direction of Arabic language skills development in students—listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. There is also an emphasis on facilitating learning so that students can think critically and creatively, supported by a language-rich environment at Diniyyah Puteri Padang Panjang. Based on these criteria, the researcher identifies the curriculum integration model adopted as a Nested Curriculum applied in this school.

Curricular integration at Diniyyah Puteri School demonstrates a cross-sectoral approach. Integration is evident in the learning objectives, materials, instructional time, and learning activities under the framework of both the Ministry of Religious Affairs' curriculum and the DAC curriculum.

After presenting the previous data and analysis, the following discussion addresses the research issue, namely curriculum integration. Diniyyah Puteri School is a private girls' school located in Padang Panjang, West Sumatra. Through the implementation of an integrated Arabic language curriculum under the authority of both the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Diniyah Arabic Center, the national curriculum provided by the Ministry of Religious Affairs serves as a reference for developing the local curriculum in each institution, while the Arabic language curriculum under the DAC is a localized curriculum developed to enhance the quality of instruction and Arabic language proficiency across various linguistic components.

This curriculum forms the foundation for Arabic language learning development in this school. It is designed to prepare students to master and improve their Arabic language skills in everyday vocabulary, conversation, grammar, and reading comprehension. The integration of the curriculum is prioritized because the school aims for students to be able to speak and read Arabic proficiently, thereby setting instructional objectives that enhance language proficiency within a limited and efficient time frame.

The application of curriculum integration demonstrates the characteristics of components such as instructional objectives and teaching materials. These two elements intersect in achieving the institution's desired outcomes. Through such integration, several benefits are observed in Arabic language learning. First, the achievement of Arabic language instruction goals is supported by additional learning time outside of school hours, such as home-based learning and language-rich school environments. Second, students engage in more intensive Arabic language practice compared to conventional schools. The implementation of an integrated curriculum that trains students' skills across various activities demonstrates that students can receive training to assimilate and apply learned concepts and language skills. This element relates to the understanding that curriculum integration enables students to learn integrated subject matter and apply it in communicative contexts related to school and institutional life.

Third, students' experiences in improving their Arabic language abilities vary. Depending on the curriculum integration implemented in the school, student experiences may occur in different environments—both formal and informal. The language environment contributes to students' success in communicating with various parties such as teachers, peers, and school staff (Brahin et al., 2020). As previously stated, one of the advantages gained is the opportunity for students to apply Arabic intensively. This is supported by the study by Uril, which states that the language environment is a crucial factor influencing students' foreign language acquisition (Rahmawati & Febriani, 2021).

Fourth, the use of diverse teaching materials sourced from various references and the implementation of different instructional strategies for each skill area can affect the reinforcement of vocabulary, phonological awareness, and structural comprehension. In relation to these factors, (Amrullah, 2021) asserts that managing the integration of Arabic language curricula requires several stages: analyzing needs, formulating and responding to philosophical questions, determining curriculum design, and drafting plans for development, implementation, and evaluation. These stages influence the objectives, content, strategies, and assessment systems in the curriculum development process.

The integration of curricula at Diniyyah Puteri Padang Panjang demonstrates the application of a Nested Curriculum Model. The reality of the Arabic language curriculum objectives at this school implies a focus on multidimensional skills and concepts within a single learning activity (Bahri et al., 2020). Curriculum integration is oriented toward common goals in achieving Arabic language proficiency, such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing in Arabic. These objectives are embedded in both the Ministry of Religious Affairs curriculum and the Diniyah Arabic Center curriculum. A cross-curricular approach ensures that skills and learning processes converge within instructional activities. This comprehensive design is implemented optimally by teachers through their pedagogical strategies.

The researcher identifies the integration of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Diniyah Arabic Center curricula as converging toward a nested curriculum type. Based on the data obtained, it can be concluded that the learning model is mutually integrated, forming a model of integrated curriculum whose primary focus is the Arabic language subject in relation to thinking

skills. This indicates a combination of cognitive, emotional, and psychomotor aspects, as well as the integration of practical skills, attitudes, and communication.

This definition is illustrated by the characteristics of curriculum integration, namely a learning process with a clear purpose. This process affects the meaningfulness of the material being learned, for instance, language skills applied in daily activities. In addition, the Arabic language learning process at the Diniyyah Arabic Center also includes student-centered activities, which is a key feature of the Nested Curriculum. Students are able to apply specific learning to solve problems encountered in their lives. The nested curriculum model is especially suitable for teachers seeking to integrate critical thinking and collaborative skills into content instruction.

The implementation of Arabic curriculum integration at Diniyyah Puteri Padang Panjang offers several practical advantages. These include the resolution of Arabic language learning challenges from multiple perspectives, the establishment of collaborative efforts among pesantren institutions, and students' development of both independent and collective responsibility through targeted instructional strategies. Diversification is achieved by offering an integrated curriculum and learning materials tailored to individual capabilities. However, in practice, the implementation of this curriculum integration remains unstructured. This is evidenced by the suboptimal development of textbooks aligned with the KMA curriculum requirements. This presents a challenge in producing textbooks that meet national needs, so that educators do not have to seek out broader references if well-structured, integrative learning materials are already available. Another limitation lies in the need for Arabic language teachers to adopt unified strategies in implementing curriculum integration, ensuring a distinct and coherent approach to Arabic language instruction at Diniyyah Puteri Padang Panjang.

4. Conclusion

Based on the analysis obtained, the researcher concludes that the integration of the Arabic language curriculum at Diniyyah Puteri Padang Panjang reflects a Nested Curriculum Model, indicating the integration of cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains, as well as the combination of process skills, attitudes, and communication within both curricula: the Ministry of Religious Affairs Curriculum as the national reference framework, and the Diniyyah Arabic Center Curriculum as the supporting curriculum for Arabic language instruction. This model is characterized by curriculum integration in the following areas: 1) Learning Objectives, such as the mastery of Arabic language skills and linguistic components; 2) Learning Materials, including the availability of Ministry-produced textbooks and supplemental materials from Arabic language camp programs, vocabulary enhancement, and muhadatsah proficiency; 3) Learning Time, comprising two hours of formal instructional time and additional informal learning in school and dormitory settings; 4) Learning Activities, covering classroom instruction, dormitory-based learning, and school-wide language environment engagement. The findings indicate that integration based on the Nested Curriculum model encourages students to develop accurate speaking and reading skills through both formal in-class activities and informal out-of-class practices. Given that this study is limited to a qualitative data framework, the researcher recommends further studies employing experimental methods to objectively assess the effectiveness of this curriculum integration model.

Declarations

Author contribution statement

Suci Ramadhanti Febriani served as the main and corresponding author, leading the conceptualization, research design, and manuscript writing. Imam Asrori contributed to data collection, analysis, and assisted in the revision and final editing of the manuscript. Sutaman provided critical input

during the data interpretation phase and supported the refinement of the theoretical framework and discussion section.

Funding statement

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Data availability statement

The datasets generated during and analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Declaration of Interest's statement

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have influenced the work reported in this paper.

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