

A 4Cs-Based Framework for Arabic Language Curriculum to Improve Students' Linguistic Competence

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ABSTRACT

Although 21st-century skills (the 4Cs) have been widely discussed in general education, studies that specifically examine their integration into the Arabic language curriculum remain limited. Most previous research emphasizes instructional methods or product-oriented curriculum development (R&D), while qualitative and conceptual analyses focusing on how a 4Cs-based curriculum enhances students' linguistic competence are still underexplored. This study aims to address this gap by exploring the implementation of a 4Cs-based Arabic language curriculum at Nurul Jadid University, a pesantren-based higher education institution in Indonesia. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, data were collected through observations, interviews, and document analysis. The findings reveal that integrating critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration into the Arabic language curriculum contributes positively to students' linguistic competence, contextual understanding, and relevance to real-life communication. However, the study also identifies challenges related to human resource development, particularly lecturers' readiness and capacity to implement the 4Cs approach effectively. This study highlights the importance of curriculum innovation in strengthening 21st-century learning competencies within Islamic higher education.

Keywords: *Arabic Language Curriculum, 4C Skills, Higher Education, 21st-Century Learning.*

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INTRODUCTION

The challenges currently faced by the educational world are becoming increasingly complex, requiring the education sector to adapt to the rapid advancement and integration of technology. As global competition intensifies, Indonesia must prepare its human resources to compete effectively with other nations across various sectors. According to research conducted in 2010, Indonesia ranked 59th out of 60 countries in the competitiveness index. In the 2017–2018 period, the nation improved to 36th position in the Global Competitiveness Index, and in 2023, the IMD Global Competitiveness Index placed Indonesia at 34th among 67 countries with a score of 71.52. The most recent report indicated Indonesia's highest ranking in history 27th place signifying gradual improvement. However, this progress also highlights the urgent need for curriculum innovation and strategic educational reforms to strengthen student competencies and national competitiveness (Muhaimin, 2015).

In the era of globalization and the Fourth Industrial Revolution (Industry 4.0), higher education institutions are required to produce graduates who possess not only broad knowledge but also the ability to adapt to dynamic, interdisciplinary, and complex global environments. The disruption era has transformed various aspects of human life, shifting traditional manual systems toward digitalized processes in education, industry, and social interaction (Dasmadi, 2021). Consequently, the traditional approach to learning, which often emphasizes memorization and teacher-centered methods, is no longer sufficient to meet the needs of the current generation. Instead, higher education must focus on developing 21st-

century competencies, particularly those encapsulated in the 4C framework Critical Thinking, Creativity, Communication, and Collaboration.

The 4C framework represents a set of essential skills necessary for students to thrive in a fast-changing world. Critical Thinking enables learners to evaluate information and solve problems based on evidence and logical reasoning. Creativity encourages innovation and the ability to generate new ideas. Communication focuses on the capacity to articulate thoughts effectively, both orally and in writing, while Collaboration emphasizes teamwork and collective problem-solving. According to (Okstiana, 2025), these competencies are crucial in higher education because they cultivate intellectual independence, foster social adaptability, and enhance employability in competitive global contexts.

The selection of the 4C model (Critical Thinking, Communication, Collaboration, and Creativity) as a framework for Arabic language teaching is grounded in its strong alignment with the linguistic and pedagogical demands of 21st-century education. Arabic language learning requires not only mastery of linguistic structures but also the ability to interpret meaning critically, communicate effectively in diverse contexts, collaborate in authentic language use, and creatively apply language skills in real-life situations. The 4C framework provides an integrated approach that supports higher-order thinking, interactive communication, and learner-centered practices, which are essential for developing comprehensive linguistic competence. Moreover, the 4C model is adaptable to various learning environments, including Islamic higher education contexts, making it a relevant and responsive framework for contemporary Arabic language curriculum design.

In the context of Islamic higher education, especially in Indonesia, integrating 4C skills within curriculum design holds strategic importance. Nurul Jadid University, as a pesantren-based higher education institution, represents a unique blend of traditional Islamic values and modern educational paradigms. The university has responded proactively to the challenges of globalization by developing an Arabic language curriculum based on the 4C framework. This curriculum does not merely aim to improve linguistic competence but also to develop higher-order thinking skills, intercultural collaboration, and effective communication within multilingual contexts. The integration of the 4C model aligns with the institution's vision to harmonize Islamic ethics, intellectual growth, and practical life skills in producing graduates who are both spiritually grounded and globally competent.

Critical Thinking, in Arabic language learning, facilitates deeper comprehension of meaning, context, and linguistic structure (Aziz, Laili, & Rido'i, 2024). Students are encouraged not only to master grammar but also to interpret texts analytically, uncover cultural nuances, and evaluate different perspectives. Communication skills enable students to express ideas confidently and engage effectively in Arabic-speaking environments. Collaboration enhances active learning and mutual understanding through peer interaction, while Creativity allows students to produce authentic works such as poems, short stories, or dialogues in Arabic.

Through active, participatory, and contextual learning strategies, the 4C-based Arabic curriculum at Nurul Jadid University accommodates students' academic and practical needs in facing global challenges while remaining grounded in pesantren values. Therefore, studying the implementation of the 4C-based Arabic language curriculum is vital for understanding its design, strategies, challenges, and implications for improving student competence and graduate competitiveness in the 21st century.

The integration of the 4C framework into Islamic higher education requires contextual adaptation to align with Islamic educational philosophy. According to Muhaimin (2015), curriculum design in Islamic universities must balance *ta'dib* (moral cultivation), *ta'lim* (instruction), and *tarbiyah* (holistic development). This tripartite framework ensures that education nurtures intellectual, spiritual, and social dimensions harmoniously. Pesantren-based universities such as Nurul Jadid University face the unique task of integrating global educational paradigms with Islamic values. Therefore, the adoption of a 4C-based curriculum

not only aims at academic excellence but also at character formation grounded in faith, ethics, and community engagement.

Moreover, Kuntowijoyo's (2006) concept of *transformative education* emphasizes that Islamic learning should produce individuals who are both *ulul albab* (intellectually and spiritually balanced) and socially responsible. Integrating 4C competencies supports this vision by promoting analytical reasoning (critical thinking), creativity in da'wah and scholarship, effective communication in multicultural settings, and collaboration in community-based projects. The combination of modern pedagogical frameworks and Islamic educational principles provides a balanced approach to curriculum innovation in the 21st century.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive method, focusing on the analysis of the implementation of the 4C-based Arabic language curriculum (Critical Thinking, Communication, Collaboration, and Creativity) in developing students' language competencies within the Arabic Language Education Department at Nurul Jadid University, Paiton, Probolinggo. Data were collected through a comprehensive literature review, which included books, academic journals, scholarly articles, and institutional documents related to language curriculum design, particularly those relevant to Arabic language instruction.

The participants of this study consisted of 15 individuals, including five full-time Arabic language lecturers, eight students, and two curriculum developers at Nurul Jadid University. The lecturers were selected based on their teaching experience and active involvement in implementing the Arabic language curriculum. The students were drawn from programs offering Arabic language courses and were chosen to represent diverse levels of linguistic competence. The curriculum developers were included to provide insights into curriculum planning and policy. Participants were selected using purposive sampling, with criteria focusing on direct involvement, relevant experience, and the ability to provide in-depth and contextual data aligned with the objectives of this qualitative study.

A qualitative approach was adopted to gain an in-depth understanding of how the 4C framework is applied in Arabic language learning and to identify the challenges and opportunities emerging from its implementation. In addition, the researcher conducted direct observations and semi-structured interviews with Arabic language lecturers to obtain firsthand insights into the practical application of the 4C approach in teaching. The data collected from interviews were analyzed thematically to identify patterns and categories aligned with the research objectives.

Data analysis was carried out by categorizing findings from observations, interviews, and literature studies according to the four core components of the 4C framework – Critical Thinking, Communication, Collaboration, and Creativity. To ensure the validity and reliability of the findings, data triangulation was employed, comparing information from multiple sources to confirm consistency and accuracy across datasets.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Curriculum Design Framework in the 4C-Based Program (Critical Thinking, Communication, Collaboration, Creativity)

The design of the 4C-based Arabic language curriculum at Nurul Jadid University is constructed upon the principles of integrative and student-centered learning, aiming to develop linguistic competence alongside the essential 21st-century skills critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity. The curriculum framework emphasizes active, participatory, and contextual learning that encourages students to construct knowledge through meaningful interaction and problem-solving activities.

At the design stage, curriculum developers integrate Islamic educational philosophy *ta'dib* (moral cultivation), *ta'lim* (instruction), and *tarbiyah* (holistic development) with modern pedagogical principles. Each course module is structured to include learning outcomes that explicitly reflect the four dimensions of 4C. For instance, critical thinking is

developed through analytical text interpretation and argumentative writing; communication through discussion forums and oral presentations; collaboration through group projects and peer learning; and creativity through innovative tasks such as digital storytelling or Arabic-based creative content production.

In addition, the curriculum design aligns with the Outcome-Based Education (OBE) framework, ensuring that learning objectives, instructional strategies, and assessment methods are coherently connected. This approach enables students to not only master linguistic structures but also to apply Arabic communicatively and creatively in academic, social, and professional contexts. Hence, the 4C-based curriculum design serves as a dynamic model that bridges global educational paradigms with Islamic pedagogical values, fostering graduates who are linguistically proficient, intellectually critical, and socially responsible.

Main Objective of the Curriculum Design

The primary goal of the 4C-based curriculum design is to enhance students' Arabic language skills; listening, speaking, reading, and writing through the balanced integration of Critical Thinking, Communication, Collaboration, and Creativity within instructional activities. The curriculum seeks to develop not only linguistic competence but also higher-order thinking and interpersonal skills necessary for the 21st century.

Principles of the 4C-Based Curriculum Design

The learning approach emphasizes student-centered learning in which students actively construct knowledge rather than passively receive information, supported by Project-Based Learning (PjBL) that organizes instruction around meaningful projects to stimulate critical and creative thinking while fostering collaboration and communication. In addition, learning materials are contextualized to real-life and professional needs; for instance, at Nurul Jadid University, Arabic lecturers in the Arabic Language Education Department develop Arabic 1 and 2 textbooks based on themes relevant to students' specific majors, enabling learners to acquire Arabic vocabulary and language skills aligned with their disciplinary fields.

Instructional Program Design

The intended learning competencies include students' ability to compose well-structured argumentative essays as a demonstration of writing skills, deliver clear and effective academic presentations to reflect speaking proficiency, analyze and interpret academic articles to develop reading comprehension, and summarize as well as critically evaluate audiovisual materials to strengthen listening skills.

The integration of the 4C framework in learning activities is implemented through strategies that foster critical thinking by engaging students in text analysis, argument comparison, idea synthesis, and information evaluation through debates and critical discussions, while communication skills are strengthened by emphasizing clarity and effectiveness in oral and written expression through presentations, group discussions, and role-plays. Collaboration is developed through group projects, peer review activities, online discussion forums, interview simulations, and inter-course cooperative assignments, and creativity is encouraged by involving students in producing educational vlogs, podcasts, poems, or short plays that address contemporary issues.

Examples of learning activities include project-based tasks in which students create podcasts to express critical opinions on relevant social issues, debate classes that require students to defend arguments grounded in academic reading materials, online discussion forums where students post analytical responses and engage with peers' perspectives, and creative essay-writing activities in which students develop narrative essays based on interviews or personal experiences.

Evaluation and Assessment

The assessment system includes process assessment through observation of students' participation, teamwork, and engagement during learning activities, complemented by product assessment that evaluates written outputs, academic presentations, and creative media projects. In addition, a 4C-based rubric is applied to measure students' critical thinking,

communication effectiveness, collaboration skills, and originality of ideas in an integrated manner.

Technological Integration

Digital learning tools are used to support instruction, including Learning Management Systems (LMS), collaboration platforms such as Google Docs and Padlet, and creative media tools like Canva and Anchor.fm for podcast production.

4C-Based Skill-Specific Learning Activities

Listening activities are designed to integrate the 4C framework through several stages: (1) Critical Thinking, in which students analyze the content of academic podcasts and identify underlying assumptions or potential bias; (2) Communication, where students discuss and present their interpretations in small-group settings; (3) Collaboration, by jointly developing a mind map that summarizes the key ideas of the podcast; and (4) Creativity, through the production of a one-minute video or audio summary that captures the main points in an engaging format.

Speaking activities integrate the 4C framework through the following components: (1) Critical Thinking, where students conduct debates on social issues by using evidence and data from academic articles; (2) Communication, demonstrated through the delivery of short, well-structured presentations with clear and coherent arguments; (3) Collaboration, achieved by participating in inter-group panel discussions that encourage the exchange of perspectives; and (4) Creativity, through talk-show simulations in which students take turns acting as speakers and moderators.

Reading activities are structured around the 4C framework as follows: (1) Critical Thinking, in which students analyze texts to distinguish main arguments from supporting evidence; (2) Communication, where students present their analytical findings in group discussions; (3) Collaboration, by jointly creating an infographic that summarizes the reading content; and (4) Creativity, through transforming an academic article into a short script for an educational video.

Writing activities incorporate the 4C framework through: (1) Critical Thinking, as students write analytical essays addressing specific issues; (2) Communication, by engaging in peer-review processes to provide constructive mutual feedback; (3) Collaboration, through composing joint articles using collaborative platforms such as Google Docs; and (4) Creativity, by writing Arabic poems or short stories that explore social or educational themes.

Implementation of 4C (Critical Thinking, Creativity, Communication, and Collaboration) in Arabic Language Learning.

The implementation of the 4C approach represents a significant breakthrough in revitalizing the relevance of Arabic language learning amidst contemporary challenges. Arabic is positioned not merely as a tool for understanding classical Islamic scholarship but also as a medium for developing students' character and soft skills. At Nurul Jadid University, this integration is realized through interactive instructional design, project-based assessments, and collaborative tasks among students to complete applied assignments.

This paper explores how the 4C framework is implemented in Arabic language learning at Nurul Jadid University, the strategies employed by lecturers and the institution, as well as the challenges and opportunities arising from its application. Thus, this study is expected to contribute to the development of a contextual and future-oriented model of Arabic language education that aligns linguistic competence with 21st-century learning skills and Islamic educational values.

Implementation of 4C in Arabic Language Learning

Critical Thinking

Text Analysis: Students are required to analyze Arabic texts either classical works (such as *kutub al-turāth*) or modern academic writings such as theses and journal articles and identify their structure, meaning, and contextual relevance. This activity is typically assigned to intermediate and advanced students (semesters 3–6).

Discussion: Students engage in discussions on topics related to the Arabic language and Arab culture. This is commonly implemented in the *Maharah al-Kalam* (speaking skills) course to train students to express their ideas fluently in Arabic.

Problem-Solving: Students are tasked with solving problems related to Arabic, such as translating texts or interpreting cultural contexts. This practice is generally applied to students in semesters 3 and 4 who are taking translation courses (*tarjamah*) both written and oral.

The findings indicate that critical thinking was integrated into Arabic language learning through activities that required students to analyze texts, interpret meanings contextually, and evaluate linguistic structures. Lecturers encouraged students to question vocabulary usage, grammatical patterns, and discourse meaning rather than relying on rote memorization. This approach helped students develop deeper comprehension and increased their ability to apply linguistic knowledge in varied contexts.

Critical Thinking, as one of the main pillars of the 4C competencies, plays a vital role in Arabic language learning. In many educational institutions, Arabic teaching is often limited to memorizing vocabulary and grammar rules without providing sufficient space for students to understand and analyze the material critically kritis (Aziz, Sholehawati, Mufarrohah, & Hosnan, 2023). Within a 4C-based curriculum, critical thinking is implemented through activities such as text analysis, solving linguistic problems, and understanding the cultural context within Arabic texts. This helps students not only master the language mechanically but also grasp the deeper meanings behind the linguistic structures they study.

In educational theory, critical thinking is regarded as the ability to analyze, evaluate, and make decisions based on logic and evidence. This aligns with Bloom's Taxonomy, which places critical thinking at the levels of analysis, synthesis, and evaluation in the learning process (Mujib, 2019). In the context of Arabic language learning, applying critical thinking through text analysis trains students to think logically and systematically. According to Paul and Elder, critical thinking should be taught through practice and application in real-life situations, which corresponds to the text analysis method that deepens linguistic understanding (Rachmantika & Wardono, 2019).

One effective method to foster critical thinking in Arabic learning is text analysis, where students are encouraged to explore texts from grammatical, semantic, and cultural perspectives. This method allows learners to evaluate and interpret textual messages, thereby gaining a deeper understanding of the context. For instance, by analyzing short surahs in the Qur'an or classical Arabic texts (*kutub turats*), students can observe the relationships between words, meanings, and embedded cultural values. Text-based learning like this also trains students to develop habits of logical and critical thinking in understanding the Arabic language.

Vygotsky's theory of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) supports the idea that critical thinking develops when students are guided by teachers or collaborate with peers (Tamrin, Sirate, & Yusuf, 2011). Language plays a crucial role in individual cognitive development, and social interaction is essential in the learning process (Insani, 2025). In Arabic language learning at the higher education level, text analysis enables students to explore meaning within cultural and linguistic contexts, thereby fostering their intellectual independence. This approach also aligns with Piaget's constructivist theory, which posits that learners construct understanding based on their own experiences and gain a deeper grasp of language through active analysis (Wati, Zaim, & Thahar, 2023).

Creativity

Creative Writing: Students are asked to write short stories or poems in Arabic. **Presentation:** Students are required to deliver presentations on topics related to the Arabic language and culture. Each student presenting their paper must do so in Arabic, even though many still struggle with fluency, vocabulary accuracy, and sentence structure. **Project-Based Learning:** Students are encouraged to create projects related to Arabic, such as producing a short film or developing an Arabic learning application.

Creativity was encouraged by allowing students to generate original sentences, create dialogues, and solve linguistic problems in flexible ways. Open-ended tasks and project-based assignments enabled students to experiment with language use creatively, thereby increasing motivation and reinforcing linguistic competence beyond mechanical language practice.

Creativity is a skill often overlooked in conventional Arabic language learning, where the focus usually lies on grammar and translation. However, in the 4C-based curriculum, creativity receives significant attention because it helps students express themselves freely in the target language. Creativity can be fostered through activities such as writing poetry, composing short stories, or even creating songs in Arabic. These activities allow students to explore the language in unique and personal ways, enhancing their interest and engagement in the learning process (Aziz, Sholehawati, Mufarrohah, & Hosnan, 2023).

The Creative Problem Solving (CPS) theory proposed by Osborn and Parnes emphasizes that creativity involves identifying problems and generating innovative solutions. In the context of Arabic language learning, creativity can be developed through tasks such as writing poetry or short stories. CPS supports the 4C curriculum by encouraging students to think beyond conventional boundaries and produce original ideas (Supriyadi, Diana, Saputri, Satiyarti, & Novitasari, 2020). This aligns with the concept of divergent thinking, which refers to the ability to explore multiple solutions—an essential aspect of language learning as a form of personal expression.

A creative approach to Arabic language learning also enhances student motivation. When learners are given the opportunity to produce original works, they become more engaged and motivated to learn (Aziz, Husein, & Syafi'i, 2022). For example, creative projects such as writing Arabic short stories or designing posters with specific vocabulary can effectively apply linguistic knowledge in a practical and enjoyable way. Thus, creativity not only improves students' language skills but also provides a more meaningful and inspiring learning experience.

According to Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination Theory, individuals feel more motivated when they have autonomy over their tasks (Aziz, Husein, & Syafi'i, 2022). In Arabic learning, giving students creative freedom nurtures intrinsic motivation and fosters a deeper interest in the language. Creative projects, such as writing short stories or poems, empower students to take ownership of their learning process, thereby enhancing their engagement. This approach is consistent with constructivist theory, which posits that enjoyable and meaningful learning experiences lead to deeper learning outcomes.

Communication

Conversation Practice: Students are encouraged to engage in Arabic conversations with peers or lecturers. However, in the Arabic Language Education program at Nurul Jadid University, this skill remains relatively underdeveloped due to limited human resources proficient in spoken Arabic. This challenge arises partly because students come from diverse educational backgrounds some having little to no prior exposure to Arabic which often leads to a lack of confidence in communication. **Presentation:** Students are tasked with presenting topics related to the Arabic language and culture. **Discussion:** Students participate in discussions on Arabic and Arab cultural themes to enhance oral interaction.

Communication competence is a crucial yet often neglected aspect of traditional Arabic curricula, which tend to focus more on reading and writing skills. In contrast, the 4C-based curriculum emphasizes the development of comprehensive communication abilities involving listening, speaking, and writing in Arabic. Arabic language learning under this model provides students with opportunities to interact using the target language through discussions, conversations, and debates, fostering confidence and fluency in expressing ideas (Aziz, Sholehawati, Mufarrohah, & Hosnan, 2023).

Communication skills were strengthened by incorporating real-life and contextual tasks, such as role plays, discussions, and situational dialogues. These activities enabled students to practice Arabic in authentic communicative settings, improving fluency, confidence, and

pragmatic language use. Students reported greater engagement and relevance of learning to everyday communication needs.

The Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach, as emphasized in educational communication theory, highlights that language competence extends beyond grammatical accuracy to include social interaction skills (Ilmudinulloh, Bustomi, Pratiwi, & Ilyas, 2022). The 4C-based Arabic curriculum implemented at Nurul Jadid University's Arabic Language Education Program aligns with this perspective, as CLT aims to develop communicative competence and integrates the four core language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Alamri & Abdullah, 2018). In Arabic language instruction, speaking and listening activities such as discussions and debates embody CLT principles by promoting contextual and meaningful language use.

Communicative language teaching has become a dominant method in second and foreign language pedagogy due to the limitations of earlier methods such as Grammar-Translation and Audiolingualism (Tiwari, 2022). To foster effective communication, various strategies are integrated within the 4C framework such as daily conversation simulations, presentations, and role-playing. These activities encourage students to actively use Arabic in real communicative settings, thereby improving fluency and practical language use. Speaking practice in supportive and low-anxiety environments helps students overcome hesitation and fear of making mistakes, while simultaneously enhancing their interpersonal communication and message delivery skills.

According to Vygotsky's social development theory, social interaction is fundamental to language skill development. Activities such as role-plays and simulated conversations allow students to learn from real-life contexts. Vygotsky emphasizes the role of verbal interaction and scaffolding, where guidance from teachers and peers supports learners' linguistic growth. Thus, active communication strategies within the curriculum not only facilitate language acquisition but also enable students to learn collaboratively from their immediate environment (Tamrin, Sirate, & Yusuf, 2011).

Collaboration

Group Work: Students are assigned to work collaboratively on projects or tasks related to the Arabic language. At Nurul Jadid University, an Outcome-Based Education (OBE) Community Service Program (KKN OBE) has been implemented over the past five years. This initiative represents an advancement from the traditional KKN model, designed to be more structured and outcome-oriented with measurable impacts. The program encourages collaboration between lecturers and final-year students by integrating research, teaching, and community service simultaneously over nearly one academic year. Students apply the knowledge they have acquired tailored to their respective disciplines to help communities address real-world problems.

Group Projects: Students are tasked with creating collaborative projects related to Arabic, such as producing Arabic-language vlogs about their daily lives, which are then uploaded to YouTube or other social media platforms.

Collaborative learning was implemented through group discussions, peer teaching, and cooperative problem-solving tasks. Such strategies fostered interaction among students, promoted shared responsibility in learning, and enhanced mutual support in mastering linguistic skills. Collaboration also created a more active and inclusive classroom environment.

Collaboration is a fundamental element of the 4C framework, encouraging students to learn teamwork, share ideas, and solve problems collectively. In Arabic language learning, collaboration can be implemented through group assignments, joint projects, and discussion groups. Through collaboration, students exchange knowledge and assist one another in understanding complex concepts. Moreover, working in groups allows them to explore diverse perspectives, enriching their linguistic understanding while fostering mutual respect and empathy (Aziz, Husein, & Syafi'i, 2022).

Collaboration is also central to Vygotsky's social constructivist theory, which posits that learning is a social process occurring through interaction with others (Tamrin, Sirate, & Yusuf, 2011); (Lestari & Hindun, 2023). In Arabic language education, collaborative learning through projects or group work encourages students to share insights and support each other's comprehension. This creates a supportive learning environment, enabling students to overcome challenges together, thereby enhancing both their linguistic proficiency and social competence.

Collaborative projects such as dialogue creation, drama scripting, or creative Arabic works immerse students in interactive and practical learning experiences. Working collaboratively not only facilitates peer learning but also instills a sense of shared responsibility. Such activities nurture essential social skills like tolerance, respect for diverse opinions, and negotiation ability. Furthermore, these collaborative practices allow students to apply Arabic in realistic communicative contexts, helping them internalize the language as it is used in authentic, everyday interactions.

Challenges, Solutions, and Impacts of Implementing the 4C-Based Curriculum (Critical Thinking, Communication, Collaboration, Creativity) in Enhancing Students' Arabic Language Competence.

Implementation Challenges

Despite its significant benefits, the implementation of the 4C-based curriculum in Arabic language learning faces several notable challenges. One of the primary issues is the limitation of resources and time allocated to support 4C-oriented activities. Moreover, lecturers require adequate training to effectively apply interactive and student-centered learning methods that align with the 4C framework. The readiness and skill of lecturers in managing interactive classrooms, guiding discussions, and facilitating collaborative projects greatly influence the success of the curriculum's implementation. Based on the results of interviews and direct observation, several key challenges were identified:

The implementation of the 4C approach in Arabic Language Education at Nurul Jadid University faces several pedagogical and cultural challenges. First, many first-year students come from diverse educational backgrounds with varying levels of Arabic proficiency, making it difficult for lecturers to apply discussion-based and collaborative 4C strategies uniformly. In addition, Arabic instruction still relies heavily on classical texts and standardized modules, whereas the 4C approach requires more contextual, application-oriented learning resources. The lack of appropriate textbooks and digital media limits the development of students' creativity and communication skills, while the need to integrate modern pedagogical approaches with the pesantren-based values of *adab*, *akhlaq*, and the classical *bayani* tradition requires careful contextualization to ensure harmony with religious foundations.

Another major challenge is the persistence of a passive learning culture, as many students are accustomed to lecture-centered instruction and lack confidence to actively express ideas in Arabic, which hinders the cultivation of critical thinking and communicative competence. These difficulties are compounded by limited facilities and technological infrastructure, such as insufficient devices and unstable internet access, which obstruct project-based and digital learning. Furthermore, lecturers often face heavy administrative workloads that reduce the time and energy available to design and sustain innovative, interactive, and 4C-oriented learning programs.

Strategic Solutions

To support effective implementation of the 4C approach, several strategic measures can be undertaken, starting with mapping students' initial competence through diagnostic assessments at the beginning of the semester to enable differentiated instruction and targeted remedial support. Lecturers should be encouraged to develop innovative, project-based learning modules connected to real-world contexts, supported by institutional collaboration with publishers and digital media developers to provide interactive resources aligned with 4C principles. In addition, continuous training programs are essential, including soft-skill development for students in public speaking, creative writing, and teamwork, as well as professional development for lecturers in active learning strategies and educational

technology. The optimization of technology through learning management systems such as Moodle or Google Classroom can further enhance communication and collaboration in blended learning environments, complemented by long-term investments in digital language laboratories or mini studios for multimedia-based Arabic instruction. Finally, inter-unit collaboration within the university can help reduce lecturers' administrative burdens, with shared responsibility among academic units and student organizations, such as Arabic language clubs, to provide extracurricular spaces for creative practice and peer learning beyond the classroom.

Positive Impacts on Arabic Language Competence of PBA Students

4C-based learning in Arabic education enhances students' intellectual and linguistic competencies by integrating critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity in a holistic manner. Students develop *istidlal* and *tafkir naqdi* skills through the critical analysis of classical and contemporary Arabic texts, including Qur'anic verses, hadiths, and literary works, by questioning meaning, context, and relevance, thereby strengthening the *bayani* and exegetical traditions through modern pedagogical approaches. At the same time, communicative, problem-based, and task-based learning strategies promote proficiency in *muhadatsah* and *kitabah*, enabling students to actively engage in discussions, academic debates, and the production of contextual Arabic digital content. Collaborative learning further cultivates active academic engagement as students work in teams to produce papers, presentations, and translation projects, fostering openness to diverse perspectives. Moreover, creativity is developed as students move beyond grammatical memorization to produce literary works, performances, and multimedia projects, making Arabic language learning more dynamic, meaningful, and relevant to real-life contexts.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this study have important practical implications for Islamic higher education. Integrating the 4C model into the Arabic language curriculum provides a strategic framework for strengthening students' linguistic competence while simultaneously developing essential 21st-century skills. Islamic higher education institutions can use this approach to revitalize Arabic language teaching by making it more contextual, communicative, and relevant to real-life and professional needs. Furthermore, the study highlights the importance of enhancing lecturers' pedagogical capacity through targeted professional development focused on critical, collaborative, and creative teaching practices. At an institutional level, 4C-based curriculum innovation supports the mission of Islamic universities to produce graduates who are not only academically and religiously grounded but also adaptive, competitive, and innovative in responding to contemporary global challenges.

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