

Best Practices for Teaching Speaking Skills Based on Management Aspects and ACTFL Proficiency Levels at STIBA Ar Raayah

Fuad Munajat, M. Imam Zaenal Abidin

Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kudus

Corresponding author: fuadmunajat@iainkudus.ac.id

Abstract

*This study examines the implementation of Arabic speaking instruction (*mahārat al-kalām*) at STIBA Ar Raayah through the interaction between educational management practices and the application of ACTFL proficiency levels. Adopting a descriptive qualitative design, the research draws on classroom observations, interviews with students and instructors, and document analysis of curriculum materials and ACTFL-related guidelines to capture institutional patterns of curriculum organization, instructional practice, and assessment. The findings indicate that Arabic speaking instruction at STIBA Ar Raayah is institutionally concentrated during the preparatory year (*I'dād*), supported by centralized curriculum management, staged instructional design, and sustained Arabic exposure through residential living and Arabic-medium instruction. ACTFL proficiency levels function as a guiding framework for instructional alignment and formative assessment rather than as rigid benchmarks for outcome measurement. Extracurricular speaking activities operate as complementary spaces for practice and refinement, while the immersive language environment (*bī'ah lughawīyah*) provides continuous opportunities for language use beyond formal instruction. Overall, the study presents a context-specific best practice model in which curricular alignment, proficiency*

frameworks, and learning environments interact to support Arabic speaking development. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of how educational management can sustain proficiency-oriented language instruction within institutional contexts.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji pelaksanaan pembelajaran keterampilan berbicara bahasa Arab di STIBA Ar Raayah melalui interaksi antara praktik manajemen pendidikan dan penerapan tingkat kemahiran ACTFL. Penelitian menggunakan desain kualitatif deskriptif dengan pengumpulan data melalui observasi kelas, wawancara dengan mahasiswa dan dosen, serta analisis dokumen kurikulum dan pedoman ACTFL untuk menggambarkan pola kelembagaan dalam perencanaan kurikulum, pelaksanaan pembelajaran, dan praktik asesmen. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pembelajaran berbicara bahasa Arab di STIBA Ar Raayah dipusatkan secara institusional pada tahap persiapan, yang didukung oleh manajemen kurikulum terpusat, desain pembelajaran bertahap, serta paparan bahasa Arab yang berkelanjutan melalui sistem asrama dan penggunaan bahasa Arab sebagai bahasa pengantar. Tingkat kemahiran ACTFL berfungsi sebagai kerangka acuan dalam penyelarasan pembelajaran dan asesmen formatif, bukan sebagai tolok ukur capaian yang bersifat kaku. Kegiatan berbicara di luar kelas berperan sebagai pelengkap untuk praktik dan penyempurnaan keterampilan, sementara lingkungan bahasa menyediakan kesempatan penggunaan bahasa secara berkesinambungan di luar pembelajaran formal. Secara keseluruhan, penelitian ini menunjukkan praktik terbaik yang bersifat kontekstual, di mana penyelarasan kurikulum, kerangka kemahiran, dan lingkungan belajar berinteraksi dalam mendukung pengembangan keterampilan berbicara bahasa Arab. Temuan ini memberikan pemahaman yang lebih mendalam tentang peran manajemen pendidikan dalam menopang pembelajaran bahasa yang berorientasi pada kemahiran di tingkat kelembagaan.

الملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحليل تنفيذ تعليم مهارة الكلام في اللغة العربية في جامعة الراية لعلوم اللغة العربية من خلال التفاعل بين ممارسات الإدارة التعليمية وتطبيق مستويات الكفاءة اللغوية وفق إطار المجلس الأمريكي لتعليم اللغات الأجنبية. اعتمدت الدراسة المنهج الوصفي النوعي، وجمعت البيانات من خلال الملاحظة الصافية، والمقابلات مع الطلبة والمدرسين، وتحليل الوثائق المتعلقة بالمناهج الدراسية وإرشادات المجلس الأمريكي لتعليم اللغات الأجنبية، وذلك للكشف عن الأنماط المؤسسية في تخطيط المنهج، وتنفيذ التعليم، وممارسات التقويم. وتبين نتائج الدراسة أن تعليم مهارة الكلام في المدرسة العليا لعلوم اللغة العربية الراية يركز عليه مؤسسيًا في المرحلة الإعدادية. مدومًا بإدارة منهجية مركبة، وتصميم تعليمي مرحلي، وتعرض مستمر للغة العربية من خلال نظام السكن الداخلي واعتماد العربية لغة للتدريس. وتستخدم مستويات المجلس الأمريكي لتعليم اللغات الأجنبية بوصفها إطاراً مرجعياً لتنسيق التعليم والتقويم التكوفي، لا باعتبارها معايير جامدة لقياس المخرجات. كما تؤدي الأنشطة اللامنهجية دوراً تكميلياً في إتاحة فرص الممارسة وصقل المهارات، في حين توفر البيئة اللغوية (البيئة اللغوية) فرضاً مستمرة لاستخدام اللغة خارج نطاق التعليم الرسمي. وبوجه عام، تبرز هذه الدراسة نموذجاً للممارسات الفضلى ذات الطابع السياقي، حيث تتكامل مواءمة المنهج، وإطار الكفاءة، وبيئة التعلم في دعم تنمية مهارة الكلام باللغة العربية. وتسمم النتائج في تعميق الفهم بدور الإدارة التعليمية في دعم التعليم اللغوي القائم على الكفاءة على المستوى المؤسسي.

Keywords: ACTFL; Arabic oral proficiency; educational management; immersive language environment; language preparatory program

Introduction

Educational management at STIBA Ar Raayah is oriented toward the systematic organization of time, human resources, and curriculum to support the achievement of instructional goals. Through structured management practices, the institution seeks to ensure that learning processes are

effectively coordinated in order to foster students' competencies, particularly Arabic speaking skills (*mahārat al-kalām*). Previous studies have emphasized that effective educational management plays a critical role in supporting learning quality through the coordination of instructors, instructional materials, and assessment practices.¹ In this regard, management is not merely an administrative function but a strategic mechanism that shapes the organization and coherence of students' learning experiences.

Within the broader context of higher education development, institutions are increasingly required to align teaching practices with internationally recognized standards and learners' communicative needs. STIBA Ar Raayah responds to this demand by integrating pedagogical planning and standardized proficiency frameworks into Arabic language instruction. Managing learning resources and instructional processes is therefore essential for creating an environment that supports meaningful language use and communicative competence. Consequently, educational management at STIBA Ar Raayah extends beyond logistical coordination to curriculum design aligned with internationally recognized proficiency standards, such as those established by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL).²

Speaking skills (*mahārat al-kalām*) constitute a central component of Arabic language mastery at STIBA Ar Raayah. To guide the development and assessment of these skills, the

¹ Zainul Arifin et al., "Arabic Language Learning Approach Using Smart Technology in Higher Education," *Izdihar : Journal of Arabic Language Teaching, Linguistics, and Literature* 6, no. 1 (2023): 1-12, <https://doi.org/10.22219/jiz.v6i1.25011>.

² Dian Islamiyati and Farikh Marzuki Ammar, "Challenges and Solutions in Maharah Kalam Learning: A Qualitative Study in an Islamic Junior High School in Sidoarjo, Indonesia," *Indonesian Journal of Islamic Studies* 11, no. 2 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.21070/ijis.v11i2.1662>.

institution adopts the ACTFL proficiency framework, which categorizes speaking ability into three principal levels: Novice, Intermediate, and Advanced. This proficiency-oriented framework enables instructors to describe students' communicative development more systematically and to align instructional strategies with learners' proficiency characteristics. Periodic evaluations referencing ACTFL descriptors function primarily as formative tools that support instructional adjustment and ongoing development in speaking performance, reflecting principles of criterion-referenced assessment.³ Through this structured approach, the institution emphasizes students' ability to communicate effectively in both social and academic contexts.

Previous studies have explored various strategies for enhancing Arabic speaking skills through pedagogical and curricular approaches. Asmara and Mustofa, for instance, examined Arabic speaking instruction at the school level and reported that learners often experience negative perceptions of Arabic due to its perceived complexity, highlighting the need for more engaging instructional practices.⁴ Similarly, Haq demonstrated that game-based learning can foster interactive learning environments that support speaking development.⁵ Other studies have emphasized the importance of aligning Arabic language curricula with international frameworks, such as the CEFR, to address learners' communicative needs more

³ Ibnu Burdah, *Melejitkan Bahasa Arab Aktif Melalui Strategi Debat* (Malang: CV Lisan Arabi, 2016).

⁴ Linda Asmara and Triono Ali Mustofa, "Strategi Guru Bahasa Arab dalam Meningkatkan Maharotul Kalam di MTs. Husnul Khotimah Kuningan," *Jurnal Onoma: Pendidikan, Bahasa, dan Sastra* 10, no. 2 (2024): 1531–41, <https://doi.org/10.30605/onoma.v10i2.3557>.

⁵ Muhammad A'inul Haq, "Pengaruh Permainan Truth or Dare Terhadap Ketrampilan Bicara Bahasa Arab Siswa," *Journal of Education and Religious Studies* 1, no. 3 (2021): 102–7, <https://doi.org/10.57060/jers.v1i03.48>.

effectively.⁶ While these studies provide valuable insights into instructional strategies and curriculum alignment, they offer limited discussion on how institutional management and standardized proficiency frameworks interact in shaping speaking instruction.

Building on this gap, the present study examines the implementation of the ACTFL proficiency framework within the context of educational management at STIBA Ar Raayah. Rather than focusing solely on classroom techniques, this study explores how curriculum planning, instructional coordination, and assessment practices are organized to support Arabic speaking instruction. The guiding research question of this study is: How is the ACTFL-based proficiency framework implemented within educational management practices to support Arabic speaking instruction at STIBA Ar Raayah? By addressing this question, the study seeks to clarify the relationship between educational management structures and proficiency-oriented speaking instruction within an institutional context.⁷

Methodologically, this research adopts a descriptive qualitative design to capture in-depth perspectives on teaching practices and learning experiences. Data were collected through interviews with 15 students and five instructors at STIBA Ar Raayah, selected based on the principle of data saturation to ensure analytical adequacy. Students participating in the study had completed at least one semester of Arabic instruction, while instructors possessed a minimum

⁶ Salman Alfarisi and Ari Septiawati, "Suitability of Maharah Kalam Learning Achievement in JSIT Arabic Learning Curriculum With CEFR," *Al-Hikmah: Jurnal Agama Dan Ilmu Pengetahuan* 19, no. 2 (2023): 231–55, [https://doi.org/10.25299/al-hikmah:jaip.2022.vol19\(2\).9543](https://doi.org/10.25299/al-hikmah:jaip.2022.vol19(2).9543).

⁷ Abdul Aziz Hasibuan, Darwyan Syah, and Marzuki Marzuki, "Manajemen Pendidikan Karakter di SMA," *Tarbawi: Jurnal Keilmuan Manajemen Pendidikan* 4, no. 2 (2018): 191–212, <https://doi.org/10.32678/tarbawi.v4i02.1230>.

of two years of experience teaching *mahārat al-kalām*. In addition, document analysis was conducted on the Arabic language curriculum, ACTFL instructional guidelines, and classroom teaching materials to contextualize the integration of proficiency standards. Classroom observations further complemented the data by examining instructional methods, teacher-student interaction, speaking activities, and levels of learner engagement. Through this integrated methodological approach, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how ACTFL-based proficiency assessment and educational management interact to support Arabic speaking instruction at STIBA Ar Raayah.

Results

The findings of this study describe how Arabic speaking skills (*mahārat kalām*) are implemented at STIBA Ar Raayah through the interaction between educational management practices and the application of ACTFL proficiency levels. Rather than measuring causal effects, the results highlight patterns of curriculum organization, instructional implementation, and assessment practices that shape students' speaking development within the institutional context.

Institutional Context and Program Characteristics

STIBA Ar Raayah positions Arabic language education as a core institutional priority. The Arabic Language Education program is one of the flagship programs of the institution and is supported by a learning environment in which Arabic functions as the primary medium of instruction. Based on document analysis and institutional records, STIBA Ar Raayah employs several native Arabic-speaking instructors and implements a residential learning system in which all students live in dormitories. This boarding-based environment creates continuous exposure to Arabic beyond formal classroom

instruction and distinguishes STIBA Ar Raayah from most Islamic higher education institutions in Indonesia.

The vision and mission of the program emphasize academic excellence, professional competence in Arabic education, and community engagement. These institutional goals are operationalized through an integrated curriculum that combines elements of *pesantren* education with national higher education standards. This integration forms the structural background for the implementation of Arabic speaking instruction analyzed in this study.

Curriculum Planning and Management of Speaking Skills Learning

Data from interviews and document analysis indicate that curriculum planning at STIBA Ar Raayah follows a centralized and top-down management model. Preparatory meetings are conducted at the beginning of each semester, involving academic leaders such as the Deputy Academic Affairs, program coordinators, and institutional authorities. Instructors receive semester learning plans (*RPS*) in advance, ensuring consistency between instructional objectives and institutional expectations.

A key managerial characteristic identified in the findings is the separation between language skills instruction and undergraduate coursework. Speaking (*kalām*), listening (*istimā*), reading (*qirā'ah*), and writing (*kitābah*) skills are institutionally designated to be completed during the preparatory year (*I'dād lughawi*). This decision reflects the historical development of STIBA Ar Raayah from an Islamic boarding school system, where intensive language preparation precedes academic specialization. Consequently, by the time students enter the undergraduate (S1) phase, formal courses in speaking skills are no longer offered.

Implementation of Arabic Speaking Instruction

The implementation of Arabic speaking instruction at STIBA Ar Raayah occurs through three interrelated forms: intracurricular learning, extracurricular activities, and the linguistic environment (*bī'ah lughawīyah*). This study focuses primarily on intracurricular implementation during the preparatory year.

During the *I'dād* stage, students receive intensive instruction in pronunciation (*aṣwāt*), vocabulary (*mufradāt*), and grammatical structures (*tarākib*), alongside systematic training in speaking and listening skills. Observations reveal that students engage in Arabic instruction for several hours daily, following a structured schedule that integrates language learning with religious and general subjects. Instructors reported that this intensive format is designed to build foundational speaking competence before students encounter Arabic-medium instruction in content courses.

In contrast to some other Islamic higher education institutions, STIBA Ar Raayah does not continue formal speaking skills courses at the undergraduate level. Instead, Arabic is used as the medium of instruction across most subjects for the remaining four years of study. According to interview data, this practice is perceived by instructors as reinforcing speaking skills implicitly, as students are required to communicate in Arabic in academic and residential settings.

Assessment Practices and ACTFL Proficiency Levels

Assessment of speaking skills at STIBA Ar Raayah is aligned with the ACTFL proficiency framework, which categorizes learners' oral ability across levels ranging from Novice to Advanced. Instructors reported using ACTFL descriptors as reference points for evaluating students' speaking performance, particularly during the preparatory year. Periodic assessments are conducted to identify students'

proficiency development in terms of fluency, vocabulary use, and functional communication.

While the ACTFL framework provides a shared standard for assessment, the findings suggest that its application functions primarily as a diagnostic and formative reference rather than as a strict benchmarking tool. Interview data indicate that instructors rely on ACTFL levels to map students' general speaking ability and to adjust instructional emphasis, rather than to assign rigid proficiency labels. This flexible use of ACTFL aligns with the institution's broader management strategy, which prioritizes foundational competence and sustained language exposure.

Summary of Key Empirical Findings

Based on observations, interviews, and document analysis, several empirical findings emerge: (1) Arabic speaking skills instruction at STIBA Ar Raayah is institutionally concentrated during the preparatory year (*I'dād*), with no formal speaking courses at the undergraduate level; (2) Educational management adopts a centralized planning model that integrates *pesantren* traditions with higher education structures; (3) ACTFL proficiency levels are used as a guiding framework for assessment and instructional alignment, rather than as fixed outcome measures; (4) Continuous exposure to Arabic through residential living and Arabic-medium instruction constitutes a central mechanism supporting speaking practice.

These findings provide an empirical foundation for the subsequent discussion on how educational management and proficiency frameworks interact in shaping Arabic speaking instruction at STIBA Ar Raayah.

Discussion

This section discusses the findings by situating them within the ACTFL proficiency framework and relevant perspectives in educational management and second language acquisition. The discussion focuses on interpreting what these findings imply for proficiency-oriented speaking instruction, particularly in relation to curriculum sequencing, assessment alignment, and the institutional conditions that sustain oral language development. By engaging with prior research and theoretical models, this section aims to clarify how educational management functions not merely as a contextual backdrop, but as an active mechanism shaping the design, implementation, and sustainability of Arabic speaking instruction at STIBA Ar Raayah.

Curriculum Management and the Staged Design of Speaking Instruction

The findings show that curriculum management at STIBA Ar Raayah is characterized by centralized, top-down decision making in which the foundation and senior academic leadership determine recruitment, subject allocation, and the overall sequencing of language learning. Viewed through an educational management lens, this centralized governance functions as a mechanism for ensuring curricular coherence; namely, that learning objectives, time allocation, and instructional implementation remain aligned across instructors rather than varying according to individual teaching preferences. Such coherence is widely regarded in management scholarship as a core feature of effective organizational strategy, as it stabilizes instructional expectations and secures consistency of delivery across cohorts.⁸

⁸ Tony Bush, "Educational Leadership and Management: Theory, Policy, and Practice," *South African Journal of Education* 27, no. 3 (2007): 391–406,

Within this governance structure, STIBA Ar Raayah applies a staged model of speaking instruction in which intensive oral-skill development is concentrated in the preparatory year (*I'dād*), while the undergraduate stage emphasizes Arabic-medium academic study rather than stand-alone *kalām* courses. This sequencing reflects an institutional interpretation of proficiency development as a process that must be built early through intensive and structured practice before learners are expected to operate in Arabic as the language of broader academic participation.⁹ In this sense, the "*I'dād* coursework" design represents a curricular pathway rather than a mere scheduling decision: foundational speaking competencies are targeted first, and sustained language use is subsequently expected through Arabic-medium instruction. From the perspective of curriculum design, this approach aligns with established principles of program planning in language education, where curriculum sequencing connects needs analysis, learning goals, syllabus design, and evaluation into a coherent instructional system.¹⁰

The staged design becomes more interpretable when connected to proficiency frameworks such as ACTFL. ACTFL defines proficiency as functional ability across levels (Novice, Intermediate, Advanced, Superior, and Distinguished), articulated through descriptors of task type, communicative

<https://www.sajournalofeducation.co.za/index.php/saje/article/view/107>; Jeong-Mi Moon, Eric M. Camburn, and James Sebastian, "Streamlining Your School: Understanding the Relationship between Instructional Program Coherence and School Performance," *School Effectiveness and School Improvement* 33, no. 2 (2022): 260–79, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09243453.2021.2011750>.

⁹ Lulu Azka, Ummi Nur Hafsoh, and Faishol Mahmoud Adam Ibrahim, "The Challenges of Learning Arabic Listening Skills Using Youtube as a Learning Tool," *Alsina : Journal of Arabic Studies* 6, no. 2 (2024): 229–46, <https://doi.org/10.21580/alsina.6.2.23369>.

¹⁰ Jack C. Richards, *Curriculum Development in Language Teaching*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

context, accuracy, and discourse control rather than through content mastery alone.¹¹ By concentrating speaking instruction earlier, the implicit managerial assumption is that learners should reach an operational baseline that enables meaningful participation in later Arabic-medium academic tasks. This assumption is consistent with ACTFL's proficiency logic, which conceptualizes performance development as emerging from sustained opportunities to use language for communicative functions at progressively demanding levels. The use of the ACTFL proficiency system, which includes three main levels: novice, intermediate, and advanced, facilitates a more focused assessment of students' speaking skills and helps instructors design teaching strategies that cater to the individual needs of students.¹² Students who are periodically assessed based on ACTFL criteria show consistent progress in their speaking abilities, especially in the context of vocabulary usage and speaking fluency.¹³

An additional pedagogically significant nuance emerges from the finding that, during the *I'dād* stage, learners are intentionally kept away from native speakers to avoid demotivation, while intensive instruction focuses on core components (*aṣwāt, mufradāt, tarākīb*) and the four language skills, including speaking.¹⁴ Interpreted through second

¹¹ American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, "ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines," 2024, https://www.actfl.org/uploads/files/general/Resources-Publications/ACTFL_Proficiency_Guidelines_2024.pdf.

¹² Nurul Octavia, Yuli Astutik, and Endang Mastuti Rahayu, "Teachers' Teaching Strategies for Teaching Speaking Skills at Junior High School," *Borneo Educational Journal (Borju)* 5, no. 1 (2023): 37–47, <https://doi.org/10.24903/bej.v5i1.1107>.

¹³ Zhengdong Gan, "Understanding L2 Speaking Problems: Implications for ESL Curriculum Development in a Teacher Training Institution in Hong Kong," *Australian Journal of Teacher Education* 37, no. 1 (2012): 43–59, <https://doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2012v37n1.4>.

¹⁴ Muspika Hendri, "Pembelajaran Keterampilan Berbicara Bahasa Arab Melalui Pendekatan Komunkatif," *POTENSIJA: Jurnal Kependidikan*

language learning theory, this reflects a sequencing decision about the conditions of practice: the institution prioritizes scaffolded and structured practice at an early stage before expanding the communicative environment in later phases. Research on instructed learning and practice supports the general principle that proficiency development is strengthened when practice is planned, sequenced, and repeated under conditions that match learners' readiness, rather than assuming that exposure alone will generate systematic gains.¹⁵

Finally, the STIBA Ar Raayah model highlights an important theoretical implication that can be stated without contradicting the findings. Concentrating *kalām* instruction in the preparatory stage provides a strong foundation; however, continued development beyond this stage depends on whether later Arabic-medium study continues to generate sufficient structured speaking opportunities, such as tasks, interaction, and feedback, to sustain upward movement in proficiency. This is not a challenge to the effectiveness of the staged design, but rather a theoretical consequence of proficiency-oriented curricula, in which long-term gains depend on both early intensive instruction and continued opportunities for meaningful output and interaction in subsequent phases.¹⁶

Islam 3, no. 2 (2017): 196–210,
<https://doi.org/10.24014/potensia.v3i2.3929>.

¹⁵ Robert DeKeyser, ed., *Practice in a Second Language: Perspectives from Applied Linguistics and Cognitive Psychology* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Steven C. Pan et al., "The Synergistic Benefits of Systematic and Random Interleaving for Second Language Grammar Learning," *Journal of Applied Research in Memory and Cognition* 8, no. 4 (2019): 450–62, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jarmac.2019.07.004>; Yuki Yoshimura and Brian MacWhinney, "The Effect of Oral Repetition on L2 Speech Fluency: An Experimental Tool and Language Tutor," in *Speech and Language Technology in Education (SLaTE 2007)* (ISCA: ISCA, 2007), 25–28, <https://doi.org/10.21437/SLaTE.2007-5>.

¹⁶ Chin-Wen Liao et al., "A Practical Curriculum Design and Learning Effectiveness Evaluation of Competence-Oriented Instruction Strategy Integration: A Case Study of Taiwan Skills-Based Senior High School,"

ACTFL Proficiency as an Alignment Framework for Assessment and Management

The findings indicate that ACTFL proficiency levels at STIBA Ar Raayah function not only as a pedagogical reference for evaluating students' oral performance, but also as a management tool for aligning objectives, instruction, and evaluation across the program. In ACTFL's framework, proficiency is defined as the ability to use language to accomplish communicative tasks in real-world contexts and is described through hierarchical levels with performance-based descriptors.¹⁷ Within this logic, the institutional use of ACTFL provides a shared reference for defining expected speaking outcomes, interpreting learner performance, and organizing evaluation cycles consistently across instructors and cohorts.¹⁸

From an assessment perspective, the periodic evaluation and feedback practices described in the findings can be interpreted through the lens of formative assessment, where assessment evidence is actively used to inform instructional adjustment and learner support. Research on assessment for learning emphasizes that feedback becomes effective when it is aligned with explicit criteria and used to guide subsequent teaching decisions.¹⁹ In proficiency-oriented programs, ACTFL descriptors can serve as such criteria, allowing feedback to move beyond general impressions toward functional explanations of performance. From a management standpoint, this shared descriptor-based reference supports coordination,

Behavioral Sciences 13, no. 1 (2023): 43, <https://doi.org/10.3390/bs13010043>.

¹⁷ American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, "ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines."

¹⁸ Octavia, Astutik, and Rahayu, "Teachers' Teaching Strategies for Teaching Speaking Skills at Junior High School."

¹⁹ Brendan Boyle et al., "Overcoming the Challenge of 'Fuzzy' Assessment and Feedback," *Education + Training* 62, no. 5 (2020): 505-19, <https://doi.org/10.1108/ET-08-2019-0183>.

instructional consistency, and program-level quality assurance.²⁰

A technical issue that warrants clarification, without altering the substantive findings, concerns the use of non-standard labels such as “Excellent” and “Highly proficient” in proficiency-mapping tables. ACTFL proficiency terminology is standardized, and ACTFL-related instructional documents such as Performance Descriptors for Language Learners and Can-Do Statements are organized using official ACTFL categories and modes of communication.²¹ To maintain analytical credibility, it is therefore important to state explicitly that ACTFL functions as the anchoring framework and that any local labels are internal shorthand mapped to specific ACTFL descriptors, with transparent criteria and units of analysis.

From a broader management perspective, ACTFL becomes analytically meaningful when understood as part of an alignment mechanism linking staged curriculum design, Arabic-medium instruction, residential language environments, and evaluation practices. In this interpretation, ACTFL provides the descriptor system that renders learner performance legible for monitoring progress and guiding improvement, while management decisions supply the conditions of implementation, such as time allocation, staffing, and evaluation routines, that sustain proficiency-oriented instruction.²²

²⁰ Gan, “Understanding L2 Speaking Problems: Implications for ESL Curriculum Development in a Teacher Training Institution in Hong Kong.”

²¹ American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, “ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines.”

²² Jean Stockard, “The Impact of Administrative Decisions on Implementation Fidelity of Direct Instruction and Student Achievement,” *Learning Disability Quarterly* 43, no. 1 (2020): 18–28, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0731948719830346>; Judith Liskin-Gasparro, “Historical Perspectives on the ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview,” in *Challenges and Innovations in Speaking Assessment* (New York: Routledge, 2024), 21–39, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315201504-3>.

Extracurricular Speaking Practices within a Proficiency-Oriented Learning Environment

The findings regarding extracurricular speaking activities at STIBA Ar Raayah suggest that such activities function primarily as complementary spaces for oral practice rather than as the main driver of speaking proficiency development. From a theoretical standpoint, this supports the view that extracurricular learning extends the formal curriculum rather than replacing systematic instructional design.²³ In language education research, extracurricular activities are commonly described as providing additional opportunities for rehearsal, performance, and social interaction, while core linguistic competence remains anchored in structured instruction and curriculum sequencing.²⁴

Within the STIBA Ar Raayah context, the relatively recent establishment of *kalām*-related clubs indicates that speaking development had already been sustained through intensive preparatory instruction (*I'dād*) and an immersive language environment (*bi'ah lughawiyah*). This aligns with sociocultural perspectives on language learning, which emphasize that competence emerges from repeated participation in communicative practices embedded in everyday institutional routines rather than from isolated training events alone.²⁵ Extracurricular activities can therefore be interpreted as

²³ M. Kholis Amrullah et al., "Elevating Arabic Speaking Skills: Plotagon and Digital Comics as Catalysts for Enhanced Learning Engagement and Proficiency," *Al-Ta'rib : Jurnal Ilmiah Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Arab IAIN Palangka Raya* 12, no. 1 (2024): 17–32, <https://doi.org/10.23971/altarib.v12i1.7564>.

²⁴ M.V. Kuimova, R.I. Bazhenov, and V.V. Shcherbakov, "Reading as Extracurricular Activity to Enhance Foreign Language Learning," *PONTE International Scientific Researchs Journal* 73, no. 4 (2017): 185–91, <https://doi.org/10.21506/j.ponte.2017.4.48>.

²⁵ Matthew E. Poehner, "Sociocultural Considerations of Communicative Competence," in *Communicative Competence in a Second Language* (New York: Routledge, 2022), 60–75, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003160779-5>.

communities of practice that refine and extend learners' speaking abilities, rather than as the foundational source of those abilities.²⁶

Interview accounts of students' success in debate competitions without extensive formal training should be interpreted cautiously. While such achievements may reflect strength in specific rhetorical and persuasive skills, they do not constitute comprehensive evidence of overall language proficiency. Debate represents a specialized communicative genre that foregrounds structured argumentation and competitive performance, capturing only a limited segment of the broader speaking competencies targeted in Arabic language education. Consequently, reliance on competition outcomes as a primary indicator of learning effectiveness risks overstating program impact and obscuring alignment with formal learning objectives.

Research on second language speaking development suggests that performance in high-stakes communicative tasks is strongly influenced by depth of prior exposure, task familiarity, and confidence built through sustained practice, rather than by short-term training alone.²⁷ In this sense, the findings suggest that the *I'dād* program and immersive environment reduce learners' dependence on extracurricular clubs for initial participation, while not eliminating their pedagogical value for advanced refinement.²⁸

²⁶ Salih Yousif Sharaf Mohamed and Alimuddin Rivai, "The Design and Implementation of Arabic Speech Proficiency (Kalam) Lectures Is Student-Centered," *ELOQUENCE: Journal of Foreign Language* 2, no. 2 (2023): 296–312, <https://doi.org/10.58194/eloquence.v2i2.676>.

²⁷ DeKeyser, *Practice in a Second Language: Perspectives from Applied Linguistics and Cognitive Psychology*.

²⁸ Chantelle Warner, "Can Frameworks for Language Learning Be Multilingually Indifferent?," *The German Quarterly* 96, no. 3 (2023): 395–97, <https://doi.org/10.1111/gequ.12372>.

Bi'ah Lughawiyah as an Immersive Environment for Proficiency Development

The findings concerning *bi'ah lughawiyah* indicate that the language environment at STIBA Ar Raayah operates as a central institutional condition for speaking development rather than as a peripheral factor.²⁹ Second language acquisition research emphasizes that sustained interaction and routinized language use play a critical role in shaping oral proficiency, particularly when learners are provided with repeated opportunities for communicative practice and feedback.³⁰

From a sociocultural perspective, *bi'ah lughawiyah* can be understood as an environment of practice in which Arabic is used consistently across formal and informal domains, including classrooms, dormitories, and daily institutional routines. Language development emerges through participation in such social practices, where learners gradually appropriate linguistic resources through interaction with peers and more proficient users.³¹ The residential system and Arabic-medium interaction therefore create low-stakes, recurring opportunities for speaking that extend beyond scheduled instructional time.³²

Importantly, immersion should not be equated with automatic proficiency gains. Research cautions that immersion

²⁹ Amrullah et al., "Elevating Arabic Speaking Skills: Plotagon and Digital Comics as Catalysts for Enhanced Learning Engagement and Proficiency."

³⁰ Kazuya Saito et al., "How Does Longitudinal Interaction Promote Second Language Speech Learning? Roles of Learner Experience and Proficiency Levels," *Second Language Research* 37, no. 4 (2021): 547–71, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0267658319884981>.

³¹ Mohamed and Rivai, "The Design and Implementation of Arabic Speech Proficiency (Kalam) Lectures Is Student-Centered."

³² Bambang Bambang et al., "Planning and Strategies for Maharah Al-Kalam Learning Arabic Language in Madrasah," *WARAQAT: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman* 8, no. 1 (2023): 91–100, <https://doi.org/10.51590/waraqat.v8i1.457>.

alone does not guarantee advancement; rather, quality of interaction, opportunities for output, and availability of feedback are decisive factors.³³ In the STIBA Ar Raayah context, the language environment gains instructional value because it is reinforced by institutional norms and aligned with curricular and assessment expectations.

Curricular Coherence between Receptive and Productive Skills

The findings reveal a critical issue of curricular coherence between listening (*istimā*) and speaking (*kalām*) objectives. Document analysis indicates that listening objectives are positioned at lower proficiency bands, while speaking objectives are articulated at higher levels. In ACTFL's framework, communicative proficiency is conceived as an integrated construct in which receptive and productive skills develop interdependently, with listening comprehension functioning as a foundation for oral production.³⁴

Input-based theories of second language acquisition argue that comprehension precedes and constrains production, suggesting that learners must first be able to process spoken language before producing accurate and contextually appropriate output.³⁵ When speaking objectives exceed listening capacity, learners may face pedagogical mismatches that limit the effectiveness of speaking instruction.³⁶ From a

³³ DeKeyser, *Practice in a Second Language: Perspectives from Applied Linguistics and Cognitive Psychology*.

³⁴ American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, "ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines."

³⁵ Mila Tasseva-Kurktchieva, "Can Production Precede Comprehension in L2 Acquisition?," *Second Language Research* 31, no. 4 (2015): 493–522, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0267658315581725>.

³⁶ Hatta Sabri, Wildana Wargadinata, and Sutaman, "Ta'līm Al-Istimā' Wā-Al-Kalām Bi-Taṭbīq Uslüb Farīq Al-Tadrīs Fī Al-Jāmi'ah Al-Islāmīyah Al-Ḥukūmīyah," *Alsinatuna* 8, no. 2 (2023): 241–66, <https://doi.org/10.28918/alsinatuna.v8i2.1747>; Ahmad Musthofa and Mamluatun Ni'mah, "Pembelajaran Keterampilan Berbicara Dan Langkah-

curriculum design perspective, outcomes-based and proficiency-oriented education therefore requires vertical and horizontal alignment across skills, ensuring that progress in listening reinforces speaking development.³⁷

This issue of misalignment becomes more visible when speaking proficiency is inferred primarily from performance in specialized communicative tasks such as debate. The inherent nature of debate, with its emphasis on structured argumentation and competitive performance, does not adequately represent other critical areas of language development, particularly receptive abilities and interactional competence that depend heavily on listening comprehension. As a result, strong performance in debate may coexist with uneven development across core language skills, masking underlying gaps between receptive and productive capacities. This underscores the importance of aligning curricular objectives and assessment practices so that speaking outcomes are supported by commensurate development in listening, rather than being evaluated through task-specific performance alone.

Management Implications for Alignment, Feedback, and Sustainable Proficiency Growth

Taken together, the discussion indicates that effective Arabic speaking instruction at STIBA Ar Raayah emerges from coordinated management decisions that align curriculum structure, proficiency frameworks, and learning environments. Alignment, defined as coherence between intended learning outcomes, instructional practices, and assessment criteria, is a core principle in proficiency-oriented education.³⁸

Langkah Penyajian Dialog Di Universitas Zainul Hasan Probolinggo," *Alsina: Journal of Arabic Studies* 3, no. 1 (2021): 19–36, <https://doi.org/10.21580/alsina.3.1.10881>.

³⁷ Richards, *Curriculum Development in Language Teaching*.

³⁸ Mikyung Kim Wolf, Alison L. Bailey, and Laura Ballard, "Aligning English Language Proficiency Assessments to Standards: Conceptual and

ACTFL proficiency levels function as an alignment mechanism that connects curriculum planning, instructional expectations, and evaluation routines.³⁹ When descriptors are used consistently across stages, they support coordination among instructors and program-level quality assurance.⁴⁰ Equally important is feedback, which research on formative assessment identifies as central to proficiency development when aligned with explicit criteria and used to guide instructional adjustment.⁴¹

Sustainability extends these implications over time. Educational change research cautions that instructional innovations require long-term structures, monitoring, and adaptive capacity to remain effective.⁴² In the STIBA Ar Raayah model, sustainability depends on maintaining alignment between staged curriculum design, Arabic-medium instruction, immersive environments, and assessment practices as learners progress beyond the preparatory stage. This positions educational management not as a background variable, but as an active force shaping the trajectory of language proficiency development.

Conclusion

This study has examined Arabic speaking instruction (*mahārat al-kalām*) at STIBA Ar Raayah through the lens of educational management and the application of ACTFL

Technical Issues," *TESOL Quarterly* 57, no. 2 (2023): 670–85, <https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.3199>.

³⁹ Octavia, Astutik, and Rahayu, "Teachers' Teaching Strategies for Teaching Speaking Skills at Junior High School."

⁴⁰ Bush, "Educational Leadership and Management: Theory, Policy, and Practice."

⁴¹ Paula E. Chan et al., "The Critical Role of Feedback in Formative Instructional Practices," *Intervention in School and Clinic* 50, no. 2 (2014): 96–104, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1053451214536044>.

⁴² Gan, "Understanding L2 Speaking Problems: Implications for ESL Curriculum Development in a Teacher Training Institution in Hong Kong."

proficiency levels, with a focus on institutional patterns rather than causal measurement. The findings demonstrate that speaking development at STIBA Ar Raayah is shaped by a coherent interaction between centralized curriculum management, a staged instructional design concentrated in the preparatory year (*I'dād*), and sustained Arabic exposure through residential living and Arabic-medium instruction. Within this model, ACTFL proficiency levels function as a guiding framework that supports instructional alignment and formative assessment, rather than as rigid benchmarks for outcome measurement.

From a best-practice perspective, STIBA Ar Raayah illustrates how proficiency-oriented language education can be operationalized through strong institutional alignment. The concentration of speaking and listening instruction in the *I'dād* stage establishes a shared linguistic foundation, while subsequent Arabic-medium academic study and *bī'ah lughawīyah* provide continuous opportunities for use and reinforcement. Extracurricular speaking activities further complement this system by offering spaces for application and refinement, without displacing the central role of structured instruction and curricular coherence. At the same time, the analysis highlights the importance of maintaining alignment between receptive and productive skills, ensuring that speaking objectives are consistently supported by commensurate development in listening comprehension.

Overall, the STIBA Ar Raayah model represents a context-specific best practice in managing Arabic speaking instruction through the integration of curriculum planning, proficiency frameworks, learning environments, and assessment practices. Future research may extend this analysis by examining how similar management-driven proficiency models function in non-residential institutions, by exploring longitudinal development beyond the preparatory stage, or by comparing the effectiveness of different alignment strategies across Arabic

language programs. Such studies would contribute to a deeper understanding of how sustainable proficiency growth can be supported through educational management in diverse instructional contexts.

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