



a Qualitative Assessment of Students' Arabic Writing Skills (*Kitabah*) at SMA Bina Taruna Surabaya

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the implementation of kitabah assessment, identify its objectives, assessment forms, and assessment instruments, and examine the challenges encountered in its implementation at SMA Bina Taruna Surabaya. Because, writing skills assessment is a fundamental component of Arabic language learning, it measures learners' productive ability to organize ideas, apply linguistic rules, and communicate meaning effectively in written form. However, writing assessment practices in schools continue to emphasize grammatical accuracy, limiting the comprehensive evaluation of students' writing competence. This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach using a case study design. Data were collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews and analysis of documentation. Data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. The findings reveal that kitabah assessment has been systematically implemented through sentence construction, paragraph completion, and picture description tasks. Although these activities effectively assess students' mastery of vocabulary, grammatical structures, and spelling accuracy, the assessment remains predominantly product-oriented and focuses more on linguistic correctness than on idea development, coherence, cohesion, creativity, and communicative effectiveness. Furthermore, teachers have not yet implemented standardized analytical scoring rubrics, resulting in limited objectivity and comprehensiveness in evaluating students' writing performance. The study concludes that the current implementation of kitabah assessment at SMA Bina Taruna Surabaya effectively measures students' fundamental Arabic writing skills but has not yet fully represented communicative writing competence.

Keywords: *Analytical Scoring Rubric; Arabic Language Learning; Arabic Writing Skills; Authentic Assessment; Kitabah Assessment.*

Asbtrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis implementasi asesmen kitabah, mengidentifikasi tujuan, bentuk, dan instrumen penilaian yang digunakan, serta menganalisis berbagai kendala dalam pelaksanaannya di SMA Bina Taruna Surabaya. Karena asesmen keterampilan menulis merupakan komponen penting dalam pembelajaran bahasa Arab, yang berfungsi untuk mengukur kemampuan produktif peserta didik dalam mengorganisasikan gagasan, menerapkan kaidah kebahasaan, dan mengomunikasikan ide secara tertulis. Namun, praktik asesmen di berbagai sekolah masih didominasi oleh penilaian aspek gramatikal sehingga belum mampu menggambarkan kompetensi menulis secara komprehensif. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif dengan desain studi kasus. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi kelas, wawancara semi-terstruktur, serta analisis dokumen. Data dianalisis menggunakan model interaktif Miles, Huberman, dan Saldaña melalui kondensasi data, penyajian data, serta penarikan dan verifikasi

kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa asesmen kitabah telah dilaksanakan secara sistematis melalui tugas menyusun kalimat, melengkapi paragraf, dan mendeskripsikan gambar. Meskipun efektif mengukur penguasaan kosakata, nahwu, sharaf, dan imla', asesmen masih berorientasi pada produk serta lebih menekankan ketepatan linguistik dibandingkan pengembangan ide, koherensi, kohesi, kreativitas, dan efektivitas komunikasi. Selain itu, guru belum menggunakan rubrik penilaian analitik yang terstandar sehingga objektivitas penilaian belum optimal. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa asesmen kitabah di SMA Bina Taruna Surabaya telah mendukung pengukuran kemampuan dasar menulis bahasa Arab, namun belum sepenuhnya mencerminkan kompetensi menulis komunikatif.

Kata Kunci: Asesmen Autentik; Asesmen Kitabah; Keterampilan Menulis; Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab; Rubrik Analitik.

INTRODUCTION

Writing skill (*kitabah*) represents one of the highest levels of productive language competence in Arabic language learning because it requires learners to integrate linguistic knowledge, cognitive processing, and communicative competence into coherent written discourse.¹ Unlike receptive language skills, which primarily involve understanding spoken or written input, writing demands that learners generate ideas, organize information logically, apply grammatical rules accurately, select appropriate vocabulary, and produce texts that are cohesive, coherent, and meaningful. Consequently, *kitabah* is not merely a mechanical activity of arranging words into sentences but a complex intellectual process that reflects learners' overall mastery of Arabic as a foreign language.² The quality of students' writing therefore serves as an important indicator of the effectiveness of Arabic language instruction and the achievement of expected learning outcomes.

The central role of writing competence has encouraged educational researchers to emphasize that assessment should not only determine whether students have mastered grammatical rules but should also evaluate how effectively they communicate ideas through written texts.³ Contemporary theories of language assessment have shifted from traditional knowledge-based testing toward

¹ Sarah Sarah et al., "Technology Integration in Arabic Language Skills Development in the Digital Era," *Al-Fusha: Arabic Language Education Journal* 6, no. 2 (2024): 74–81, <https://doi.org/10.62097/alfusha.v6i2.1735>.

² Ahmad Mohammad Alzubi, "The Role of Digital Media Technology in Arabic and English Classes in the Kingdom of Jordan," *Alsuna: Journal of Arabic and English Language* 6, no. 1 (2023): 55–72, <https://doi.org/10.31538/alsuna.v6i1.3419>.

³ Iis Susiawati, Dadan Mardani, and Muhammad Faiz Alhaq, "The Role and Strategy of Digital Technology in Improving the Arabic Language Learning Process," *Hunafa: Jurnal Studia Islamika* 21, no. 2 (2024): 209–32, <https://doi.org/10.24239/jsi.v21i2.783>.

performance-based assessment that measures authentic language use.⁴ Brown argues that productive language assessment should provide evidence of learners' actual communicative competence rather than merely testing their memorization of linguistic rules. Likewise, Weigle explains that writing assessment should be conducted through explicit analytical criteria that evaluate multiple dimensions of writing quality, including content development, organization, vocabulary, grammatical accuracy, and mechanics. Hyland further emphasizes that writing tasks and assessment criteria should be closely aligned with instructional objectives so that assessment genuinely reflects the competencies intended to be achieved. These perspectives collectively demonstrate that effective *kitabah* assessment requires a multidimensional approach capable of representing students' writing abilities comprehensively.

Despite significant theoretical developments in language assessment, the implementation of *kitabah* assessment in many educational institutions remains dominated by conventional practices. In numerous Arabic language classrooms, assessment still focuses primarily on grammatical accuracy, spelling, and vocabulary usage, whereas higher-order aspects such as idea development, organization, critical thinking, coherence, cohesion, and communicative effectiveness receive relatively limited attention.⁵ As a result, students often perceive writing as an exercise in avoiding grammatical mistakes rather than as an opportunity to express ideas creatively and meaningfully. Such assessment practices also reduce teachers' ability to identify students' actual strengths and weaknesses in written communication because the assessment emphasizes linguistic correctness instead of overall writing quality.

⁴ Nurhasma Muhamad Saad, "Digital Literacy Transformation in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah for Arabic Language Learning Through Adab and Tahfidz Programs with Technological Touch," *Al-Bidayah: Jurnal Pendidikan Dasar Islam* 16, no. 2 (2024): 281–308, <https://doi.org/10.14421/al-bidayah.v16i2.9852>.

⁵ Irsal Amin et al., "Student Perception of the Development of Arabic Learning Model in Intensive Learning Program at IAIN Padangsidimpuan Language Development Center," *Lisanan Arabiya: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Arab* 6, no. 1 (2022): 69–86, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.32699/liar.v6i1.2613>; Achmad Makki Lazuardi and Syarif Muhammad Syaheed, "Enhancing Arabic Language Proficiency through Interactive Learning Programs," *Lahjatuna: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Arab* 4, no. 2 (2025): 89–102, <https://doi.org/10.38073/lahjatuna.v4i2.2584>; Dea Sapitri et al., "The Relevance of Arabic in Islamic Studies: Linguistic Implications for Understanding the Qur'an and Hadith," *SHAWTUL 'ARAB* 4, no. 2 (2025): 231–38, <https://doi.org/10.51192/sa.v4i2.1654>; Zuhirawati Zuhirawati, "Dynamics of Arabic Language Learning in the Digital Era," *At-Tasyrih: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Hukum Islam* 11, no. 2 (2025): 122–34, <https://doi.org/10.55849/attasyrih.v11i2.356>; Dara Rizki Meilizia, Widiya Yul, and Riko Andrian, "Immersive Learning through Audio-Visual Media: Reconstructing Arabic Language Teaching for the Digital Generation," *Lughawiyat: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Dan Sastra Arab* 8, no. 2 (2025): 319–35, <https://doi.org/10.38073/lughawiyat.v8i2.2586>.

This condition has important implications for the quality of Arabic language learning. Assessment is not merely an instrument for assigning scores but also functions as a mechanism for monitoring learning progress, providing formative feedback, and supporting instructional improvement.⁶ Therefore, assessment instruments that lack clear criteria or standardized scoring procedures may produce subjective judgments and inconsistent evaluation results.

A preliminary investigation conducted at SMA Bina Taruna Surabaya indicated that Arabic writing assessment had been implemented regularly as part of classroom evaluation. Initial classroom observations suggested that assessment activities were predominantly directed toward evaluating grammatical correctness and vocabulary mastery, whereas assessment of idea organization, coherence, cohesion, and communicative quality had not yet been systematically incorporated into classroom practice. Interviews with the Arabic language teacher further indicated that teachers experienced difficulties in constructing analytical scoring rubrics capable of assessing multiple dimensions of writing performance objectively and consistently.

Previous studies have extensively examined writing assessment from various perspectives.⁷ Brown highlighted the importance of authentic assessment in measuring productive language skills, whereas Weigle proposed analytical scoring systems capable of improving assessment reliability and objectivity. Hyland discussed the relationship between writing pedagogy, task design, and assessment validity in second language education. Within the field of Arabic language education, previous

⁶ Cutri Tjalau and Suharia Sarif, "Penerapan Thariqah At-Ta'lim As-Siyah Al-Lughawiyah Dalam Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab," *A Jamiy: Jurnal Bahasa Dan Sastra Arab* 8, no. 2 (2019): 101–35, <https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.31314/ajamiy.8.2.101-135.2019>; Sunardi Sunardi, "Upaya Meningkatkan Aktivitas Siswa Dan Hasil Belajar Bahasa Arab Melalui Contextual Teaching and Learning," *Nusantara: Jurnal Pendidikan Indonesia* 2, no. 3 (2022): 547–74, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.14421/njpi.2022.v2i3-8>; Aliya Arofah, "Dinamika Bahasa Arab Pada Komunikasi Masyarakat Keturunan Arab Dalam Pengajian Agama Di Kudus," *Middle Eastern Culture & Religion Issues* 1, no. 2 (2022): 198–210, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.22146/mecri.v1i2.6047>.

⁷ Sutipyo Ru'iyah, "Implementasi Metode Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) Pada Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab Di Madrasah Tsanawiyah," *SALIHA: Jurnal Pendidikan & Agama Islam* 6, no. 2 (2023): 370–85, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.54396/saliha.v6i2.658>; Moh Rifa'i et al., "Implementasi Contextual Teaching And Learning (CTL) Dalam Meningkatkan Prestasi Belajar Siswa Pada Materi Bahasa Arab:(Studi Kasus Di MTs Nurul Jadid Paiton Probolinggo)," *TARQIYATUNA: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam Dan Madrasah Ibtidaiyah* 1, no. 2 (2022): 68–82, <http://jurnal.asy-syukriyyah.ac.id/index.php/tarqiyatuna/article/view/282>; Husnaini Jamil and Sardiyana Sardiyana, "Eksistensi Metode Qawaid Tarjamah Dalam Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab Di Era Revolusi 4.0," *Naskhi: Jurnal Kajian Pendidikan Dan Bahasa Arab* 2, no. 1 (2020): 30–39, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.47435/naskhi.v2i1.289>; Nur Indah Rofiqoh, "Penerapan Model Flipped Classroom Dalam Meningkatkan Keterampilan Berbicara Bahasa Arab Mahasiswa," *Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan Islam* 21, no. 1 (2023): 1–14, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.36835/jipi.v21i1.4045>.

researchers have investigated students' writing errors, the effectiveness of instructional methods for improving writing achievement, and the development of writing assessment instruments. Although these studies have contributed significantly to the advancement of Arabic writing instruction, most have focused on evaluating learning outcomes, developing instructional models, or validating assessment instruments. Relatively few studies have explored how *kitabah* assessment is actually planned, implemented, and interpreted within authentic classroom contexts, particularly in Indonesian secondary schools.

This limitation reveals an important research gap. Existing studies have provided substantial theoretical discussions concerning writing assessment principles, yet empirical investigations into classroom-based assessment practices remain limited. Consequently, there remains a need for qualitative research capable of describing the implementation of *kitabah* assessment comprehensively within its natural educational setting. The novelty of this study lies in its holistic examination of *kitabah* assessment practices through qualitative inquiry. Rather than focusing solely on students' writing achievement or the development of assessment instruments, this research investigates the complete assessment process, including assessment planning, classroom implementation, scoring procedures, teacher feedback, and challenges encountered during classroom practice.

SMA Bina Taruna Surabaya was selected as the research site because Arabic language instruction constitutes an integral component of the school's curriculum, with writing assessment serving as one of the principal indicators of students' language achievement. Therefore, this study aims to explore the implementation of *kitabah* assessment at SMA Bina Taruna Surabaya, identify the assessment techniques employed by Arabic language teachers, analyze the challenges encountered during the assessment process, and formulate recommendations for developing more valid, reliable, objective, and comprehensive writing assessment practices. The findings are expected to contribute theoretically to the development of Arabic language assessment literature and practically to improving the quality of writing assessment in secondary education.

METHOD

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study design,⁸ to explore the implementation of Arabic writing skills (*kitabah*) assessment at SMA Bina Taruna Surabaya. The research was conducted at SMA Bina Taruna Surabaya. The participants were selected purposively based on their direct involvement in the assessment process and consisted of the principal, an Arabic language teacher, and Grade XII students. Primary data were obtained from these participants, while secondary data were collected from lesson plans, assessment rubrics, students' writing assignments, and curriculum documents.

Data were collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. Classroom observations focused on the implementation of *kitabah* assessment, including assessment procedures, teacher feedback, scoring practices, and students' participation during writing activities. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to obtain information regarding assessment objectives, assessment criteria, challenges encountered by teachers, and strategies used in evaluating students' writing skills. Documentation was employed to support the observation and interview findings through the analysis of lesson plans, assessment instruments, scoring rubrics, students' written work, and other relevant school documents.

The collected data were analyzed using the interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which consists of four interconnected stages: data collection, data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Data condensation involved selecting, coding, simplifying, and categorizing field data according to the research objectives.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings obtained from classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis indicate that the implementation of *kitabah* assessment at SMA Bina Taruna Surabaya has become an integral part of Arabic language instruction and is conducted systematically at the end of each learning unit. Classroom observations revealed that the Arabic language teacher consistently assessed students' writing

⁸ John W Creswell and J David Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (Sage publications, 2017).

performance through several structured activities, including sentence construction, paragraph completion, and picture description exercises. These activities were designed to evaluate students' ability to apply Arabic vocabulary, construct grammatically correct sentences, and demonstrate mastery of *nahwu* and *sharaf*. During the learning process, the teacher provided clear instructions and examples before students completed the assigned writing tasks, enabling them to understand the expected writing format.⁹ However, observations also showed that the assessment process remained largely teacher-centered, with evaluation focusing predominantly on the correctness of linguistic forms rather than on students' ability to communicate ideas through extended written discourse.

The interview with the Arabic language teacher confirmed these observations. The teacher explained that guided writing activities were intentionally selected because the majority of Grade XII students had not yet achieved sufficient proficiency to produce independent compositions in Arabic. The teacher also acknowledged that assessing students' writing primarily emphasized grammatical correctness, vocabulary accuracy, and spelling because these aspects were considered fundamental indicators of students' mastery of Arabic.¹⁰ Furthermore, the teacher admitted that the absence of a comprehensive analytical scoring rubric often made it difficult to evaluate higher-order aspects of writing, such as idea organization, coherence, cohesion, and communicative effectiveness. Consequently, classroom assessment tended to prioritize measurable linguistic elements over broader communicative competencies.

The findings were further supported by document analysis of students' writing assignments, teachers' assessment sheets, and lesson plans. The analyzed documents showed that most writing tasks required students to arrange words into meaningful sentences, complete partially constructed paragraphs, or produce short descriptive texts based on visual prompts.¹¹ Likewise, the assessment records demonstrated that teachers assigned scores primarily according to grammatical accuracy, vocabulary selection, and writing mechanics, whereas explicit indicators related to content

⁹ Rahmat Sapaat Siregar, "Improving the Arabic Writing Skills of Students through the Application of Contextual Learning Methods at Dayah Irsyadul Abidin Qurani," *Indonesian Journal of Education and Social Humanities* 2, no. 1 (2025): 358–69, <https://doi.org/10.62945/ijesh.v2i1.726>.

¹⁰ Ahmad Zubaidi et al., "Enhancing Arabic Writing Skills Using Chat GPT-Based AI Learning Models: A Tridimensional Human-AI Collaboration Framework," *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics* 15, no. 1 (2025): 87–101, <https://doi.org/10.17509/21r9r439>.

¹¹ Mohammad T Alhawary, *Teaching Arabic as a Foreign Language: Techniques for Developing Language Skills and Grammar* (Taylor & Francis, 2023).

development, paragraph organization, coherence, and cohesion were not consistently documented within the assessment criteria. These findings indicate that the assessment instruments employed remain predominantly product-oriented and have not yet comprehensively measured students' communicative writing competence.

Overall, the findings suggest that *kitabah* assessment at SMA Bina Taruna Surabaya has been implemented systematically and aligns with the instructional objectives established by the school. Nevertheless, the implementation remains largely conventional because assessment practices continue to emphasize linguistic accuracy rather than the broader dimensions of writing competence. Therefore, the empirical findings indicate that the current assessment system has fulfilled its function as a tool for measuring basic language proficiency but has not yet fully reflected writing as a complex productive skill requiring the integration of linguistic, cognitive, and communicative competencies.

The findings of this study demonstrate that the guided writing activities, such as sentence construction, paragraph completion, and picture description, constitute the primary forms of assessment employed by teachers. These findings are generally consistent with Brown's perspective that guided writing tasks are appropriate for learners in the early stages of second language acquisition because they provide sufficient linguistic scaffolding while enabling students to practice productive language skills in a controlled environment.¹² Brown emphasizes that controlled writing tasks reduce learners' cognitive burden by allowing them to concentrate on the accurate use of vocabulary and grammatical structures before progressing toward more complex communicative writing activities.

Similarly, the present findings correspond with Al-Naqah's theory of *al-insya' al-muwajjah*, which regards guided writing as an intermediate stage in developing Arabic writing competence.¹³ According to, students should first acquire the ability to organize words into grammatically correct sentences before they are encouraged to compose complete paragraphs and extended discourse independently. The use of sentence arrangement, paragraph completion, and picture description tasks at SMA Bina Taruna Surabaya therefore reflects a pedagogical strategy that seeks to

¹² Nur Khaerati, "The Relationship Between Listening Skills and Arabic Writing Skills," *Al-Iftah: Journal of Islamic Studies and Society* 4, no. 1 (2023): 45–62, <https://doi.org/10.35905/aliftah.v4i1.7448>.

¹³ Mizan et al. (2023)

strengthen students' linguistic foundation prior to introducing more advanced writing activities. Considering that many students still experience difficulties in applying nahwu and sharaf accurately, the teacher's preference for guided writing can be regarded as pedagogically appropriate within the existing instructional context.

Nevertheless, the findings also reveal several aspects that differ from contemporary theories of writing assessment. Hyland argues that writing assessment should extend beyond the evaluation of linguistic accuracy and instead examine learners' ability to communicate meaning effectively through coherent, purposeful, and contextually appropriate written discourse. Writing is viewed not merely as the production of grammatically correct sentences but as a communicative activity requiring the integration of content development, organization, audience awareness, and rhetorical competence.¹⁴ From this perspective, assessment practices that concentrate predominantly on grammar and vocabulary may fail to capture the complexity of writing as a communicative process.

The present findings further indicate that assessment criteria at SMA Bina Taruna Surabaya have not yet comprehensively evaluated higher-order dimensions of writing, including idea development, coherence, cohesion, creativity, and communicative effectiveness. This condition contrasts with Weigle's analytical writing assessment model, which proposes that writing performance should be evaluated through multiple interconnected dimensions rather than a single linguistic criterion. Weigle emphasizes that analytical scoring rubrics improve both the validity and reliability of writing assessment because they enable teachers to distinguish between different aspects of students' writing performance. In contrast, assessment practices relying primarily on grammatical accuracy may produce scores that reflect linguistic competence without adequately representing students' overall ability to construct meaningful written texts.

¹⁴ Ghada Awada, Jack Burston, and Rosie Ghannage, "Effect of Student Team Achievement Division through WebQuest on EFL Students' Argumentative Writing Skills and Their Instructors' Perceptions," *Computer Assisted Language Learning* 33, no. 3 (2020): 275–300, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09588221.2018.1558254>; Roberto Santiago De Roock, "On the Material Consequences of (Digital) Literacy: Digital Writing with, for, and against Racial Capitalism," *Theory Into Practice* 60, no. 2 (2021): 183–93, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/00405841.2020.1857128>; Zubaidi et al., "Enhancing Arabic Writing Skills Using Chat GPT-Based AI Learning Models: A Tridimensional Human-AI Collaboration Framework."

Furthermore, the findings may also be interpreted through the framework proposed by Bachman and Palmer, who argue that language assessment should possess not only reliability but also construct validity and authenticity. Authentic assessment requires writing tasks that resemble real communicative situations encountered outside the classroom. In the present study, most writing assignments remained highly structured and teacher-directed, limiting students' opportunities to express personal experiences, opinions, arguments, or creative ideas through Arabic writing. Consequently, although the assessment successfully measured students' mastery of basic linguistic forms, it provided relatively limited evidence regarding their communicative writing competence in authentic contexts.

Taken together, these theoretical comparisons suggest that the current implementation of *kitabah* assessment at SMA Bina Taruna Surabaya occupies a transitional position between traditional and contemporary structural assessment. The assessment practices have successfully fulfilled their function in strengthening students' grammatical competence and reducing writing anxiety through guided instructional support. However, they have not yet fully accommodated recent developments in language assessment that emphasize authentic performance, higher-order thinking, communicative competence, and analytical evaluation.

Based on the observation, interview, and document analysis, the teacher's assessment practices appear to be strongly influenced by students' relatively limited proficiency in vocabulary and grammatical structures. Consequently, teachers tend to prioritize controlled writing tasks because they are considered more manageable for students and easier to assess objectively within the available instructional time. From this perspective, the use of guided writing represents a rational instructional decision intended to ensure that students first achieve mastery of fundamental linguistic competencies before engaging in more demanding writing activities.

However, from a broader educational perspective, the continued reliance on controlled writing tasks has important pedagogical implications. Writing is widely recognized as a higher-order productive language skill that requires learners not only to demonstrate linguistic accuracy but also to organize ideas logically, establish coherence between sentences, develop arguments, and communicate meaning effectively. When assessment focuses predominantly on grammatical correctness, students may perceive writing as an activity of avoiding errors rather than

constructing meaningful discourse. Such an assessment orientation potentially limits students' opportunities to develop creativity, critical thinking, and independent written expression, which are increasingly emphasized in twenty-first-century language education.¹⁵

Another important finding concerns the assessment criteria employed by the teacher. The document analysis suggests that scoring practices primarily emphasize observable linguistic elements, including grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics, while broader dimensions such as content quality, idea development, coherence, cohesion, and communicative effectiveness receive relatively limited attention. The interview findings further imply that the absence of an analytical scoring rubric constitutes one of the principal challenges encountered by teachers during the assessment process. Without explicit assessment descriptors for each dimension of writing, scoring decisions inevitably rely more heavily on professional judgment and personal experience.

The present findings also suggest that the current implementation of kitabah assessment reflects a product-oriented evaluation model rather than a process-oriented assessment approach. Students are generally evaluated based on the quality of their final written products, whereas relatively little emphasis is placed on the stages of planning, drafting, revising, and editing that characterize authentic writing development. As a consequence, assessment functions primarily as a mechanism for assigning scores at the end of instruction rather than as a formative process that continuously supports students in improving their writing competence. This finding indicates that assessment has not yet been fully integrated into the learning process as an instrument for promoting reflective learning and continuous improvement.

From the researchers' perspective, these findings should not be interpreted as weaknesses in teachers' professional competence but rather as reflections of contextual challenges commonly encountered in Arabic language education. Teachers

¹⁵ Ramy A Rahimi and Grace S Oh, "Rethinking the Role of Educators in the 21st Century: Navigating Globalization, Technology, and Pandemics," *Journal of Marketing Analytics* 12, no. 2 (2024): 182–97, <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41270-024-00303-4>; Rofiatun Nisa, "Digital Literacy in Islamic Elementary Schools: An Overview of The Factors, Challenges, and Impact 21st Century Skills Development," *Jurnal Cendekia Media Komunikasi Penelitian Dan Pengembangan Pendidikan Islam* 17, no. 1 (2025): 334–55, <https://doi.org/10.37850/cendekia.v17i01.1025>; Yumei Zou et al., "Digital Learning in the 21st Century: Trends, Challenges, and Innovations in Technology Integration," in *Frontiers in Education*, vol. 10 (Frontiers Media SA, 2025), 1562391, <https://doi.org/10.3389/educ.2025.1562391>.

are required to balance curriculum objectives, limited instructional time, heterogeneous student abilities, and the practical demands of classroom assessment. Under such circumstances, emphasizing grammatical accuracy through guided writing becomes a pragmatic strategy for ensuring that students acquire essential language foundations. Nevertheless, as students' proficiency gradually develops, assessment practices should also evolve toward more communicative and authentic forms of writing evaluation that provide learners with greater opportunities to express ideas independently and apply Arabic in meaningful contexts.

Nevertheless, the synthesis of the findings also reveals that the current assessment model remains predominantly product-oriented, with greater attention devoted to linguistic correctness than to communicative competence. As a result, assessment practices have not yet comprehensively captured the multidimensional nature of writing as a productive language skill. Effective writing involves not only the accurate application of grammar and vocabulary but also the ability to generate ideas, organize information logically, construct coherent paragraphs, adapt language to communicative purposes, and express meaning creatively. These dimensions received relatively limited attention within the existing assessment practices, indicating that the assessment system has not fully represented students' overall writing competence.

The present study therefore contributes to the growing body of literature emphasizing that Arabic writing assessment should move beyond the traditional structural paradigm toward a more comprehensive model integrating linguistic, cognitive, and communicative dimensions. Rather than abandoning the assessment of grammatical accuracy, future kitabah assessment should position grammar as one component within a broader analytical framework that also evaluates content quality, organization, coherence, cohesion, creativity, and communicative effectiveness. Such an approach would enable teachers to obtain a more accurate representation of students' writing competence while simultaneously encouraging learners to develop higher-order thinking skills through meaningful written communication.

Overall, this study concludes that the implementation of kitabah assessment at SMA Bina Taruna Surabaya has established a solid foundation for evaluating students' basic Arabic writing skills. However, responding to current developments in language assessment requires a gradual transformation toward more authentic, process-oriented, and analytically assessed writing evaluation. Such transformation is expected

not only to improve the validity and reliability of writing assessment but also to foster students' critical thinking, creativity, and communicative competence in Arabic. Consequently, the findings of this study provide both theoretical enrichment for the field of Arabic language assessment and practical recommendations for teachers, schools, and curriculum developers seeking to enhance the quality of *kitabah* assessment in secondary education.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the implementation of *kitabah* assessment at SMA Bina Taruna Surabaya has been systematically integrated into Arabic language learning and serves as an essential component of evaluating students' writing competence. These assessment techniques effectively measure students' mastery of vocabulary, *nahwu* and *sharaf*, and *imla'*, thereby supporting the development of fundamental Arabic writing skills. However, the findings also reveal that the existing assessment practices remain largely product-oriented, with greater emphasis placed on linguistic accuracy than on broader dimensions of writing competence, such as idea development, coherence, cohesion, creativity, and communicative effectiveness. Consequently, the current assessment system has not yet fully represented *kitabah* as a productive language skill that integrates linguistic, cognitive, and communicative competencies. These findings indicate the need to transform writing assessment from conventional grammar-focused evaluation toward a more authentic, process-oriented, and analytically assessed model that provides a comprehensive representation of students' writing performance.

This study contributes both theoretically and practically to the field of Arabic language assessment. The study further demonstrates how contemporary theories proposed by Brown, Hyland, Weigle, and Al-Naqah can be interpreted within actual classroom assessment practices. Practically, the findings provide recommendations for Arabic language teachers to employ analytical scoring rubrics, integrate authentic writing tasks, and strengthen formative feedback so that assessment functions not only as a measurement tool but also as a means of improving students' writing competence. Nevertheless, this research has several limitations. The study was conducted in a single educational institution with a limited number of participants and focused primarily on teachers' assessment practices. Therefore, the findings cannot be generalized to all

Arabic language learning contexts. In addition, the research did not examine the long-term effects of assessment practices on students' writing achievement or investigate students' perceptions of assessment in greater depth.

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