Arabic Teachers Pedagogical Competence: Cultural Approach in Enhancing the Students' Communicative Skills

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Abstract

This research aims to discuss the pedagogical competence of Arabic teachers at the senior high school level *(Madrasah Aliyah)*, focusing on cultural approaches to improve students' Arabic communicative skills. The research method used is a qualitative approach with a phenomenological type. This research involved classroom observations, in-depth interviews with the two teachers, and analysis of documents related to learning materials. The research results highlight two important things: First, the importance of selecting learning materials that suit students' needs and their level of understanding and paying attention to diverse learning interests and learning styles. Teacher 1 (T1) combines a book published by the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, *Kurikulum Menteri Agama* (KMA) 183 textbooks, with the *silsilah ta'lim al-Lughah al-Arabiyyah* pedigree to overcome the leading textbook's lack of Arabic cultural content. In contrast, teacher 2 (T2) integrates theoretical principles of language teaching with online learning resources and audiovisual materials. Second, this research shows that creating interactive, collaborative and communicative learning situations is essential in improving students' communicative competence. T1 uses question-and-answer techniques, discussions and group work, while T2 combines modern technology with learning videos, interactive applications and guided discussions. This research implies the importance of a cultural approach in improving students' Arabic communicative skills in *Madrasah Aliyah*. These findings can be the basis for developing a more inclusive and relevant curriculum in Arabic language learning at the high school level by paying attention to cultural aspects as an integral part of Arabic language teaching.

Keywords: *Arabic Teachers, Communicative skills, Cultural approach, Pedagogical competence*

Introduction

In teaching Arabic at school, teachers need appropriate learning strategies starting from approaches, methods and techniques (Jendli & Albarakati, 2024; Sanusi et al., 2020; Sya'diah & Anshari; Wesely et al., 2024). Selecting methods and techniques based on the right approach will meet students' Arabic language learning needs. Teaching Arabic is about mastering grammar and vocabulary and an in-depth understanding of the culture and context behind the language to facilitate communication (Fauzia et al., 2023; Maimunah et al., 2023). Therefore, improving students' communicative skills requires teacher pedagogical competence, such as mastering learning theories and educational learning principles (Permendiknas, 2007). One approach that can be applied in teaching Arabic is the cultural approach (Heidari et al., 2014; Kramsch, 1995; Murphy, 1988; Onishchuk et al., 2020).

Cultural approaches have emerged as a promising strategy. In practice, this approach teaches the language itself and opens the door to a deeper understanding of the identity, values and cultural norms attached to the language (Merrouche, 2010; Sleptsova et al., 2020). The characteristics of Arabic language teaching that focus on a cultural approach cannot be separated from the social and cultural context in which it is used. Every word and expression in Arabic has a story, history, and meaning closely related to the people who use it (Grozdanoski, 2019). Apart from that, teachers transmit linguistic information and facilitate understanding how Arabic is used in real communicative situations (Kim, 2020). Thus, this approach places culture as a strong foundation in the learning process.

In teaching Arabic as a foreign language in schools, a cultural approach can utilize various teaching materials, such as literature, music, films and folklore, to bring students closer to the Arabic cultural context (Bakalla, 2023). Through these works, students can learn more deeply about the values, social norms, and perspectives that shape Arab culture (Arnett & Adolescence, 2010). With teachers implementing this approach, students not only learn how to speak Arabic but also how to communicate effectively with Arabs in a variety of everyday life situations.

However, the research results of Nurbayan et al. (2023) also stated that the condition of Arabic language teachers in schools is that they sometimes only focus on delivering material in order to avoid obligations, and they do not pay serious attention to the most crucial aspects needed by students in learning Arabic in the 21st century. As a result, the teaching method teachers use cannot achieve the goals of learning Arabic in the 21st century, including students being able to communicate using Arabic. Therefore, in teaching Arabic based on a praxeological perspective, teachers are primarily required to diagnose problems students face to determine appropriate actions to achieve Arabic language learning goals (Sanusi et al., 2022).

Regarding cultural approaches to teaching Arabic, Syairi (2013) carried out research on teaching Arabic. His research concluded that teachers often need to remember to convey the culture contained in Arabic, so when communicating Arabic, mistakes often occur in its use. However, in this research, the research approach used

only developed cultural approach indicators without conducting research studies in the field. Apart from that, the research results of Hadiyanto et al. (2023) show that the integration of local Indonesian culture in the Arabic language learning process in higher education aims to enable students to wisely compare the two Arab-Indonesian cultural values and still maintain their identity as Indonesians. However, this research does not focus on strengthening students' communication skills through an Arabic cultural approach.

Therefore, this research is presented to improve previous research. This research focuses more on teachers' pedagogical competence in applying a cultural approach when teaching Arabic in the classroom. This is important to research because the cultural approach pays special attention to politeness and cultural norms in communication. Students are invited to understand how to speak appropriately in various contexts, considering differences in status, age and social relationships between speakers (Berns, 2013; Cazden, 1970). This improves students' communicative skills and helps them prevent misunderstandings and conflicts that may arise due to a lack of understanding of the cultural context.

As professional educators, teachers must have pedagogical competence and master cultural approaches to teaching Arabic (Asiri & Metwally, 2020; Boulaouali, 2023). The aim of implementing this approach is so that students become skilled language speakers and individuals who can see the Arab world with high cultural sensitivity (Abdelhadi et al., 2020). They can respond to situations wisely, understand nuances of meaning in conversations, and respect existing cultural norms (Mardhiyah et al., 2023). Especially in today's digital era, students' communicative skills in Arabic are an advantage and a bridge that connects various cultures and extends understanding across civilizations.

Based on the statement above, this research aims to discover how teachers can use a cultural approach to teaching Arabic to improve students' communication. By deepening understanding of the close relationship between language and culture, Arabic language teaching can become more meaningful and meet the demands of cross-cultural communication in the current global context.

Method

This research uses a qualitative approach with a phenomenological type. The choice of this design was based on the consideration that the background of the object of this research was a social phenomenon, namely the phenomenon of Arabic teachers' pedagogical competence in applying a cultural approach to improving students' communicative skills. In addition, this phenomenological research tries to explain or reveal the meaning of concepts or experiential phenomena based on the awareness that occurs in several individuals. Phenomenology is carried out in natural situations, so there are no limitations in interpreting or understanding the phenomena being studied, and researchers are free to analyze the data obtained. This research uses a phenomenological approach because the facts in the picture below support it.

Figure 1. Phenomological Research Facts

This research was conducted at *Madrasah Aliyah Negeri* (MAN) in the Bandung Raya. Participants in this research were two Arabic teachers at MAN Cimahi City. This sampling technique uses purposive sampling, where the researcher determines the sample using specific criteria according to the research objectives. The specified criteria consist of two aspects, namely institutional aspects and teacher identity. Criteria related to institutional aspects include a) the school has a superior program in Arabic, b) the school has Arabic language teachers who have State Civil Apparatus status and have been certified, and c) the school has Arabic language teachers who have masters and doctoral qualifications. Apart from that, the criteria related to the teacher's identity are multilingual-based Arabic language learning. The specified criteria aim to reveal pedagogical competence, especially teacher competence, in implementing the Arabic language learning approach.

The data collected in this research includes four indicators of Arabic teachers' pedagogical competence.

Table 1. Indicators of Arabic Language Teacher Pedagogical Competence

Indicators of Teacher Pedagogical Competency	Indicators of Arabic Teacher Pedagogical Competency	Items
Mastering learning theories and educational learning principles	Teachers can apply a cultural approach to learning Arabic that educates creatively	Teachers select learning materials that incorporate elements of Arab culture, such as poetry, folklore, or historical aspects, to provide students with a more holistic learning experience

	Teachers create learning situations encouraging students to interact, collaborate, and use Arabic in culturally relevant contexts
	Teachers evaluate the progress of students' communication skills comprehensively, including language use, fluency, understanding of cultural context, and adaptability in communication.

To obtain the required research data according to the indicators described in Table 1, researchers used data collection techniques such as observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation studies. Observations were carried out to determine the implementation of learning in the classroom, which focused on the teacher's ability to create learning situations that combined elements of Arab culture, mastery of teaching methods, and evaluation of learning carried out by the teacher in determining students' communication skills. Then, interviews were conducted to explore as much information as possible regarding the teacher's steps in creating learning situations that encourage students to use Arabic in a cultural context, teaching methods and learning evaluation. Meanwhile, the documentation study used in this research aims to document learning materials that combine elements of Arabic culture.

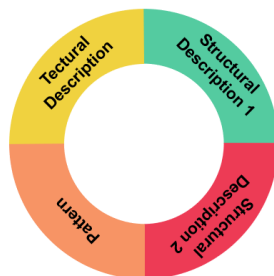Data analysis used by researchers includes four stages as described below.

Figure 2. Phenomenological Data Analysis Pattern (Moustakas, 2014)

1. Textural Description (TD): In this stage, the researcher initiated a conversation with the informant to gather insights on the cultural approach to learning Arabic. The purpose was to understand the informant's experiences and perceptions, which could provide valuable context for the research. The conversation began with the researcher sharing a story about the importance of a cultural approach in learning Arabic, serving as a prompt for the informant.

2. Structural Description Construct Degree 1 (SD 1): At this stage, the researcher invited the informant to share their knowledge about the steps taken by the Arabic teacher in implementing a cultural approach. The informant's insights,

gathered through structured and unstructured interviews, were crucial in understanding how the cultural approach was used to enhance students' communicative skills.

3. Structural Description Construct Degree 2 (SD 2): At this stage, the researcher reads or listens again to the meanings of the phenomenon of learning Arabic using a cultural approach conveyed by the informant. After that, the researcher finds and determines the keywords that the researcher had obtained from the meaning units at elementary stage 1. These keywords are then referred to as emergent meanings/concepts.

4. Pattern: After carrying out the three stages above, the researcher can find out how the responses from the informants relate to the research problem that the researcher poses. Researchers use the phenomenological method to carry out the qualitative data analysis process, which is also commonly called coding analysis. Thus, after the coding analysis, we can obtain an overview of teacher competence in implementing a cultural approach to improve students' communicative skills at school.

Results and Discussion

The cultural approach to teaching Arabic at Madrasah Aliyah is about teaching language structure and vocabulary and introducing students to the language's cultural context. Therefore, teachers' pedagogical competence, in this case, is essential because they need to integrate elements of Arab culture into learning to improve students' communicative skills holistically (Alfayez, 2022; Siregar, 2022). Regarding teachers' pedagogical competence in implementing a cultural approach includes indicators a) the teacher's ability to select learning materials that combine elements of Arab culture, b) the teacher's ability to create interactive, collaborative and communicative learning situations, c) the teacher's ability to evaluate the progress of students' communication skills comprehensively (Kokorina et al., 2021; Lavrenteva & Orland-Barak, 2023; Tiwari, 2021).

The teacher chooses Arabic learning materials

The teacher's selection of material is a critical step in the Arabic language learning process. In choosing Arabic language material, teachers need to be able to identify students' needs and level of understanding of Arabic (Retnawati, 2020; Sanusi, 2022). This includes knowledge about students' backgrounds, their level of language skills, learning interests, and effective learning styles. By understanding this, teachers can choose relevant material that matches students' abilities and needs.

Teachers' pedagogical competence, which includes the ability to select and integrate elements of Arabic culture into learning materials, can be done by presenting Arabic poetry, folklore, songs, or historical texts to teach Arabic to students (Bakalla, 2023; Boubaya, 2020). In this way, students not only learn the structure of the language but are also involved in understanding the cultural expressions contained in the

language. The integration of these cultural elements will make learning more meaningful and relevant for students. This is in line with the results of interviews with Arabic teachers.

T1

In choosing Arabic learning materials, I pay close attention to two main things: the needs of the students and the quality of the resources I use. I always try to understand students' understanding and interest in Arabic. In this way, I can choose material by combining the book published by the Ministry of Religion, KMA 183 as the primary textbook and *silsilah ta'lim al-Lughah al-Arabiyyah* book that suits their beginner or advanced level. In the *silsilah ta'lim al-Lughah al-Arabiyyah* book, specifically to increase the reading skills *(maharah qiraah)*, many texts contain stories about Islamic history, Arab culture, and so on. So, this book is suitable for improving students' communicative competence in schools.

T2

My approach to selecting learning materials is deeply rooted in the theoretical principles of language teaching, with a strong emphasis on communicative theory. I firmly believe that materials should facilitate natural interaction in Arabic, rather than just theoretical understanding of grammatical rules. This belief guides my choice of the Ministry of Religion KMA 183 book, which I use to encourage language use in communicative contexts such as dialogue, role-playing, and real direct speaking situations. I am also meticulous in selecting online sources and audiovisual materials, ensuring they align with the curriculum and present the material in an engaging and comprehensive manner. The chosen sources should provide a robust understanding of grammar, vocabulary, and the cultural context in which Arabic is used.

The interview results show that T1 pays attention to student's needs and the quality of resources by combining material from the Ministry of Religion and *silsilah ta'lim al-Lughah al-Arabiyyah* book. With an approach that includes an understanding of the student's level and selectivity in choosing resources, he aims to present material relevant to the curriculum and interesting and in-depth content. In contrast to T2, he chose material from the KMA 183 book and online sources based on theoretical principles of language teaching, especially communicative theory. T2 also emphasized the importance of materials that allow students to interact in Arabic naturally and practically, considering cultural and historical aspects to deepen their understanding of the language context.

The two methods used by T1 and T2 show a strong commitment from both teachers to providing meaningful and compelling learning experiences for students in learning Arabic through selecting textbooks. In line with the research results of Ospina & Medina (2020), the advantage of teachers providing learning experiences to students is that they will explore, discover and understand the world, including culture. Students

will also be more creative, innovative, self-confident, independent, and empathetic and have a high social sense (Torres, 2021; Yacoubian, 2020).

Furthermore, based on the results of a documentation study on *maharah qiraah* materials. For example, in the Arabic text contained in the KMA 183 book, there is a discussion of الأديان في إندونيسيا، السفر. In this السفر theme, it is more tendentious to introduce areas in Bali, Indonesia. Therefore, this problem is why T1 combines the KMA 183 textbook and *silsilah ta'lim al-Lughah al-Arabiyyah* level 3 pedigree as sources in learning Arabic. Because in the *silsilah ta'lim al-Lughah al-Arabiyyah* book, there are many elements of Arab culture, especially those related to *maharah qiraah* material. For example, in chapter 10 about الفارس الملثم, there is the sentence والله لايهزم جيش فيه مثلك (Truly, an army like you cannot be defeated). The phrase والله, in Arabic culture, is not only about taking an oath in the name of God. However, it can be interpreted as a statement of honesty and a call for the truth of something. By using the phrase والله, someone swears by God that what they say is the absolute truth (Al-Khawaldeh, 2018; Said & Grier-Reed, 2023). Therefore, claims must be considered valid by all who hear them, and making false oaths is a major sin in Islam.

Meanwhile, the teaching resource used by T2 is the book KMA 183. However, he also designs Arabic teaching materials by combining online and audiovisual learning resources. For example, in *maharah al-kalam (speaking skills)* learning, the teacher complements it using YouTube video media about Arabic language learning. For example, the phrase "by the way" in Arabic cannot be translated using a literal procedure but is translated using a cultural equivalence procedure (Al Farisi, 2011; Newmark, 1988). In Arabic, the expression "by the way" is not translated as يتحدث يتحدث as students understand it literally, but the expression is translated as على فكرة or بالمناسبة.

Interestingly, students can also listen to how to pronounce the expression correctly. Another example is when students want to convey the expression "a generous person" in conversation material, they can use an Arabic cultural expression, namely اليد الطويل. The expression اليد الطويل is not translated literally as "long arm" because it is not culturally relevant in Arabic.

Therefore, selecting Arabic language learning materials that integrate Arabic cultural values is essential in improving students' Arabic communication skills at school. This is because Arabic culture is rich in expressions, metaphors and ways of speaking, which may be difficult to understand directly if they are not integrated with cultural understanding. Integrating cultural values helps students understand and use cultural expressions correctly and can increase the depth of their communication (Shaules, 2019; Şchiopu, 2018; Ting-Toomey & Dorjee, 2018).

Thus, the competency of Arabic teachers in selecting learning materials and designing teaching shows different abilities and methods, where T1 combines the KMA 183 textbook with the *silsilah ta'lim al-Lughah al-Arabiyyah* book to overcome the book's lack of Arabic cultural content. Main text. Meanwhile, T2 uses the KMA 183 book as the primary source and enriches teaching with online learning resources and audiovisual

materials. This teacher adapts to students' needs in understanding not only the structure of the Arabic language but also its use in a real Arabic cultural context. Both approaches emphasize integrating Arab cultural values into Arabic language learning at school. By selecting appropriate material from textbooks and additional sources, both teachers can help students improve their Arabic communication skills more in-depth and contextually.

Teachers create interactive, collaborative and communicative learning situations

The ability of Arabic teachers to create interactive, collaborative and communicative learning situations in schools is essential. Interactive learning situations allow students to participate actively in discussions and speak, listen, and write in Arabic (Gulnaz, 2020; Wargadinata et al., 2020). This method helps improve their communication skills naturally and effectively. In addition, by creating collaborative situations, teachers promote teamwork and student participation in group activities. This increases learning motivation and expands students' opportunities to practice speaking Arabic with fellow students (Alghasab et al., 2019; Febriani et al., 2020). Students can learn Arabic better when placed in situations relevant to everyday life or the Arab cultural context. Students can understand and use Arabic in a more authentic context. However, communicative learning is about language and understanding the social and cultural norms associated with using Arabic (Abuemira, 2024; Shiri, 2015). Teachers can guide students in understanding the cultural expressions and social conventions that underlie Arabic communication.

T1, in line with this approach, places students at the centre of the learning process. They are not just passive listeners, but active participants who build their own knowledge through practical experience. As shown in Figure 3, this approach empowers students and instils a sense of responsibility for their learning.

Figure 3. Interactive Arabic learning activities

Specifically, teachers actively use question-and-answer techniques in creating interactive Arabic language learning. T1 asked students randomly and designed open-ended questions that required deep thinking and structured responses. Apart from that, T1 also started discussions in class by providing interesting stimuli, such as discussing Arabic texts relevant to everyday life or contemporary issues. This is in line with the research results of Jannah & Thohir (2020) and Hidayatolloh et al. (2023), which state that discussions allow students to practice speaking Arabic more naturally and in a structured manner. Putra & Isnaini (2024) emphasized that students can learn to express opinions, debate, or even find solutions together using their target and target language in learning Arabic with discussion. Thus, through discussions in learning Arabic, students improve their speaking and listening abilities and develop self-confidence, social skills, and the ability to argue and think critically, which are essential in using Arabic effectively.

Furthermore, T1 actively promotes group work by creating collaborative learning situations. Often, T1 assigns assignments that require students to work together in small or large groups, such as carrying out projects or solving problems based on Arabic contexts. T1 uses a project approach where students work together to complete larger tasks, such as creating a presentation or drama based on the studied Arabic text. In line with Umamah & Hifdhiyah (2024), through presentations, students are invited to speak in public in Arabic. This helps them improve pronunciation, intonation, and clarity when communicating according to the language used by native speakers. In addition, Bakar et al. (2011) also emphasized that presentations using Arabic can enrich students' vocabulary by preparing a script beforehand. Even though some students use Arabic, it is not relevant to authentic Arab culture.

Drama-based Arabic language learning significantly improves students' communicative skills, where students will actively use Arabic directly in a fun and challenging context. They learn to speak fluently and naturally, honing their ability to construct sentences and express emotions or ideas (Kabesh, 2022). More than that, students are also given the opportunity to express themselves in different ways in their roles (Bessadet, 2022). This helps them explore various aspects of the Arabic language, such as idioms, humour, or language styles that suit the characters they play. Drama also often involves collaboration between students in preparing and presenting performances. They learn to work together, discuss ideas, solve problems, and achieve common goals in Arabic (Even, 2008). Thus, drama-based Arabic language learning improves students' communicative skills and enriches their learning experience in a different and more profound way. This method can be a valuable addition to the Arabic curriculum to prepare students to face real communication situations more confidently and effectively.

In creating communicative learning situations, T1 often uses simulations or role plays to explore communicative situations in Arabic. For example, simulating interaction situations in the market or the office to practice students' speaking skills. Next, T1 provided feedback that focused on the students' communicative abilities in

terms of pronunciation, understanding, and Arabic expression in general. Simulations or role plays allow students to be actively involved in learning. They must communicate actively in Arabic to complete tasks or achieve goals in the game, thereby maximizing the time they spend using the language (Al-Karawi, 2020; Daif-Allah, 2023). Another benefit according to research results from Maryam (2020), is that in game-based foreign language learning, teachers indirectly provide opportunities for students to practice Arabic in a more realistic and structured context. This can increase their confidence in speaking and communicating in Arabic daily, giving them a sense of empowerment and accomplishment.

In contrast to T2, he uses technology in learning Arabic, such as learning videos, interactive applications, and online quizzes, to create interactive situations. This helps maintain student interest and facilitates more dynamic interactions. T2 also frequently used guided discussions to explore students' understanding of specific Arabic topics, ensuring that each student had the opportunity to contribute.

Consistent with the research of Yahya et al. (2021), the use of technology, such as engaging learning videos and interactive applications, has been found to make learning Arabic more captivating for students. The visual and interactive presentation of learning material reduces the risk of boredom and increases students' interest in learning Arabic (Ahmadi & Ilmiani, 2020). However, the most significant advantage of technology is its ability to facilitate independent learning outside of class time. Learning videos can be accessed at any time and from any location, allowing students to learn Arabic according to their own schedules and individual needs (Hilmi & Ifawati, 2020). This promotes a more flexible learning environment that can be adjusted to each student's learning pace.

In addition, to create a collaborative situation, T2 organizes group-based projects where students work together to research, design, or present Arabic topics in the KMA 183 textbook. This encourages teamwork and effective communication between students. T2 also uses brainstorming and group discussion techniques to solve problems or find solutions to problems with Arabic syntax or morphology rules.

Figure 4. Collaborative Arabic learning activities

Collaborative learning with discussion and group work, as shown in Figure 4, provides the benefit of expanding their vocabulary in Arabic. They learn new words and phrases used in real, relevant contexts. In fact, according to Setiadi (2019), collaboration in learning Arabic requires students to listen to and understand various opinions and arguments from their classmates. This helps improve their ability to understand and respond effectively to Arabic conversations. Thus, collaborative-based Arabic learning carried out by T2 helps improve students' Arabic language skills and develops their social, teamwork and communication skills, which are necessary for future success.

The important thing in learning Arabic is creating a communicative situation. No matter how good the teaching materials used in learning Arabic are, they do not emphasize aspects of students' communicative skills, and they have yet to achieve the fundamental goal of learning Arabic (Sauri et al., 2021). In classroom learning, T2 provides opportunities for students to practice speaking Arabic freely in a structured context, including talking about personal experiences and discussions about global issues, be it the environment, climate change, health, food insecurity, economic recovery, etc. T2 also uses audiovisual media to show examples of appropriate use of Arabic and to train students' listening and understanding skills in different variations of Arabic. When discussing personal experiences and global issues, students can expand their vocabulary and learn more expressions in foreign language learning (Maskor et al., 2016). This method also helps them communicate more fluently and in a variety of ways (Trentman, 2013).

Thus, the ability of these two teachers to create interactive, collaborative and communicative learning situations at school greatly influences students' learning experiences in Arabic language skills. The approach used by the two Arabic teachers shows their creativity in utilizing technology, encouraging collaboration between students, and activating students to participate actively in the learning process. This active participation makes the learning process more engaging and enhances the student's understanding and retention of Arabic. Thus, they teach Arabic theoretically and provide practical experience that allows students to develop the skills of speaking, listening and understanding Arabic better and more effectively.

Teachers evaluate students' communication skills

Teacher pedagogical competence also includes comprehensively evaluating students' progress in understanding and applying Arabic and its cultural context (Al-Mandhari, 2011). Teachers assess students' language abilities and identify the extent to which students can apply their cultural understanding in communicating using Arabic (Wahba et al., 2013). Additionally, teachers provide constructive feedback to assist students in developing their communicative skills.

In connection with the statement above, based on the results of interviews with T1 and T2 regarding how to evaluate students' communication skills, it is indicated as follows.

T1

I designed the evaluation to cover various language skills, especially speaking skills. Specifically, for formative evaluation, I use written tests to measure understanding of grammar and vocabulary. Apart from that, I also conduct direct observations when students participate in group conversations or role plays to see to what extent they can apply their communication skills in authentic contexts. This evaluation gives us a comprehensive picture of their communication skills. Meanwhile, for summative evaluation, I use more formal written or oral exams to assess students' understanding of grammar and vocabulary and their ability to convey messages clearly and in a structured manner in Arabic.

T2

Whether it is formative or summative evaluation, I use collaborative projects where students work together to create a presentation or video on a specific topic in Arabic. This evaluation helps them practice speaking and organize their ideas in a structured manner. Additionally, I conduct continuous improvement sessions where students receive feedback from me and from their peers to help them improve their skills over time.

The results of interviews with T1 and T2 regarding how they evaluate formative and summative students' communication skills in learning Arabic are comprehensive and varied. T1 is likelier to use written tests and direct observation in group activities. Meanwhile, T2 is more likely to use collaborative projects for both formative and summative evaluations. Students work together to create presentations or videos on topics in Arabic, which helps them practice speaking and organizing ideas in a structured manner. Interestingly, T2 also facilitated continuous improvement sessions where students received feedback from their teachers and peers to improve their communication skills continuously.

In line with research results, regular feedback helps students continue developing their communication skills. By understanding their strengths and weaknesses, students can focus on aspects that need improvement and improve their communication skills gradually (Carless & Boud, 2018; Li, 2010). Thus, facilitating continuous improvement sessions provides the feedback necessary for students' growth in communication skills and builds a strong foundation for the continued and effective development of language skills.

Conclusion

The cultural approach to teaching Arabic at *Madrasah Aliyah* focuses on aspects of language structure and vocabulary and integrates elements of Arabic culture into the learning process. Based on the findings regarding teachers' pedagogical competence in implementing a cultural approach through Arabic language learning, it can be concluded as follows. First, the teacher's selection of Arabic learning materials must pay attention

to students' needs, level of understanding, learning interests, and effective learning styles. T1, for example, combines the KMA 183 textbook with the *silsilah ta'lim al-Lughah al-Arabiyyah* book to complement the leading textbook's lack of Arabic cultural content. Meanwhile, T2 focused more on applying theoretical principles of language teaching, especially communicative theory, using the KMA 183 book, online learning resources, and audiovisual materials. Second, the two teachers show different approaches to creating interactive, collaborative and communicative learning situations. T1 actively uses question-and-answer techniques, discussions, and group work to involve students in learning.

On the other hand, T2 integrates technology more by using learning videos, interactive applications, and guided discussions to facilitate dynamic interactions between students. Third, evaluating students' communication skills is essential in ensuring teaching effectiveness. Both teachers demonstrated the ability to comprehensively evaluate students' progress in understanding and applying Arabic and its cultural context. This is done through various methods, such as assignments, exams, and observations in different learning situations. This research focuses on the competence of Arabic teachers in implementing a cultural approach, so further research is needed regarding other indicators of pedagogical competence.

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