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Evaluating Alef Education's 2024 Olympiad: ACTFL-Based Insights for Madrasah Aliyah

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Abstract

This study aims to evaluate the extent to which the Olympiad questions correspond to the five key components of the ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) 5C standards: Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities. A qualitative library research method was employed, focusing on the collection and analysis of Olympiad test items alongside ACTFL guideline documents. The analysis explored how each question reflects communicative competence, cultural relevance, cross-disciplinary connections, opportunities for language and cultural comparison, and its potential to foster engagement with the broader global community. The findings reveal that the Olympiad questions adequately addressed the Communication and Culture components by promoting interpretive and cultural understanding tasks. However, indicators of interpersonal and presentational communication were less emphasized, indicating a gap in fostering interactive language use. The questions effectively integrated Connections by linking Arabic language learning to interdisciplinary themes such as economics, health, and history, thereby enhancing students' critical thinking and contextual understanding. Additionally, elements of Comparisons and Communities were implicitly present but lacked explicit engagement with global multicultural perspectives. Overall, the study concludes that the 2024 Alef Education Olympiad provides a valuable model for Arabic language assessment aligned with contemporary global standards, though further refinement is needed to strengthen interpersonal communication and global community integration. It recommends that Arabic language curricula incorporate more authentic, culturally diverse, and communicative tasks to better prepare students for participation in a multilingual and interconnected world.

.***Keywords:*** *Arabic Language Olympiad; Alef Education; 5C ACTFL*

ملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تقييم مدى توافق أسئلة الأولمبياد مع المكونات الرئيسية الخمسة لمعايير ACTFL (المجلس الأمريكي لتعليم اللغات الأجنبية) 5C: التواصل، والثقافات، والروابط، والمقارنات، والمجتمعات. استُخدمت منهجية بحث مكتبي نوعي، مع التركيز على جمع

وتحليل عناصر اختبار الأولمبياد إلى جانب وثائق إرشادات ACTFL. استكشف التحليل كيف يعكس كل سؤال الكفاءة التواصلية، والأهمية الثقافية، والروابط بين التخصصات، وفرص المقارنة اللغوية والثقافية، وإمكانية تعزيز التفاعل مع المجتمع العالمي الأوسع. تكشف النتائج أن أسئلة الأولمبياد تناولت بشكل كافٍ مكوني التواصل والثقافة من خلال تعزيز مهام الفهم التفسيري والثقافي. ومع ذلك، لم يتم التركيز بشكل كافٍ على مؤشرات التواصل بين الأشخاص والعرض التقديمي، مما يشير إلى وجود فجوة في تعزيز الاستخدام التفاعلي للغة. دمجت الأسئلة الروابط بفعالية من خلال ربط تعلم اللغة العربية بمواضيع متعددة التخصصات مثل الاقتصاد والصحة والتاريخ، مما عزز التفكير النقدي لدى الطلاب وفهمهم السياقي. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، كانت عناصر المقارنات والمجتمعات حاضرة ضمنيًا، لكنها افتقرت إلى التفاعل الصريح مع وجهات النظر العالمية متعددة الثقافات. إجمالًا، خلصت الدراسة إلى أن أولمبياد ألف التعليمي لعام ٢٠٢٤ يُقدم نموذجًا قيّمًا لتقييم اللغة العربية يتماشى مع المعايير العالمية المعاصرة، مع ضرورة إجراء المزيد من التحسينات لتعزيز التواصل بين الأفراد والتكامل المجتمعي العالمي. وتوصي الدراسة بأن تتضمن مناهج اللغة العربية مهامًا أكثر أصالة وتنوعًا ثقافيًا وتواصلًا لإعداد الطلاب بشكل أفضل للمشاركة في عالم متعدد اللغات ومترابط.

الكلمات المفتاحية: *أولمبياد اللغة العربية, ألف للتعليم* 5C ACTFL

INTRODUCTION

The interest in learning Arabic continues to grow in various countries around the world, including Indonesia.[1] The development of the Arabic language in Indonesia coincided with the introduction of Islam to the archipelago, where Arabic was primarily studied as a tool to understand and deepen knowledge of Islam.[2] However, over time, Arabic has gained its appeal, as evidenced by the increasing number of students interested in furthering their understanding of the language both domestically and internationally.

[1] St Kuraedah, Nur Azaliah Mar, and Fahmi Gunawan, "Improving Students' Sense to Learn Language in Islamic Institution of Coastal Area Indonesia," *IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science* 156, no. 1 (May 2018): 012047, https://doi.org/10.1088/1755-1315/156/1/012047.

[2] Evi Nurus Suroiyah and Dewi Anisatuz Zakiyah, "Perkembangan Bahasa Arab Di Indonesia," *Muhadasah: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Arab* 3, no. 1 (June 7, 2021): 60–69, https://doi.org/10.51339/muhad.v3i1.302.

One way to improve the quality of language learning is through language Olympiads.[3] Several Arabic language olympiads are held in Indonesia, one of which is organized by Alef Education. Alef Education is an AI-based digital platform that provides students with an engaging learning experience and helps them achieve better learning outcomes.[4]

The Alef Education Arabic Language Olympiad is a prestigious competition because Alef Education is the only platform that collaborates with the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia.[5] The Arabic Language Olympiad certainly has objectives and benefits for teachers. Among them, it helps teachers become aware of the competencies possessed by students. In addition, teachers also gain new insights related to current issues in Arabic language education.[6]

The olympiad not only benefits teachers but also provides significant advantages for students, who are at the center of the learning process. One of the objectives is to develop students' talents.[7] Through the olympiad, talented students will also develop a strong competitive spirit to become winners in the competition.[8][9]

The olympiad can increase students' motivation in the learning process. [10] Motivation is crucial for making learning more meaningful, as students are ready and eager to engage with the learning material. According to a study by Abdel-Malek in 2020, Arabic language learning in line with the standards set by the American Council

[3] Ahmad Mazli Muhammad et al., "Modern Language Olympiad: Unleashing Potentials for 21st Century Skills," *International Journal of Modern Languages And Applied Linguistics* 4, no. 4 (December 10, 2020): 80, https://doi.org/10.24191/ijmal.v4i4.11287.

[4] Ruhamauliyah Meiliyati, "Platform Alef Education Sebagai Media Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab Secara Mandiri," *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam Al-Affan* 5, no. 1 (November 12, 2024): 73–79, https://doi.org/10.69775/jpia.v5i1.276.

[5] Yeta Purnama, "Strategi Soft Power Uni Emirat Arab Dalam Kerja Sama Dengan Indonesia Tahun 2015-2022," 2022, https://dspace.uii.ac.id/handle/123456789/40701.

[6] Rizal Nur Rochman, Maman Abdurrahman, and Mad Ali, "ANALISIS KEGIATAN FORUM MGMP BAHASA ARAB DALAM PENGEMBANGAN KOMPETENSI PEDAGOGIK GURU BAHASA ARAB DI JAWA TENGAH" 11, no. 1 (2022).

[7] Ogi Danika Pranata, "Pelatihan Olimpiade Sains Nasional Bidang Kebumian Melalui Pendekatan Strategis," *Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat MIPA dan Pendidikan MIPA* 7, no. 1 (March 24, 2023): 56–62, https://doi.org/10.21831/jpmmp.v7i1.51410.

[8] Hasan Abidin, "Pendampingan Pemantapan Bahasa Arab Kelas XI MA Darul Faizin Catak Gayam Mojowarno," *Jumat Pendidikan: Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat* 4, no. 3 (December 30, 2023): 134–39, https://doi.org/10.32764/abdimaspen.v4i3.4373.

[9] Dewi Sekar Arum et al., "Mengasah Potensi Melalui Kegiatan Olimpiade Anak Hebat," *ALKHIDMAH: Jurnal Pengabdian Dan Kemitraan Masyarakat* 2, no. 4 (October 17, 2024): 148–60, https://doi.org/10.59246/alkhidmah.v2i4.1081.

[10] Poltjes Pattipeilohy et al., "The National Science Olympiad and Its Impact on Improving the Quality of Education," *EDUKASIA: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pembelajaran* 5, no. 2 (June 30, 2024): 43–54, https://doi.org/10.62775/edukasia.v5i2.821.

on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) can provide meaningful learning experiences. [11]

ACTFL (2012) is a system and guideline aimed at monitoring foreign language proficiency standards in the United States, which consists of four basic skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.[12] Within ACTFL, there are five goals in language learning. These goals are known as the 5C framework: Communication, Culture, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities. [13]

Several previous studies have raised themes regarding item analysis with various approaches. For example, research conducted by Ida and Musyarofah on the validity, reliability, difficulty level, and discriminating power of the Arabic language final exam questions for 10th-grade Madrasah students.[14] Another study by Ilham Fatkhu Romadhon analyzed the difficulty level of Arabic language olympiad questions. The findings revealed that the questions were not appropriate for the students' ability level at the Madrasah Aliyah equivalent, as students found them challenging to answer.[15] The third study analyzed multiple-choice questions in the 2023 National Arabic Language Olympiad from a functional language approach perspective by Muhammad Farid Perdana. The analysis and data processing revealed that the alignment of the multiple-choice items with presentation standards was at 75%.[16]

Based on these phenomena, the purpose of this article is to analyze Arabic language olympiad questions from the perspective of the 5C ACTFL. Through this research, it is expected that the Arabic Language Olympiad will be able to present questions that align with the ACTFL standards, focusing on the 5C goals: Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities.

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[11] Myriam Abdel-Malek, "Empowering Arabic Learners to Make Meaning: A Genre-Based Approach," *System* 94 (November 1, 2020): 102329, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2020.102329.

[12] "World-ReadinessStandardsforLearningLanguages.Pdf," accessed February 6, 2025, https://www.actfl.org/uploads/files/general/World-ReadinessStandardsforLearningLanguages.pdf.

[13] "World-ReadinessStandardsforLearningLanguages.Pdf."

[14] Farida Far Ida and Anna Musyarofah, "Validitas dan Reliabilitas dalam Analisis Butir Soal," *AL-MU'ARRIB: JOURNAL OF ARABIC EDUCATION* 1, no. 1 (December 6, 2021): 34–44, https://doi.org/10.32923/al-muarrib.v1i1.2100.

[15] Ilham Fatkhu Romadhon, "ANALISIS TINGKAT KESUKARAN SOAL – SOAL OLIMPIADE BAHASA ARAB PEKAN ARABI NASIONAL 2019 UNIVERSITAS NEGERI MALANG," 2020.

[16] Muhammad Farid Perdana, "Tahlil Bunud Al-Ikhtiyar Min Muta'ddid Fi Asilat Musabaqat Al-Lughah Al-Arabiyyah Al-Wathaniyyah Sanat 2023 'Ala Dhau Al-Madkhal Al-Wazhifi Lil-Lughah" (masterThesis, Jakarta : FITK UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, 2024), https://repository.uinjkt.ac.id/dspace/handle/123456789/80611.

METHOD

This research uses a library research approach. Library research refers to the process of finding and seeking sources that provide factual information or expert or personal opinions regarding the research questions.[17]

The data sources in this research are as follows: 1) Primary data: The Alef Education Olympiad questions for Madrasah Aliyah 2024, which can be accessed via the link https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KGJ3Ws6jHJE&t=3026s and the ACTFL guidelines. The primary data in this research pertains to the alignment of the Alef Education Olympiad questions with the 5C ACTFL standards. 2) Secondary data: Books, documents, articles, and journals that discuss Arabic language questions and ACTFL, as well as other supporting documents for this research.

The instrument used is the 5C standards, which include communication, cultures, connections, comparisons, and communities. Below is the table presenting the indicators included in the 5C standards.

Table 1. World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages

No	Standards	Indicators
1	Communication	Interpersonal Communication
		Interpretive Communication
		Presentation Communication
2	Cultures	Relating Cultural Practices to Perspectives
		Relating Cultural Products to Perspectives:
3	Connections	Making Connections
		Acquiring Information and Diverse Perspectives:
4	Comparisons	Language Comparison
		Cultural Comparison
5	Communities	Schools and Global Communities
		Lifelong Learning

The data collection technique in this study uses a documentation technique with content analysis as a research data analysis technique.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

After studying and analyzing the Alef Education Arabic Language Olympiad for Madrasah Aliyah in 2024 and analyzing several related journal articles, some data was found as follows:

[17] Mary W. George, *The Elements of Library Research: What Every Student Needs to Know* (Princeton University Press, 2008).

The 5Cs standard in the ACTFL targets five important objectives in foreign language teaching, namely *communication*, *cultures*, *connections*, *comparisons*, and *communities*. Each of these standards is related to the other.

Olympiad questions for Madrasah Aliyah were created by Alef Education in collaboration with the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia. There are 6 bags of questions for 6 Madrasahs that qualified for the final round, with each bag containing 5 questions. The next round was quick, with 10 questions. To determine the second and third winners, 2 extra questions were added because 3 groups had the same score.

The first standard in the 5Cs of ACTFL is *communication.* This aspect of communication emphasizes the achievement of using language as a means of communication effectively. Learners can use more than one language for specific purposes in a variety of situations. There are three indicators in this communication element, namely, interpersonal communication, interpretive communication, and presentation communication. The analysis of communication standards in this Olympic question can be explained in the following table.

Table 2. Findings of Communication Standards in Alef Education Olympiad Questions for Arabic Language Subjects for Madrasah Aliyah

No	Indicator	Findings (Question Number)	Reason
1.	Interpersonal Communication	-	-
2.	Interpretive Communication	All questions	The questions that are prepared require interpretative skills
3.	Presentation Communication	-	_

Based on Table 2 above, it shows that communication standards are met in the interpretative communication indicators. Interpretative communication, based on the 5C ACTFL standards, is that students understand, interpret, and analyze what they hear, read, or see on a variety of topics.[18]. Emphasis on indicators of interpersonal communication and presentation communication was not found in these questions. This shows that the questions emphasize students' ability to understand and interpret information more than to interact directly (interpersonal communication)

[18] "World-ReadinessStandardsforLearningLanguages.Pdf."

or present information. Language is a means of communication.[19] Communication in language learning involves not only comprehension but also the ability to communicate directly or convey information in the form of presentations. [20]

It is important in language learning after students learn the target language, it is hoped that students will be able to find other knowledge with the target language.[21] This is also in line with UNESCO's 21st-century Arabic language learning direction, which contains 4C skills. One of the "C" components contained in it is *communication.*[22]

According to communication science expert Harold D. Lasswell, three things cause humans to need to communicate in their lives. One of them is the human desire to control the environment. Through communication, humans can learn, maintain, and utilize everything in their environment and avoid things that threaten their lives.[23]

The second is culture. There are two indicators in culture, namely, connecting cultural practices with perspectives and connecting cultural products with perspectives. Language is inseparable from culture and becomes a container for cultural expression that binds people to each other. Language is a cultural symbol of a nation based on its diverse variations.

Nancy Bonvillain, in her book, states that *cultural models are expressed in several ways, but language is key to their transmission.*[24]*.* Cultural models, which are a set of values, beliefs, and customs held together by a group, are expressed through a variety of ways, but language is the main key to its spread. With language, the culture of each region or country can be known to the wider community. Of course, the content of cultural elements is important in the language olympiad.

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[19] Imelda Oliva Wissang et al., *Bahasa Dan Budaya* (CV. Intelektual Manifes Media, 2023), https://books.google.com/books?hl=id&lr=&id=8EHJEAAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA123&dq=Nirwan+et+al.,+BAHASA+DAN+BUDAYA+(CV.+Intelektual+Manifes+Media,+2023).+&ots=XAv_Ub9ZEu&sig=a88sCrAXibCex-GoN7WBZ3_yjzs.

[20] Syifa Hamama and Muhammad Achid Nurseha, "Memahami Komunikasi Verbal Dalam Interaksi Manusia," *Jurnal Selasar KPI : Referensi Media Komunikasi Dan Dakwah* 3, no. 2 (December 22, 2023): 136–43, https://doi.org/10.33507/selasar.v3i2.1887.

[21] Cahya Edi Setyawan, "Arah Perencanaan Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab Abad 21," *AL-MANAR: Jurnal Komunikasi Dan Pendidikan Islam* 9, no. 1 (2020): 55–82.

[22] Teguh Sulistyo, Ayu Liskinasih, and Maria Purnawati, "MERDEKA BELAJAR KAMPUS MERDEKA: TANTANGAN ATAU HAMBATAN DITINJAU DARI TUNTUTAN PEMBELAJARAN ABAD 21?," *Jurnal Ilmiah Mandala Education* 8, no. 3 (August 30, 2022), https://doi.org/10.58258/jime.v8i3.2841.

[23] Nofrion, *Komunikasi Pendidikan* (Prenada Media, 2016).

[24] Nancy Bonvillain, *Language, Culture, and Communication: The Meaning of Messages* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2019).

The following is a table of exposure to the analysis of cultural standards in the Alef Education Olympiad.

Table 3. Findings of Cultural Standards in Alef Education Olympiad Questions for Arabic Language Subjects for Madrasah Aliyah

No	Indicator	Findings (Question Number)	Reason
1.	Relating Cultural Practices to Perspectives	Bag 2 (1) Bag 1 (1, 2, 3) Bag 4 (4)	K2.1 Cultural practices of buying and selling K1.1, K1.2, K1.3 Cultural practices of working in the health sector and going to the hospital K4.4 Cultural practices celebrating Independence Day
2.	Relating Cultural Products to Perspectives	Bag 5 (2) Bag 6 (2,4) Bag 2 (5) Bag 1 (5) Bag 3 (1, 3, 5) Bag 5(1, 3, 4, 5) Bag 4 (1,3, 5) Bag 6 (1,3,5) Quick Round Right (1,2,4,5,6,8,9)	K5.2 Cultural practices of living with applicable regulations and congregational prayers in mosques K6.2 K6.4 Cultural practices go to school and study start from morning to evening. K2.5 Cultural products in the form of Alef Education K1.5 Cultural products in the form of Alef Education K3.1, K3.3, K5.5 Cultural products in the form of technology, identity cards, and the Alef Education platform K5.1, cultural products in the form of buildings, K5.3, mirror, K5.4 traditional house, K5.5 alef education K4.1 Cultural products in the form of laboratory buildings K4.3 shoe K4.5 alef education K6.1 Cultural products in the form of handphones and social media K6.3 means of transport K6.5 alef education 1 poetry, 2 means of transport, 4 passport, 5 Driver's License, 6 building, 9 Tools for making bread

Based on table 3 above, it is found that the cultural standards in the 5C of ACTFL are well represented through two main indicators, namely connecting cultural practices with cultural perspectives and linking cultural products with cultural perspectives.

1. Relating Cultural Practices to Perspectives:

   In the questions analyzed, several questions test students in associating cultural practices with cultural perspectives. For example, the questions in bag 2 (number 1) discuss the cultural practices of buying and selling, as well as the questions in bag 1, 2, and 3 that discuss cultural practices related to work in the health sector and receiving treatment at the hospital.

This shows that the questions not only focus on the use of language but also introduce the culture related to the activities of daily life in Arab society. This is in line with the goal of cultural standards in the ACTFL, which wants students to not only master the language but also understand the cultural context behind the use of the language.

2. Relating Cultural Products to Perspective:

Furthermore, questions that discuss cultural products are also found in questions from bag 1 (number 5) and bag 5 (number 1). These questions relate cultural products to a broader cultural perspective, such as Alef Education's cultural products and buildings. The question in bag 3 also relates cultural products to perspectives, namely, questions about technology and social media. The existence of these cultural products shows that these questions introduce Arab culture through examples of products that are relevant to daily life and advise students to reflect on how these cultural products have a deeper meaning in the social and cultural context.

The cultural products in this question help students understand not only language but also how language functions as a container for broader cultural products, such as technology, architecture, and the different educational systems between Arab and Indonesian cultures.

The third aspect of the 5Cs in the ACTFL is *connection*. The target of this aspect is to connect with other disciplines and get information and diverse perspectives so that language can function in academic and career situations. There are two standards in this aspect, namely, making connections and obtaining diverse information and perspectives.

1. Making connections. The indicators are that students build, strengthen, and expand their knowledge of other disciplines when using information and language to develop critical thinking and various creative problem-solving. One of the skills that must be possessed by students in the digital era is critical thinking[25].
2. Acquiring information and diverse perspectives. An indicator of achievement is that learners access and evaluate the diverse perspectives available through their language and culture.

[25] Kasdin Sihotang, *Berpikir Kritis: Kecakapan Hidup di Era Digital* (PT Kanisius, 2019).

Language learners can connect information learned from other subjects with learning foreign languages and cultures. [26]

Table 4. Findings of Connection Standards in Alef Education Olympiad Questions Arabic Language Subject for Madrasah Aliyah

No	Indicator	Findings (Question Number)	Reason
1.	Making connections	Bag 2 (1,3,4) Bag 1 (1,2,4) Bag 3 (1,2,4) Bag 4 (4) Bag 5 (1)	K2.1 Connection with the discipline of economics K2.3 Physical Education K2.4 History of Islamic Culture K1.2 K1.2 Medicine K1.4 History of Islamic Culture K3.1 Science and Technology K3.2 Health Sciences K3.4 History of Islamic Culture K4.4 History of Islamic Culture K5.1 Architect science
2.	Acquiring information and diverse perspectives.	Bag 6 (4) Quick Round Right (6,8,9,) Extra Round of the Scramble (1,2)	K6.6 History of Indonesia 6, 8 (Architect science) 9 (Tataboga science) 1 (History) 2 (Fiqh Science) Information and diverse perspectives are also obtained from the question bag as in the first connection indicator, namely, making connections.

Based on Table 4 above, the connection standard is well met, as evidenced by the following explanation. The connection aspect in the ACTFL 5C standard includes two main indicators: making connections and acquiring information and diverse perspectives. These two indicators aim to broaden students' horizons in relating language learning to other disciplines and to obtain information from a variety of different perspectives. In the context of the Alef Education Olympiad, here are the relevant findings:

1. Making Connections

   In the indicator of making connections, the questions found in the Alef Education Olympiad succeeded in connecting language learning with various other disciplines. For example, the questions in Bag 2 (numbers 1, 3, 4) and Bag 1 (numbers 1, 2, 4) discuss various disciplines, such as economics, physical education, and Islamic cultural history. This shows that these questions invite students not only to learn Arabic but also to relate it to knowledge from other relevant fields.

[26] Kiki Cahya, Moh Ainin, and Anwar Sanusi, "Buku Ajar Bahasa Arab Kelas 4 Madrasah Ibtidaiyah: Analisis Standar 5C ACTFL," *Al-Ma Rifah* 19 (October 31, 2022): 167–82, https://doi.org/10.21009/almakrifah.19.02.04.

The connections made are very important in supporting students' critical thinking skills. As explained by Sihotang[27], critical thinking is one of the important skills in the digital era, where information from various sources needs to be carefully evaluated and associated with other knowledge.

2. Acquiring information and diverse perspectives

The second indicator in the aspect of connection is to obtain diverse information and perspectives. In the Alef Education Olympiad questions, it was found that the questions sought to introduce various perspectives, such as in Bag 3 (numbers 1, 2, 4) which linked language to technology, health, and the history of Islamic culture, as well as questions in Bag 6 (number 4) which linked to Indonesian history. In this way, these questions open access for students to obtain a wider range of information, not only in the context of language but also in various fields of science and culture.

Gaining diverse perspectives is key in helping learners understand the various views and viewpoints that exist by the goals of the ACTFL standards. Language learners are expected to be able to access a variety of information from diverse sources, which will enrich their insights, both in academic contexts and in future professional life.[28]

Comparison is the fourth aspect of the 5Cs of the ACTFL. The standard in *this comparison* is language comparison and cultural comparison.[29] The language comparison referred to here is that students use language to investigate, explain, and reflect on the essence of language through a comparison of the language they learn and their native language. As for cultural comparison, in this case, students use language to explain and reflect on the cultural concepts they are learning and their own culture.

Table 5. Comparison Standard Findings in Alef Education Olympiad Questions for Arabic Language Subjects for Madrasah Aliyah

No	Indicator	Findings (Question Number)	Reason
1.	Language Comparison	Bag 2 (2) Quick Round Right (1,	K2.2. Comparison of Singular and Plural Concepts in Arabic and Indonesian 1 (Comparison of writing in Arabic and Indonesian)

[27] Sihotang, *Berpikir Kritis*.

[28] Hary Soedarto Harjono, "Literasi Digital: Prospek dan Implikasinya dalam Pembelajaran Bahasa," *Pena : Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa dan Sastra* 8, no. 1 (April 24, 2019): 1–7, https://doi.org/10.22437/pena.v8i1.6706.

[29] "World-ReadinessStandardsforLearningLanguages.Pdf."

		10)	10 (Comparison of the concept of pronouns in Indonesian with dhomir in Arabic)
2.	Cultural Comparison	Bag 5 (1, 4)	K5.1 Comparison of buildings with Indonesian architectural style with Arabic architectural style. K5.4 Comparison of Indonesian Traditional Houses with Arab.
		Quick Round Right (1)	1 (Poetry in Arabic and poetry in Indonesian have the same characteristics)

The following is an explanation of the results of the analysis in the table above.

1. Language Comparison

In terms of language comparison, the questions analyzed introduce students to the differences and similarities between Arabic and Indonesian. For example, the questions in Bag 2 (number 2) which discuss the comparison of the concepts of *mufrad* (singular) and *jamak* (plural) in Arabic and Indonesian, as well as the questions in Babak Cepat Tepat (number 1 and 10) which compare the concept of pronouns (*dhomir*) in Arabic with pronouns in Indonesian.

The opinion of linguists is that there is no pure language in this world. Therefore, languages can influence each other, and this is not a new phenomenon. The cultural contact between nations that occurs can be seen in the issue of Discussion. This caused the influence of foreign languages on the Indonesian language. One of them is Arabic, which influences the Indonesian language a lot.[30]

This analysis shows that the questions provide space for students to explore and reflect on the differences in linguistic structure between Arabic and Indonesian, which helps them in analyzing and reflecting on the essence of the two languages. In this way, students not only learn to use the language but also understand more deeply the structures and concepts that exist in the two languages compared.

2. Cultural Comparison

In the aspect of cultural comparison, the questions in the Olympics also invite students to compare Arab culture with Indonesian culture. For example, the questions in Bag 5 (number 1, 4) and Quick Round Right (number 1) discuss the comparison between architecture and traditional houses from Indonesia with Arabic architectural styles. These questions provide an opportunity for learners

[30] Amira Nayla'Izza, "Perbandingan Kata Bahasa Indonesia Dan Bahasa Arab (Tinjauan Struktur Dan Semantik)," *Jurnal Motivasi Pendidikan Dan Bahasa* 2, no. 1 (2024): 44–51.

to discuss and reflect on the cultural concepts they have learned and compare them to their own culture.

By comparing these two cultures, students can understand the cultural values that underlie social and cultural life in each society. This helps students not only to master the Arabic language but also to gain a cross-cultural understanding that can be applied in everyday life, both in social and professional contexts.

The fifth aspect in the 5Cs of ACTFL is the communities. The communities in question communicate and interact with cultural competencies to participate in multilingual communities within and around the world. There are two standards in this aspect. The first is the School and Global Community. Students use language in the classroom and outside the classroom to interact and collaborate in their communities and the global world. The second is lifelong learning. Learners set goals and reflect on using language for their enjoyment, enrichment, and progression.

The standard focuses on language as a means of communication with language speakers in all settings: school, home, community, and abroad. In addition, students now have unlimited access to information using advanced technology.[31] Community standards are standards used to check students' ability to use language both inside and outside the school environment and in life-like situations. [32]

Community standards in the ACTFL 2013 /CAEP Standards are opportunities to participate in structured study abroad and/or in-depth experience in the target language community.[33] Arabic language learning no longer only focuses on grammar mastery and mastery of Arabic texts but also as a communication tool within a community.

The Arabic language learning curriculum is developed so that the learning process (Arabic) becomes more qualitative, follows scientific developments (intellectual relevance) and the needs of society (community), and the output is

[31] Cahya, Ainin, and Sanusi, "Buku Ajar Bahasa Arab Kelas 4 Madrasah Ibtidaiyah."

[32] Habar Hussein Jassim and Rafid Raaof Jassim, "Evaluating English for Iraq Textbook Grade 5 in Terms of Textbook Quality Standards," 2021, https://www.ijherjournal.com/dergi/evaluating-english-for-iraq-textbook-grade-5-in-terms-of-textbook-quality-standards20210812022556.pdf.

[33] Christina Huhn, Teresa R. Bell, and Krista Chambless, "Issues in World Language Teacher Preparation: ACTFL/CAEP Standards and Oral Proficiency," *Foreign Language Annals* 54, no. 1 (March 2021): 255–71, https://doi.org/10.1111/flan.12507.

produced by market demand (social relevance)[34]. The use of ACTFL as a comparative standard in measuring Arabic language proficiency aims to strengthen Arabic language learning outcomes in the Independent curriculum, which is oriented towards the use of Arabic by their needs in the global community, not only oriented to religious.[35]

For language educators, the fifth Community "C" from the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) World Readiness Standards for Language Learning further guides their pedagogy in community building. Meeting these standards proves to be a challenge outside the classroom when students are asked to interact and collaborate within their communities and the global world.[36] For educators in the field of languages, community creation is based on the fifth "C" of the ACTFL World Readiness Standards for Language and Community Learning. This fifth objective area proposes that students be able to "communicate and interact with cultural competencies to participate in multilingual communities at home and around the world.[37]

The demand for learning Arabic as a foreign language continues to increase in various higher education institutions in many countries. The ability to speak a foreign language, especially Arabic, opens up various interesting opportunities in various areas of life[38].

The concept of lifelong learning (LLL) is the continuous development of skills and knowledge throughout an individual's life.[39] This not only increases social inclusion, active citizenship, and personal development but also competitiveness and employability. The term lifetime, as applied to education or learning, has been

[34] Hasyim Asy'ari and Cahya Edi Setyawan, "Arabic Curriculum Design in the Merdeka Curriculum from the Perspective of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL)," *Mantiqu Tayr: Journal of Arabic Language* 4, no. 1 (2024): 213–31.

[35] Asy'ari and Setyawan.

[36] Heather Jerónimo and Allysha Martin, "Twitter as an Online Educational Community in the Spanish Literature Classroom," *Foreign Language Annals* 54, no. 2 (July 2021): 505–24, https://doi.org/10.1111/flan.12522.

[37] Jerónimo and Martin.

[38] Maryam Nur Annisa and Randi Safii, "Analisis Kebutuhan Belajar Bahasa Arab sebagai Bahasa Asing dalam Konteks Pendidikan Tinggi," *ELOQUENCE : Journal of Foreign Language* 2, no. 2 (August 31, 2023): 141–58, https://doi.org/10.58194/eloquence.v2i2.861.

[39] Marjan Laal and Peyman Salamati, "Lifelong Learning; Why Do We Need It?," *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences* 31 (2012): 399–403.

circulating for more than a quarter of a century.[40] Our community standard analysis is presented in the following table.

Table 6. Communities Standard Findings in Alef Education Olympiad Questions Arabic Language Subject for Madrasah Aliyah

No	Indicator	Findings (Question Number)	Reason
1.	Schools and Global Communities	Bag 2 (5) Bag 1 (5) Bag 3 (5) Bag 4 (2, 5) Bag 5 (5) Bag 6 (5)	K2.5. K1.5 K3.5 K4.5 K5.5 K6.5 Discussing Alef Education, this platform is designed for students and is used to learn. K4.2 Discussion about universities and students
2.	Lifelong Learning	Bag 2 (1,3) Bag 1 (1, 2, 3) Bag 3 (1, 2, 3) Bag 4 (1,3,4) Bag 5 (2,3) Bag 6 (1,2,3,4) Quick Round Right (2,4,5,7,8,9,10) Extra Round of Scramble (2)	The topics in these questions are relevant to the context of students' daily lives.

Based on table 6 above, it can be interpreted that:

1. Schools and Global Communities

In this first standard, you note that language learning takes place not only in the classroom but also outside the classroom, involving interaction and collaboration in a global context. This is in line with the emphasis on the use of language as a necessary means of communication to participate in multilingual communities around the world. Based on the table you created, it was found that some of the questions related to the Global School and Community have the following reasons:

Bag 2 (5), Bag 1 (5), Bag 3 (5), Bag 4 (5), Bag 5 (5), and Bag 6 (5) show that these questions focus on using Arabic to discuss topics related to Alef Education, a learning platform designed to help students learn Arabic. The platform aims to connect students with a variety of learning communities, allowing them to communicate and collaborate internationally.

Bag 4 (2) shows the use of language in the discussion of topics related to universities and students, which provides real context on how language is used in

[40] Norm Friesen and Terry Anderson, "Interaction for Lifelong Learning," *British Journal of Educational Technology* 35, no. 6 (November 2004): 679–87, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8535.2004.00426.x.

a global higher education environment. It helps students understand how Arabic is used in academic communities around the world. The table above shows that the questions in this standard cover a wide range of topics that allow students to interact in Arabic in a variety of global educational contexts, broadening their understanding of the outside world.

2. Lifelong Learning

Lifelong learning is the second standard in the community aspect, which leads to the development of language skills that can be used throughout life, not just limited to formal education. This helps students not only to acquire language knowledge and skills but also to reflect and set goals in using language for personal purposes, pleasure, and progress. Based on the table you created, the findings related to lifelong learning are as follows:

Bag 2 (1,3), Bag 1 (1, 2, 3), Bag 3 (1, 2, 3): These questions are related to the topic in the questions, which are relevant to the context of the student's daily life. It covers how Arabic is used in everyday life and a broader social context, describing lifelong learning that is not just limited to the classroom but includes greater social interaction.

Bag 4 (1,3,4), Bag 5 (2,3): Focus on questions relevant to students' lives related to health and education, showing how Arabic is used in a broader context, beyond just academic or formal materials. This provides an example of how Arabic functions as a communication tool in the real world, supporting lifelong learning.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that the writing and preparation of the 2024 Alef Arabic Language Olympiad questions for Madrasah Aliyah have met most of the 5C standards set by the National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project. Based on the results of the analysis obtained, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. *Communication*. The questions in the Alef Education Olympiad show that the Interpretive Communication standard in the 5Cs of ACTFL has been well implemented. Most of the questions test students' ability to understand, interpret, and analyze texts in Arabic, which is in line with the ACTFL's goals in language teaching. However, there are weaknesses in Interpersonal

Communication and Presentation Communication, which are not so evident in these questions. This shows that although this question emphasizes interpretive skills, there is still a need for more emphasis on direct interaction and the ability to speak or convey information in Arabic.

2. *Cultures*. The questions in this Olympiad are very in-depth in connecting cultural practices and cultural products with a broader cultural perspective. For example, questions that link cultural practices such as buying and selling, health, and the celebration of Independence Day show that learning Arabic also includes an understanding of Arabic culture. In addition, questions about cultural products, such as Alef Education and traditional buildings, introduce students to important cultural aspects of the language. This reinforces the importance of language as a medium for conveying and understanding cultural values.
3. *Connections*. One of the important findings in this analysis is how Alef Education's Olympiad questions succeeded in connecting Arabic language learning with various other disciplines. For example, questions linking language to the economy, health, and history of Islamic culture show that learning Arabic can broaden students' horizons, not only in linguistic contexts but also in other disciplines. This supports critical thinking skills that are important for learners in the digital age, as described in the related literature, which shows the importance of critical and creative thinking skills in language learning.
4. *Comparisons*. In the comparisons standard, Alef Education's Olympiad questions also include a comparison between Arabic and Indonesian, as well as a comparison between Arabic culture and Indonesian culture. For example, questions that compare mufrad (singular) and jamak (plural) in Arabic with Indonesian, as well as comparisons between poetry in Arabic and poetry in Indonesian, allow students to not only understand the structure of the language but also relate it to the cultural concepts of both languages. This helps learners to develop a deeper understanding of both the languages and cultures being compared.
5. *Communities*. The questions in the Alef Education Olympics successfully cover two key standards in Community: Schools and Global Communities and Lifelong Learning. In this case, the questions related to Alef Education as a global

learning platform show how Arabic is used in the context of the wider world, facilitating cross-cultural interaction and collaboration. In addition, questions relevant to health, education, and daily life demonstrate the importance of lifelong learning, where Arabic is seen as a means of communication used throughout a student's life, not limited to the context of formal education.

Based on the conclusion above, the researcher recommends that the question makers and compilers develop Olympic questions by completing the aspects of interpersonal communication and presentation communication, including Arabic cultural practices and products, without eliminating the practices and cultural products of the Indonesian nation. In addition to these two things, language and cultural comparison standards also need to be developed, considering that the number of questions with this content is very small. The researcher also recommends conducting further research related to the analysis of the Alef Education Olympics using other analysis standards.

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