TEACHING OBJECTIVES OF THE ARABIC CONVERSATION COURSE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract	This study aims to identify the objectives of teaching the Arabic conversation course and examine the extent to which they align with the Reference Framework for Teaching Arabic to Speakers of Other Languages (Al-Imtāʿ) at Al-Raudhah Al-Hasanah College of Educational Sciences in Medan. This research is a library-based study employing a qualitative, descriptive approach. The primary data consist of the teaching plan for the Conversation course and the Reference Framework for Teaching Arabic to Speakers of Other Languages (Al-Imtāʿ), while the secondary data include relevant books, scholarly articles, and related training materials. Data were collected through documentation and interviews. The data analysis technique used was content analysis, conducted in three stages: data collection, classification, and alignment with the Reference Framework for Teaching Arabic to Speakers of Other Languages (Al-Imtāʿ). The findings indicate that the Conversation course at Al-Raudhah Al-Hasanah College of Educational Sciences in Medan primarily focuses on speaking skills through productive oral expression. Conversation I includes 19 objectives, Conversation II 16 objectives, and Conversation III 16 objectives, which emphasize students' abilities in narration, expression, explanation, discussion, presentation, and presentation writing. Overall, these objectives align with only 6 of the 24 descriptors of the Reference Framework for Teaching Arabic to Speakers of Other Languages (Al-Imtāʿ). Several objectives align with the Preparatory, Proficiency, and Distinction levels; however, the course objectives were not fully aligned with the framework, as they include writing-related objectives and fail to address 18 of its descriptors.
Keywords	Conversation, Reference Framework for Teaching Arabic to Speakers of Other Languages (Al-Imtāʿ), Teaching Objectives.

INTRODUCTION

The teaching process is an interaction between students and the teacher through the content or learning materials within the classroom, in which the teacher plays the role of a guide and supervisor in helping students acquire knowledge and sciences, develop skills, dispositions, and behavior, as well as build self-confidence so that students can learn effectively (Khalilullah, 2011). The teaching of Arabic is one of the most prominent educational fields that has received wide attention in educational institutions across the Islamic world, due to Arabic's religious, cultural, and civilizational status. It is the language of the Holy Qur'an and the Prophetic Sunnah, and a key to understanding Islamic heritage and religious sciences. Therefore, teaching Arabic to speakers of other languages is not merely a linguistic process, but also a religious, cognitive, cultural, and civilizational process. The process of teaching Arabic to speakers of other languages at universities aims to enable students to master the four language skills (ṣinī, 1995).

Language skills overlap and complement one another in natural language use (Ṣidqī et al., 2021). Speaking skills are the primary form of linguistic communication for any individual and the most important part of language practice, and they are considered essential in the teaching and learning of Arabic (Ḥasan, 1985). Speaking skills hold a special position because they are a direct tool for communication and the expression of ideas (Suja'i, 2008). It helps develop students' ability to use Arabic as an oral means of communication among members of society and enables them, in particular, to master communicative and contextual speaking skills (Sudjani & Gunadi, 2020). Although instructional materials play an important role after the teacher (L. Fitriani, 2018), they must be designed and developed in harmony with educational objectives and the students' surrounding environment (Nurlaila, 2020). The speaking skill course focuses on developing the ability to speak the language, whether through public speaking or conversation (Munir, 2017). Speaking skills are taught under the title "Teaching Speaking," as stated in the minutes of the focused group discussion meeting of the Vice Rectors of Indonesian universities No. 06/Forum-WR-WK1/PP.00.10/07/2024, or under the title "Speaking Skill Course" itself, or the "Conversation Course." The Conversation Course is offered as a practical application of speaking skills, aiming to enable students to practice the language in real or semi-real-life situations in accordance with specified educational objectives (Draft Ranting Ilmu, 2024). Thus, the objectives of teaching the Conversation Course are not limited to developing students' ability in correct pronunciation and proper expression, but also to enabling them to use the language in both daily and academic

communication contexts (al-Fawzān, 2010).

The Department of Arabic Language Education at the College of Al-Raudhah Al-Hasanah for Educational Sciences in Medan is one of the departments that seeks to develop an educational process in line with the demands of the modern era, with a focus on developing students' Arabic language skills, especially speaking skill, as a primary goal in preparing teachers and researchers capable of communicating in Arabic in various academic and educational fields. Accordingly, the department has decided that teaching the four language skills should be compulsory courses in its curriculum. Speaking skills are taught over three academic semesters under the titles Conversation I, Conversation II, and Conversation III. However, these courses were neither divided nor were their curriculum designed according to any existing foreign language teaching standards, as stated by the lecturer of the Conversation Course, because the Department of Arabic Language Education granted the Conversation lecturer the freedom to prepare the teaching plan and determine its objectives (Hermawan, 2014). This is extremely unfortunate because it affects students' abilities, as instructional materials should be selected by the lecturer based on students' backgrounds and arranged progressively. There should also be coherence between the content of each semester, and the courses should be organized systematically according to the competencies or objectives intended to be achieved (Nurzaelani, 2018).

Therefore, the lecturer should formulate the objectives of the Conversation Course based on a certain framework, because a reference framework serves as an educational guide that makes the objectives enjoyable and engaging for students (Saputra & Musthofa, 2022), so that they do not feel bored or psychologically pressured during the lesson, and ensures that the objectives are compatible with the nature of the Arabic language itself (Khalīl, 2018). It also aims to enhance and facilitate cooperation among educational institutions in different countries, provide a sound basis for the mutual recognition of language qualifications, and assist those working in the field of language teaching and learning, such as teachers, lecturers, curriculum planners for foreign and instructional languages, course designers, examination bodies, and language learners in defining and coordinating their efforts. Accordingly, the reference framework serves as a guide for curriculum development, describing language competencies, marking and correcting examinations, assessing language learning needs, designing courses to develop instructional materials, formulating language policies, conducting self- and continuous assessment, and developing teacher training programs (ʿAmshah et al., 2017). Since the mid-twentieth century, experts in teaching languages to

non-native speakers have produced several reference frameworks under different names, such as scales, descriptors, and guidelines. At the end of 2023, a reference framework specifically for teaching Arabic to speakers of other languages was published under the title The Reference Framework for Teaching Arabic to Speakers of Other Languages (Al-Imtāʿ).

The Reference Framework for Teaching Arabic to Speakers of Other Languages (Al-Imtāʿ) is a modern reference document published at the end of 2023 by experts in the Arabic language and its teaching, under the supervision of the Educational Center for the Arabic Language for the Gulf States, chaired by Professor Dr. Ali ʿAbd al-Muhsin al-Hudaibi (Al-Ḥudaybī, 2023). This framework aims to define the basic requirements for developing Arabic curricula and programs for non-native speakers, as well as for preparing and training teachers in accordance with modern scientific standards. It also seeks to fill a scientific gap in the Arab world and to keep pace with well-known global initiatives such as the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) and the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). The framework consists of three main components: authorship, teaching, and training. It also gives special attention to integrating modern technology into Arabic instruction, as well as to the education of children, learners with special needs, and those with learning difficulties. The framework defines objectives and standards for vocabulary selection, the design of activities and exercises, teaching strategies, and assessment methods, and establishes standard levels for teachers and training programs. The language proficiency levels in *Al-Imtāʿ* are built upon four main levels: Preparation, which focuses on sounds and simple expressions; Competency, which concerns the initial use of language in life situations; Excellence, which enables learners to communicate effectively and understand complex texts; and Fluency, which represents full mastery of the language and literary appreciation. Under these levels are ten sub-levels that progress from the simplest skills to the highest degrees of linguistic proficiency, allowing students to develop gradually until they can express themselves fluently and accurately, understand diverse texts, and participate in various cognitive and cultural domains (Al-Khalīj, 2023).

Media Indonesia reported that the number of unemployed people in Indonesia has reached 208 million, of whom 14 percent are university graduates (Nua, 2022). The lack of mastery among university graduates of the expected competencies determined by universities is considered one of the reasons for this figure (Syaifullah & Izzah, 2019). Among the causes of failure to achieve these objectives after the educational process are the mismatch between objectives and the characteristics

of the language, the students, and the surrounding environment of the student community, as well as the lack of alignment between instructional materials and objectives, in addition to the confusion between the objectives of the Conversation Course and those of the other three language skills (Muḥammad & Al-Salām, 2017). Teaching the Conversation Course in Indonesia has become an important issue amid growing interest in the Arabic language and culture. This phenomenon has prompted many educational institutions to begin offering Arabic language programs, necessitating the evaluation of the instructional materials, methods, and methodologies used in these programs (Mahmud, 2020).

If the objectives specified in the curriculum do not correspond to students' needs, the development of knowledge, or labor market demands, this may lead to instructional materials that lack integration between theoretical and practical aspects. As a result, students fail to achieve comprehensive competence and struggle to link theory to practice because of a gap between what they learn in the classroom and the needs of society and the professional world. Likewise, the absence of a reference framework or clear standards for formulating educational objectives within the curriculum leads to inconsistent achievement of student competencies and difficulty in ensuring continuous educational quality. The negative impact on students is a sense of confusion about the direction of their studies due to the absence of an organized, standards-based educational process, as well as their inability to develop critical, creative, and integrative thinking, despite the urgent need for these abilities in the modern era. Graduates also face negative consequences, such as insufficient preparedness to confront global challenges, whether academically, such as continuing their studies, or professionally, such as teaching Arabic conversation, and a limited ability to compete, which negatively affects the level of confidence among stakeholders from society and educational institutions.

Some previous study are: (Mūlyādī et al., 2022), in their study entitled Analytical Studies of the Curriculum at the General Secondary Education Level Based on the Common European Framework of Reference, found that the core competencies for teaching Arabic in the tenth grade consist of A1, A2, and C1 levels; in the eleventh grade, A1, A2, B1, A1, B1, and A2; and in the twelfth grade, B1 and A1. In addition, the study concluded that the core competencies for teaching Arabic in secondary schools do not align with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). (Al-Raḥmān et al., 2022), In their study entitled Analytical Study of the Content of Arabic Language Textbooks at the Secondary Education Level Based on the Common European

Framework of Reference (CEFR), concluded that Arabic language textbooks for the tenth grade contain only A1, A2, and B1 level materials, while textbooks for the eleventh and twelfth grades contain B1 and B2 level materials.

(Saputra & Musthofa, 2022), in their study entitled Analysis of an Arabic Language Textbook for Senior High Schools or Vocational Education of the Muhammadiyah Association in Relation to Speaking Skills Based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), found that the Arabic language textbook entitled Teaching Arabic in Senior High Schools or Vocational Education of the Muhammadiyah Association, written by Hilmi Fauzi Aulia and Fauzi, corresponds to the A1, A2, and B1 levels. The textbook was evaluated as containing materials aimed at enhancing students' speaking skills on topics such as travel, desires, hopes, dreams, and aspirations, and at preparing students to express personal experiences and narrate past events using simple sentences. (Zahra, 2022) In her study entitled Content Analysis of the Arabic Language Series Book in the Light of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), she found that the Arabic language series book is characterized by the inclusion of a teacher's guide, is organized comprehensively and gradually, and contains Islamic values and culture. The level of alignment was 40%, covering alignment with the curriculum, competencies, teaching methods, cultural aspects, and assessment. (Zahid et al., 2023)In their study entitled Al-Arabiyyah Bayna Yadayk: Skills Materials According to the Common European Framework of Reference, they found that the speaking skills component in Al-Arabiyyah Bayna Yadayk, Volume One, consists of seven themes, five operational competencies, and five types of exercises. They also concluded that the speaking skills materials in Al-Arabiyyah Bayna Yadayk, Volume One, fall within the A1–B1 levels of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

Given the importance of the conversation course in developing students' Arabic language skills and the fact that the Reference Framework for Teaching Arabic to Speakers of Other Languages (Al-Imtāʿ) is one of the most recent frameworks prepared by experts from various countries, this study aims to analyze and evaluate the objectives of teaching the conversation course at the Faculty of Education Sciences, Al-Raudhah Al-Hasanah College, Medan. Specifically, it seeks to describe these objectives and examine their alignment with the Al-Imtāʿ framework in order to improve the quality and outcomes of conversation teaching and to contribute to comparative research in Arabic language education for non-native speakers. This study differs from previous research in its focus on instructional objectives rather than curriculum or content, its use of the Al-Imtāʿ framework

rather than the CEFR, and its research context at the university level.

METHOD

This study is a library-based research employing a qualitative approach and a descriptive method. The researcher describes the objectives of the conversation course as stated in the teaching plans of the Arabic Language Education Department at the Faculty of Education Sciences, Al-Raudhah Al-Hasanah College, Medan, and then analyzes and compares them with the Reference Framework for Teaching Arabic to Speakers of Other Languages (Al-Imtāʿ) (Arikunto, 2023.). The data are descriptive in nature, with primary sources consisting of official documents from the conversation course teaching plans and the Al-Imtāʿ framework. In contrast, secondary sources include relevant books, scholarly articles, and training materials. Data were collected through documentation and interviews, particularly with the lecturer of the conversation course. Data analysis was conducted using content analysis through three stages: data collection, classification into main themes, and alignment with the Al-Imtāʿ framework to reach accurate conclusions (Awzī, 1993).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Teaching the Conversation Course

Teaching conversation focuses on speaking as a core language skill that enables communication and cultural expression, since knowing a language requires the ability to understand others and express thoughts, feelings, and intentions. Arabic consists of four skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing with speaking being an active, productive, and interactive skill. The general aim of teaching speaking is to help students use Arabic in daily life and understand religious texts such as the Qur'an. For non-native speakers, proficiency in speaking must be developed through continuous practice and training. Therefore, speaking is often taught as a dedicated conversation course that plays an important role in both academic and social contexts.

Conversation courses are academic subjects within Arabic-language programs for non-native speakers at many institutes and schools. They aim to train students to speak Arabic in natural or simulated real-life situations, based on the principle of communication, where educational value is achieved when learners can express their needs and ideas accurately and understandably.

Conversation is often considered a supplementary subject consisting of graded dialogues across various life contexts to strengthen communicative skills. Although in some institutions it is used to refer generally to speaking skills by naming a part to represent the whole—it essentially encompasses the full range of speaking skills, with the term conversation specifically highlighting its practical and communicative dimensions. Consequently, linguists differ on the distinction between speaking skill and conversation: one view considers them synonymous, as held by scholars such as Hasan Muhammad Hasan, Khalid al-Harbi, and Hamid Sidqi, while another view, supported by Ta'imah and CEFR experts, distinguishes them by seeing speaking as broader and conversation as more specific. In this latter view, speaking encompasses all forms of oral expression, such as speeches, presentations, discussions, conversations, and debates. In contrast, conversation is limited to dialogic exchange between two or more participants in natural situations, making it a part of speaking rather than its equivalent.

Objectives of Teaching the Conversation Course at Al-Raudhah Al-Hasanah College of Education, Medan

Table 1. "Al-Imtāʿ" Descriptors of Speaking Skills in the Objectives of the Three Conversation Courses

Conversation Courses	Levels																						
	Preparation					Proficiency						Excellence						Fluency						
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I		✓		✓					✓		✓													
II			✓						✓															
III														✓							✓			

From the previous table, it is evident that six descriptions from the Reference Framework for Teaching Arabic to Non-Native Speakers "Imtiyaz" for speaking skills are reflected in the objectives of the three conversation courses at Al-Rawdha Al-Hasna College of Education in Madyan. These include two descriptions for the Preparation level, three for the Proficiency level, and one for the Excellence level. Eighteen descriptions are not included. Specifically:

Three missing descriptions for the Foundation level:

1. The learner can pronounce Arabic sounds using isolated vocabulary supported by pictures and modeled examples of those sounds.

2. The learner can distinguish between similar and close sounds, long and short vowels, with difficulty pronouncing certain Arabic sounds that have no equivalent in their native language.

3. The learner can form very simple and short sentences using demonstrative pronouns or singular pronouns and can follow simple instructions accompanied by gestures or intonation.

Three missing descriptions for the Proficiency level:

1. The learner can communicate in consecutive, though not fully coherent, phrases and sentences to express basic needs and some related details.

2. The learner can control the language to a degree that allows understandable communication with someone familiar with interacting with language learners.

3. The learner begins to gain control over the language systems of Arabic.

Five missing descriptions for the Distinction level:

1. The learner can communicate over different time frames in organized, extended discourse to respond to and solve problems, controlling the language sufficiently to interact effectively with unfamiliar listeners.

2. The learner can handle topics related to the self and immediate informal environment and daily interactions, such as conveying news or explaining maps and charts.

3. The learner can make themselves understood when expressing their thoughts.

4. The learner can vary vocabulary, structures, and linguistic styles to present ideas in multiple ways and styles.

5. The learner can express somewhat complex information related to their profession or specialized topics clearly and in detail, performing tasks accurately.

The Reference Framework for Teaching Arabic to Speakers of Other Languages "Al-Imtāʿ"

The Reference Framework for Teaching Arabic to Speakers of Other Languages "Al-Imtāʿ" is a modern document developed in 2023 by experts in Arabic language education under the supervision of the Educational Center for the Arabic Language of the Gulf States. It aims to define the essential requirements for designing curricula and programs for teaching Arabic to non-native speakers on sound scientific foundations, while guiding teaching practices and the preparation, training, and evaluation of teachers. This framework builds on the development of global language frameworks such as FSI, ACTFL, and CEFR, and it is not labeled an "Arab framework" to reflect its inclusiveness, its service to the Arabic language and Islamic heritage, and the possibility of contributions from non-Arab specialists. "Al-Imtāʿ" consists of three main components—authorship (curriculum and materials development), teaching (planning, implementation, and assessment), and training (teacher standards and professional development)—and it also gives special attention to the

use of technology in teaching Arabic, as well as to teaching children, learners with learning difficulties, and those with special needs.

The sub-levels are established by dividing the Preparation and Fluency levels into two stages each, and the Proficiency and Excellence levels into three stages each. These sub-levels are: Preparation 1 (ˈ1), Preparation 2 (ˈ2), Proficiency 1 (ˈ3), Proficiency 2 (ˈ4), Proficiency 3 (ˈ5), Excellence 1 (ˈ6), Excellence 2 (ˈ7), Excellence 3 (ˈ8), Fluency 1 (ˈ9), and Fluency 2 (ˈ10). These levels overlap, as there is no strict boundary between one level and the next.
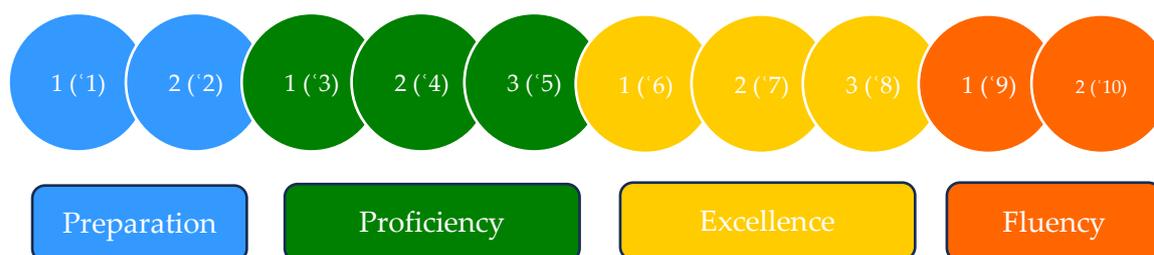
Figure 1. Sub Levels

Preparation Level Descriptors: At this level, learners can pronounce and distinguish basic Arabic sounds, including long and short vowels, though they may struggle with unfamiliar sounds. They can use simple words, short phrases, and very basic sentences—often supported by images, gestures, and memorization to express basic needs in familiar contexts, understand simple instructions, and communicate about their immediate environment. Proficiency Level Descriptors: At this level, learners can communicate using sequences of sentences, though not always fully coherent, to express basic needs and related details. They have growing control of Arabic linguistic systems, can perform simple communicative tasks (such as study, work, shopping, health, and leisure), engage in dialogues with greater confidence, answer guided questions with more detail, and describe people, places, jobs, and everyday situations using simple and clear expressions.

Excellence Level Descriptors: At this level, learners can communicate effectively in extended, well-organized discourse across different time frames, interact confidently with unfamiliar interlocutors, and handle both formal and informal topics related to personal, professional, and specialized contexts. They can clearly convey ideas, present detailed descriptions, summaries, and reports, explain information such as news, maps, or charts, and flexibly vary their vocabulary, structures, and styles to express ideas in multiple ways with notable accuracy and detail. Fluency Level Descriptors: At this level, learners can produce long, well-structured, and creative discourse across various time frames, interact effectively with unfamiliar interlocutors, and demonstrate

advanced control of common and specialized vocabulary and structures. They can deliver detailed descriptions, presentations, and original texts on complex topics across multiple fields, retell stories using Arabic rhetorical skills, adapt their style to different audiences, and self-correct and reorganize their speech fluently and efficiently.

Discussion

Based on the research findings, the objectives of teaching the Conversation course at the Faculty of Educational Sciences, Al-Raudhah Al-Hasanah College in Medan primarily emphasize productive speaking skills, including narration, explanation, opinion expression, presentations, and discussions. However, this focus does not fully represent the true nature of conversation as an interactive communicative skill (Alam & Asyrofi, 2023; Sangid & Muhib, 2019). Most learning activities and objectives remain largely one-directional and individual in nature, and in some cases resemble monologic speaking tasks and video-based assignments rather than two-way dialogic interaction that reflects natural communication. This indicates a shift in meaning between the concept of "conversation" as a dialogic practice and its implementation in classroom instruction (Alifi et al., 2024).

When analyzed using the Reference Framework for Teaching Arabic to Speakers of Other Languages (Al-Imtāʿ), the objectives of Conversation I, II, and III align with only six of the twenty-four speaking skill descriptors. This alignment is limited to the Preparation, Proficiency, and a small portion of the Excellence levels, while none of the objectives correspond to the Fluency level. In addition, eighteen descriptors of the Al-Imtāʿ framework are not addressed, particularly those related to basic phonological mastery, discourse continuity, linguistic flexibility, and the ability to interact with unfamiliar interlocutors. These findings indicate that the formulation of course objectives has not been systematically structured in a progressive manner based on the recommended competency framework (Taibi & Hammachi, 2021).

These findings are consistent with previous studies that reveal mismatches between learning objectives, instructional content, and established language reference frameworks such as the CEFR and Al-Imtāʿ. However, this study is distinctive in that it focuses on instructional objectives rather than curriculum content or textbooks, and in employing the Al-Imtāʿ framework, which is more contextually relevant to Arabic language teaching. The absence of a clear reference framework in formulating course objectives can lead to overlap across course levels, the inclusion of writing skills in conversation courses, and the failure to optimally achieve students' communicative competence

(Aziza & Muliansyah, 2020; Pamuji & Inung Setyami, 2021).

Therefore, this discussion underscores that the weak alignment between the objectives of the Conversation course and the Al-Imtāʿ framework directly affects the quality of instruction and students' competency outcomes. Consequently, it is necessary to reformulate the course objectives based on a clear, progressive, and communicative reference framework so that the Conversation course can genuinely develop students' interactive speaking abilities in accordance with academic and professional needs in the global era.

Furthermore, the limited alignment between the Conversation course objectives and the Al-Imtāʿ framework indicates that the instructional design has not yet fully adopted a communicative and competency-based orientation. In communicative language teaching, objectives should be derived from clearly defined proficiency descriptors that reflect learners' real communicative needs and contexts of language use (Wahyuningsi, 2019). Without such alignment, conversation courses risk becoming fragmented and skill-oriented in isolation, rather than serving as an integrated platform for developing interactive speaking competence. This condition may reduce students' opportunities to practice authentic dialogue, negotiate meaning, and respond spontaneously in Arabic, which are core elements of conversational proficiency.

Another important issue revealed by the findings is the inclusion of writing-related objectives within the Conversation course. Although speaking and writing are both productive skills, they require different cognitive processes, instructional strategies, and assessment criteria. The presence of writing objectives in a course intended to develop oral communication suggests a lack of clarity in distinguishing between language skills within the curriculum (Salama et al., 2022). This overlap may lead to inefficiency in learning outcomes, as students are not given sufficient focus and time to develop oral interaction skills progressively, particularly at higher proficiency levels. Similar concerns have been raised in previous studies on Arabic language curricula, which emphasize the need for clear skill separation and coherent progression across courses (Ma'ruf, 2021; Rifa'i, 2021).

From a pedagogical perspective, the absence of Fluency-level descriptors in the Conversation course objectives reflects a limited vision of long-term speaking development. Fluency represents the highest stage of language mastery, where learners are expected to communicate effortlessly, adapt their speech to different audiences, and produce extended discourse with accuracy and flexibility (Nuh et al., 2025). The lack of objectives targeting this level may hinder students' readiness

for professional, academic, and intercultural communication contexts, especially in an era when Arabic-language graduates are expected to compete globally. This finding supports arguments that higher education language programs must explicitly incorporate advanced communicative goals to meet labor market and societal demands (Miolo, 2025).

Moreover, the results highlight the importance of reference frameworks, such as Al-Imtāʿ, for ensuring quality assurance and standardization in Arabic language education. Reference frameworks provide a common language for curriculum designers, instructors, and evaluators to define competencies, design learning activities, and assess learning outcomes objectively. The absence of such a framework in formulating the Conversation course objectives at Al-Raudhah Al-Hasanah College may explain the inconsistencies across course levels and the uneven distribution of competencies. Therefore, adopting Al-Imtāʿ as a guiding framework could enhance curricular coherence, promote continuity across semesters, and facilitate benchmarking with other Arabic language programs nationally and internationally.

In light of these findings, this study reinforces the argument that instructional objectives should not be formulated independently of established proficiency standards. Instead, they should be systematically mapped to reference frameworks that reflect the linguistic, communicative, and cultural dimensions of language use. By aligning Conversation course objectives with the Al-Imtāʿ framework, institutions can ensure that students progress from basic pronunciation and simple exchanges to advanced interactive fluency in a structured and measurable manner. Such alignment is essential not only for improving instructional effectiveness but also for strengthening the credibility and competitiveness of Arabic language education programs in higher education.

CONCLUSION

The conversation course at Al-Raudhah Al-Hasanah College of Educational Sciences in Medan focuses on productive speaking skills through video-based activities rather than interactive communication. Across three course levels, the objectives emphasize narration, expression, explanation, presentation, discussion, and limited writing, with varying distributions of objectives at each level. Overall, these objectives align with only six of the twenty-four descriptors of the Reference Framework for Teaching Arabic to Speakers of Other Languages "Al-Imtāʿ," mainly at the Preparatory, Competency, and Excellence levels, while none correspond to the Fluency level, and many descriptors are not addressed. The objectives also overlap across levels and include

writing skills, suggesting they were not systematically designed according to the "Al-Imtāʿ" framework. Therefore, the study recommends that future researchers, particularly at Al-Raudhah Al-Hasanah College, explicitly design conversation course objectives in accordance with recognized reference frameworks, particularly "Al-Imtāʿ," and propose a future curriculum aligned with this framework and communicative theory.

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