

 <p>ISSN NO. 2320-5407</p>	<p>Journal Homepage: -www.journalijar.com</p> <p>INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ADVANCED RESEARCH (IJAR)</p> <p>Article DOI:10.21474/IJAR01/17445 DOI URL: http://dx.doi.org/10.21474/IJAR01/17445</p>	 <p>INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ADVANCED RESEARCH (IJAR) ISSN 2320-5407 Journal Homepage: http://www.journalijar.com Journal DOI:10.21474/IJAR01</p>
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RESEARCH ARTICLE

PROPOSED STANDARD OF ARABIC READING PROFICIENCY BASED ON THE COMMON EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK OF REFERENCE FOR LANGUAGE (CEFR) LEVELS A1 AND A2

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Manuscript Info

Manuscript History

Received: 25 June 2023
Final Accepted: 29 July 2023
Published: August 2023

Key words:-

Standard, Reading Skills, Arabic Language, CEFR, Level A1 and A2

Abstract

The academic requirement for students pursuing a major in Arabic language and Islamic studies, among other requirements, demands their proficiency in the comprehension of Arabic literary sources. Past research suggests room for improvement in students' proficiency in Arabic literacy. The issue is also encountered by students of Kolej Universiti Islam Perlis (KUIPs). Therefore, the issue pertains to whether the need for precise criteria in assessing students' language competency, specifically their competence in reading Arabic texts, is the fundamental factor contributing to this problem. Therefore, there is a need for a comprehensive investigation aimed at establishing a standardised framework for assessing Arabic reading competency. This study aims to discover the fundamental factors contributing to students' shortcomings in this area and develop effective strategies to address these challenges. This study aims to present a standardised framework for assessing Arabic reading competency, explicitly targeting the A1 and A2 levels of the Common European Framework of Reference based on Languages (CEFR). The CEFR is widely recognised as a comprehensive framework for evaluating language skill levels. This study utilises qualitative methods, specifically a literature review and semi-structured interviews, to gather primary data. The main sources of primary data include:

1. relevant studies on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) in general,
2. the CEFR in the context of Malaysia, and
3. the implementation of the CEFR in the Arabic curriculum.

Additionally, secondary references such as written books and articles are used. The collected data were analysed employing both inductive and deductive approaches. The results suggest that utilising the CEFR language proficiency level standards during the A1 and A2 phases can be a valuable tool to enhance Arabic reading skills and support ongoing progress. The study also proposes outlining CEFR-based Arabic reading competence requirements at the A1 and A2 levels. This study recommends the need for further research to obtain experts.

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validation to enhance the proposed standards. Furthermore, it is suggested by the study that further investigation should be undertaken to formulate a proposal of reading proficiency criteria within the elementary levels (B1 and B2) and the advanced levels (C1 and C2).

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Introduction: -

Arabic language education in Malaysia aims to provide students with the required abilities to meet the language competency criteria in various industries. Therefore, to accomplish this goal, the instructional programme is designed to mix classical and modern Arabic, particularly emphasising the practical application of Arabic language proficiency. However, there still needs to be more consensus on establishing a universal benchmark for assessing proficiency in the Arabic language. Concurrently, the European Union (EU) has implemented the Common European Framework of Reference for Language (CEFR) as a standardised framework for assessing the levels of language competencies. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) is a component of the European Union's initiatives aimed at promoting cultural integration and facilitating career mobility among citizens of the European Union. This framework was developed in collaboration with the Erasmus Mundus project and the Council of Europe for the Learning of Modern Languages (Kaseh, 2020). The CEFR, a benchmark for language ability, has been produced in other regions beyond Europe, including Malaysia. Inserting the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) as a guiding assessment scale in the language curriculum was a notable aspect of the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025, as outlined by the Malaysian Ministry of Education (KPM, 2012). The CEFR rules have been implemented to assess the competency levels in educational curriculum materials, as exemplified by the utilisation of the CEFR by the Malaysia Examinations Council (MPM) in the creation of Arabic language examinations (Kaseh, 2020). CEFR is the reference point for advanced language proficiency in the Standard Programme: Language, published by Malaysian Qualification Agency (Programme Standards: Language, 2018).

Salwa (2021) asserts an increasing need to include the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) in Arabic language education to cater to the rising demand for Arabic language instruction among non-Arabic speakers. Nevertheless, a limited amount of endeavour has been dedicated to establishing effective and systematic techniques or standards for achieving this objective. Furthermore, Kaseh (2020) suggests a need for further clarification regarding the objectives of the curriculum that is focused on enhancing Arabic language skills in higher education. Furthermore, the study conducted by Marlina and Khumairotuzahra (2021) confirms that no specific framework is currently available for evaluating language proficiency. The absence of consistency in assessing students' abilities and competencies results in the duplication of acquired knowledge (Talqis et al., 2020).

The current state of students' Arabic competence demands improvement due to the need for more structured rules and clear curriculum objectives. According to Nurul Iza and Kaseh (2021), preliminary investigations suggest that students in higher education exhibit a limited level of skill in reading Arabic. As mentioned earlier, the matter is similarly widespread among students pursuing the Diploma in Arabic Language programme at KolejUniversiti Islam Perlis (KUIPs). Based on the findings of Abdussalam et al. (2022), a significant proportion of students enrolled in the 30 KUIPs programme required assistance discerning between sub-ideas and primary ideas when interacting with audio texts or conversations.

Because interpreting Arabic reference materials through reading is a necessary academic skill for students pursuing a major in Arabic and Islamic studies, academic programmes in this discipline have initiated the development of a curriculum that emphasises language competency, particularly in reading (Kaseh, 2020). Furthermore, there have been global endeavours to evaluate the overall proficiency of the Arabic language by employing various techniques and assessments, such as the Online Arabic Proficiency Test (O-APT), Al-Arabiyya Test, and DIALANG (Nurul et al., 2020). The most recent scale developed by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) assesses various approaches and examinations, as Nurul et al. (2012) discussed. The implementation of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) is a valuable opportunity for the teaching and learning of the Arabic language in Malaysia to undergo a process of ongoing improvement and augmentation. Following the CEFR, this study suggests the necessary reading skills for students at the A1 and A2 competence levels.

A standard refers to a predetermined criterion established by a governmental or non-governmental entity, such as a professional association, training institution, or educational organisation. Its purpose is to evaluate an individual's or collective group's proficiency or aptitude concerning their expertise, abilities, and attitudes within a specific occupation or discipline in which they are actively involved (Yusup, 2016). According to Yusup (2016), every field or discipline has established criteria for evaluating or quantifying proficiency or accomplishment within education and training. Within the realm of language instruction, specifically in Malaysia, the Ministry of Education (KPM) has developed a curriculum that adheres to the Standard Curriculum and Assessment Document (DSKP). This curriculum encompasses both subject and learning standards, as Al Afzan (2016) and Habibah et al. (2020) outlined. The KPM Arabic Language Curriculum Document (KPM, 2017) serves as the established standard for the Arabic language curriculum.

The DSKP Arabic curriculum emphasizes the development of language proficiency in hearing, speaking, reading, and writing. These language skills are considered essential for effective language learning and acquisition. According to the CEFR, the proficiency of students in acquiring these four language abilities has the potential to enhance their willingness to utilize Arabic and to delve deeper into the study of this language (KPM, 2017). The mastery of reading competence is a crucial talent that students are required to attain. Reading competency encompasses the cognitive ability and aptitude to attentively engage with written text and effectively absorb its intended message (Nurul et al., 2010). In alternative phrasing, the individual, through the learning process, can accurately interpret written material and demonstrate an understanding of its content (KPM, 2017). Kennedy (1981) theorizes that the acquisition of reading proficiency encompasses a series of stages, starting with the recognition of visual symbols, followed by the establishment of semantic connections, comprehension, and, ultimately, the interpretation of meaning.

The international adoption and application of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)

The contemporary global education landscape has undergone significant upheavals, resulting in numerous alterations to various education sectors. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) is closely linked to the historical development of the European Union (EU), which emerged in the aftermath of World War II. The union's primary objective is to safeguard and promote human rights, maintain the integrity of the legal system, and ensure the effective operation of democratic processes among its 47 constituent nations. An effort was undertaken to foster a shared comprehension among these nations of the utilization of language in the domains of education and communication and the diverse array of languages present within their respective contexts. Efforts have been undertaken to assign a level to the languages due to the European Union's 1959 initiative to facilitate linguistic communication in education (Foley, 2019).

The CEFR was first developed as a comprehensive reference instrument to facilitate transparent education and enable any European Union member state to implement educational reforms following its inception in 2001. The framework serves as a foundation for assessing language proficiency. It supports the development of language learning strategies in a structured and autonomous manner, as outlined for its learners, intending to provide an unbiased understanding of their language proficiency levels, which is in line with the specific objectives of individuals engaged in acquiring these languages (Nur Ashiquin, 2021). According to the University of Cambridge (2013), the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) has demonstrated its successful expansion beyond Europe, extending its influence on regions such as Asia and Latin America in the domains of language learning, teaching, and curriculum development.

In the realm of Arabic language education, particularly at UmmulQura University in Makkah al-Mukarramah, Saudi Arabia, the Arabic Language Education Institute for Non-Arabic Speakers has incorporated the adoption of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) into its academic practises. Furthermore, the Arabic language competency test administered online by Saudi Electronic University has also incorporated the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (Dedi, 2020).

The implementation of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) in Malaysia.

The introduction of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) in Malaysia took place in 2013, coinciding with the CEFR conference held in Sepang, Malaysia. According to MohdSallehuddin (2017), The Malaysian Ministry of Education (KPM) has included the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) as a guiding framework for the language curriculum in Malaysia, as outlined in the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025 (Kaseh, 2020). With this, KPM asserts that it is imperative for every student undergoing the Malaysian education system to possess language sensitivity in Malaysia from an operational perspective, as well as language proficiency in English from a social standpoint, as mandated by the CEFR (KPM, 2012). The CEFR has been implemented in Malaysia using a three-phase approach. The initial phase commenced in 2013-2015, followed by the second from 2016-2020. The third and final phase is scheduled for 2021-2025, as documented by Nur Ashiquin et al. (2021).

During the initial stage, the primary objective is to enhance the current system. Therefore, the ministry intends to standardise the curriculum standards for Bahasa Malaysia in all schools; boosting the teaching and learning of English through an improved delivery system and providing more possibilities for students who do not attend SJK to acquire additional languages (KPM, 2012). In the current phase of English language enhancement, numerous educators have been selected to participate in a range of courses, such as the Professional Up-skilling of English Language Teachers (Pro-ELT), The Native Speaker Programme, The Fulbright English Teaching Assistant Programme, and the Expanded Specialist Coach (SISC) Role for English Language (Wan et al., 2019). During the second phase, implementing the Literacy and Numeracy Screening (LINUS) programme was introduced to enhance competency in Malaysian and English. The level of English language exposure was heightened, and the Ministry of Education (KPM) implemented and mandated the inclusion of an English language literature module during school hours in both primary and secondary schools (KPM, 2012). During this upcoming phase, which encompasses the period leading up to 2020, there are plans to expand the availability of additional widely spoken languages, such as Chinese, Tamil, and Arabic, to more schools (KPM, 2012). The third phase of the project involves the expansion of structural modifications. During this phase, KPM will thoroughly analyse the implementation of the structural changes introduced in the second phase (KPM, 2012). During this stage, various elements will be closely examined, such as the evaluation of descriptors, the choice of textbooks, and the utilisation of CEFR teaching and learning support resources (Wan et al., 2019).

In supplementary languages, particularly Arabic, it is imperative to develop methods and strategies to enhance students' language ability conscientiously. According to Nurul Iza and Kaseh (2021), a crucial step in achieving this objective is developing and validating appropriate assessments to ascertain students' language competency levels. Subsequently, various techniques and assessments have been developed to evaluate individuals' language competency. These include the Online Arabic Competency (O-APT), Al-Arabiyya Test, and DIALANG (Nurul et al., 2021). Various methodologies and tests are evaluated using a specific scale, with the most recently introduced by CEFR (Nurul et al., 2021). Ibtisam et al. (2020) proclaim that the instruction of the Arabic language can facilitate the acquisition of four essential language competencies: hearing, speaking, reading, and writing. In connection with this, the CEFR standard can indirectly gauge and evaluate proficiency levels ranging from the lowest (A1-A2), intermediate (B1-B2), to advanced (C1-C2) (Ibtisam et al., 2020). Hence, Ibtisam et al. (2020) proposed incorporating the CEFR standard into the Arabic language curriculum and syllabus, as it is widely regarded as a reliable tool for evaluating the attainment of language competency.

In addition, a study on CEFR-based Arabic language acquisition in Indonesia was undertaken by Talqis and Noor Azizi (2020). The adoption of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) in Arabic holds significant promise, particularly in Indonesia (Talqis& Noor Azizi, 2020). The author proposed several prerequisites for achieving a proficient outcome aligned with the CEFR standard in Arabic language acquisition, particularly in Indonesia. These prerequisites include aligning the CEFR-based Arabic language curriculum with the cultural nuances of the archipelago, ensuring the teaching staff's comprehension of the CEFR framework, confirming the compatibility of the syllabus, and learning materials, and engaging experts in Arabic language instruction for non-native speakers (Talqis& Noor Azizi, 2020). The above recommendations can also indirectly apply to the implementation of the CEFR assessment in Malaysia's Arabic language education.

Nevertheless, several independent investigations have indicated that the existing curriculum needs to be more transparent regarding its aims and how they can be accomplished (Kaseh, 2020; Salwa, 2021). The success of an academic course is reliant upon formulating a robust curriculum and its subsequent effective implementation. An effective curriculum is characterised by the coherence and alignment among its objectives, content, teaching faculty's instructional implementation, activities, and materials. Furthermore, a robust curriculum encompasses appropriate measurement and assessment tools while also considering the socio-affective dimensions of students, such as their motivation, attitudes, and learning preferences (Kaseh, 2020).

The presence of a notable study void in freelance studies of Arabic reading competency has been acknowledged by reviewers, emphasising the absence of exploration regarding the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). This phenomenon has garnered significant scholarly interest in various fields, particularly English studies, as evidenced by recent works by Wan Rowena (2019), Nur Ashiquin (2020), and Nurul Iza and Kaseh (2021). Further analysis of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) inside the Arabic curriculum is necessary to understand why it is inconsistent.

Methodology: -

Qualitative research uses data collection methods such as library research and in-person interviews. The original data for this article was obtained through library research, focusing on specific studies related to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) in general, its usage in Malaysia, and the integration of CEFR into the Arabic curriculum. In this regard, several significant texts have been consulted, including the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment, as well as its Arabic translation known as *al-It̄ār al-Marjī'ī al-Urubbi' al-Mushtarak li Ta'allum al-LughātwaTa'limihāwaTaqqīmihā*. Furthermore, the utilisation of esteemed institutions like the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2023, has been sought to get precise and reliable information, particularly on the integration of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) in Malaysia. In addition to that, supplementary sources such as books and articles were also consulted. The articles included implementing Malaysia's Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). The present study examines the contemporary issues and challenges encountered while implementing the framework MohdSallehuddin and Nurul Farehah proposed. Title: Implementation of Policy Change: A Case Study of the CEFR in Malaysian ESL Classrooms Authors: Nur Ashiquin, Abdul Halim, and Masdinah Abstract: This paper examines the implementation of policy change in Malaysian English as a Second Language (ESL) classrooms, explicitly focusing on the adoption of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). The study aims to shed light on the challenges and strategies involved in implementing this policy change and its impact on ESL teaching and learning in Malaysia. By analysing the experiences and perspectives of teachers and students, this research contributes to the existing literature on policy implementation in ESL education. The findings provide valuable insights for policymakers, educators, and researchers seeking to enhance language education practises in Malaysia and other similar contexts. The present discourse explores the various issues and challenges in curriculum change. In Malaysia, there have been several notable works related to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), such as the research conducted by Wan Rowena and Aida Hanim on implementing CEFR in the country. Additionally, Kaseh has proposed a recommendation titled "Arabic Language Based on Proficiency Level: One Suggestion" concerning CEFR. These works contribute to the academic discourse surrounding using CEFR in the Malaysian context.

Furthermore, the evaluators convened a meeting with four Arabic language specialists in Malaysia to acquire verbal data and precise details. The interview employs the method of "intensive interview," a specific sort of interview that requires the interviewer to pose the same question multiple times, at varying intervals, to the same participant to ascertain the reliability of the response (Ghazali & Sufean, 2018). The research methodology employed involves the utilisation of semi-structured dialogues, wherein a predetermined set of 10 questions is formulated before conducting the interview session. Furthermore, supplementary questions are posed to elicit more comprehensive explanations from the participants (Gay & Airasian, 2000). This interview format was selected to enable reviewers to gather data precisely, focusing specifically on the necessary topics (Merriam, 2001).

The data acquired from library studies and interviews will be analysed using inductive and deductive methodologies.

Finding and Discussion: -

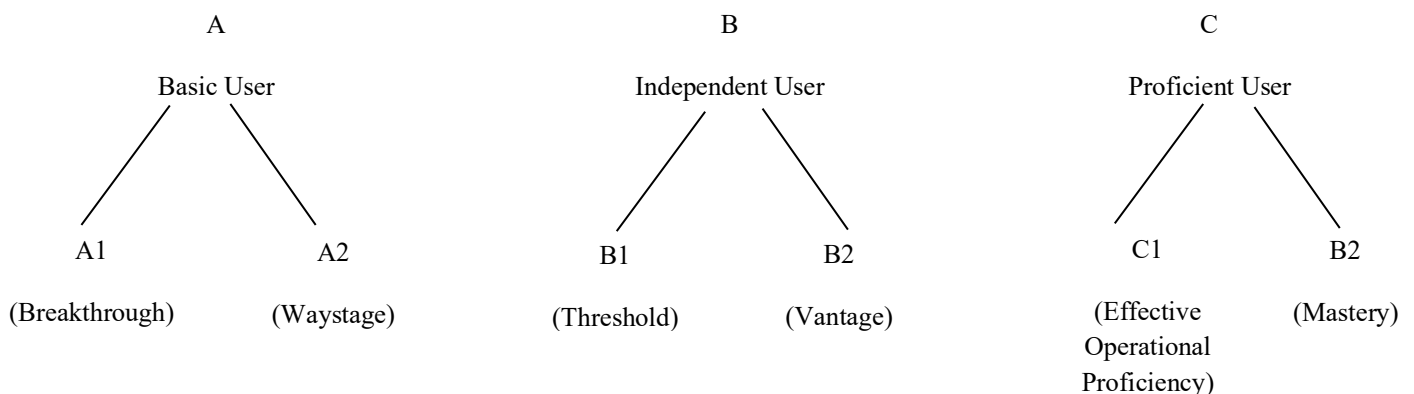
The topic of discussion pertains to the various stages of language proficiency. The analysis predicts the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

Based on the CEFR document (Council of Europe, 2001; Ma'hadTa'līm al-Lughah al-'Arabiyyah, 2016), there exists a broad consensus, although not universally shared, regarding the optimal framework for structuring language acquisition, as well as a widespread acknowledgment of the delineations about various stages of learning. A comprehensive description of the learning environment is provided by establishing a general framework consisting of six fundamental stages. These stages outline the objectives to be accomplished by the learner. The six fundamental steps are outlined as follows:

1. The term "breakthrough" was proposed by Wilkins in Trim's (1978) work, who also referred to this stage as "formulaic proficiency" and "beginner".
2. The Waystage level of proficiency reflects the information outlined in the European Council definition.
3. The threshold is a measure that accurately represents the content described in the specification of the European Council.
4. The concept of vantage pertains to the material outlined in the third European Council specification. This level is described as having "limited operational efficiency" by Wilkins in Trim's work from 1978 and as an "adequate response to commonly encountered situations" by Trim in the same publication.
5. Effective Operational Proficiency (EOP), alternatively referred to as 'effective proficiency' by Trim (1978) and 'adequate response proficiency' by Wilkins in Trim (1978), is a term used to describe a level of language competency. It signifies a heightened level of competence that aligns with the execution of intricate tasks and the evaluation of tasks.
6. In Trim's (1978) work, the concept of mastery is called 'Comprehensive mastery'. However, in Trim's (1978) study, Wilkins also refers to it as a 'Comprehensive proficiency operation', aligning with the primary examination objective in the scheme implemented by ALTE (Association of Language Testers in Europe). It has the potential to extend its scope to encompass a broader range of constructive intercultural competency that surpasses the attainment level often observed among professionals.

Upon examination of the six phases, it becomes evident that they have been categorized according to the perception of the highest stage and the lowest stage as the standard division of fundamental, elementary, and advanced stages. Furthermore, specific stage names, such as Waystage and Vantage, need help in terms of translation. The Council of Europe (2001) recommends employing a hypertext branching concept that begins at the first stage of the fraction and progresses through the three fundamental phases, A, B, and C, as depicted in Figure 1:

Figure 1



The Council of Europe (2001) has developed a standardized approach for harmonized reference levels within a comprehensive paragraph based on the concept of divided levels outlined in the CEFR document. The development of this standardized reference level standard does not impose restrictions on the variety of sectors within diverse cultural pedagogies. These sectors have the autonomy to determine the organization and description of stages and modules within their systems. The anticipated expansion of this standardized reference level standard is likely to vary in its use for different objectives. The concise and comprehensive exposition of the standardized harmonized reference level will enhance the synergy between the CEFR framework and educators, instructors, and curriculum designers. The harmonized reference level standards, explicitly targeting the lower levels of A1 and A2, are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: -

Basic User	A2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The individual can comprehend commonly used sentences and phrases about various subjects, including but not limited to personal or familial information, commercial transactions, employment, and environmental matters. - The individual demonstrates the capacity to comprehend complicated and repetitive scenarios. - The individual information, reciting abilities, and the ability to characterize their surrounding environment. Similarly, while discussing topics of everyday need, it is advisable to employ a straightforward and concise vocabulary.
	A1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The individual can comprehend and use regularly utilized idiomatic expressions in everyday situations and concise verses designed to meet one's daily requirements. - The user's text does not contain any information to rewrite. The ability to effectively identify oneself and others, inquire about personal background information such as residence, acquaintances, and possessions, and respond to such inquiries, is a valuable skill. - Proficient in comprehending and effectively communicating using succinct and precise language when conversing with individuals.

Recommendations for Enhancing Reading Proficiency Standards Aligned with CEFR Levels A1 and A2

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) has established guidelines for assessing reading skills at the A1 and A2 levels. These standards aim for self-assessment purposes for individuals learning or using a language that is not their native tongue. At the A1 proficiency level, learners can comprehend nouns, regularly utilized vocabulary, and concise phrases, as exemplified in Table 4. At the A2 proficiency level, the learner can comprehend brief and concise passages and identify the information conveyed in regularly used everyday statements. Furthermore, the learner exhibits comprehension skills in deciphering the content of straightforward letters, as exemplified in Table 2.

Table 2: -

CommonReferenceLevels: self-assessment grid		
Reading	A1	A2
	I can understand familiar names, words and very simple sentences, for example on notices and posters or in catalogs	I can read very short, simple texts. I can find specific, predictable information in simple everyday material such as advertisements, prospectuses, menus and timetables and I can understand short simple personal letters

At the A1 proficiency level, the learner can evaluate their understanding of proper nouns, common nouns, and vocabulary, as well as brief phrases found in various written materials such as notes, posters, or catalogues. At the A2 proficiency level, learners can evaluate their reading skills in comprehending brief and uncomplicated verses. Additionally, they can extract commonly encountered information from advertising, newsletters, food lists, and calendars. At this juncture, learners can comprehend uncomplicated verses seen inside informal correspondence.

The CEFR has established four distinct categories of reading activities, which include: (1) Reading for the acquisition of general knowledge, (2) Reading for the retrieval of information, (3) Reading and comprehending

instructions, and (4) Reading for personal enjoyment. The tasks mentioned above serve the purpose of achieving a fundamental and comprehensive understanding, acquiring information, delving into intricate details, and formulating a conclusive outcome based on the reading material. To accomplish the stated objectives, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) has categorized reading proficiency into five distinct scales. These scales encompass the ability to comprehend reading texts in a general sense, interpret written correspondence, acquire general knowledge through reading, comprehend information and arguments presented in written form, and understand instructions through reading. Table 3 presents the five Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) reading proficiency scales of A1 and A2.

Table 3: -

Overall Reading Comprehension	
A2	Can understand short, simple texts on familiar matters of a concrete type which consists of high-frequency everyday or job-related language.
	Can understand short, simple texts containing the highest frequency vocabulary, including a proportion of shared international vocabulary items.
A1	Can understand every short, simple text a single phrase at a time, picking up familiar names, words, and basic phrases and rereading as required.
Reading Correspondence	
A2	Can understand basic types of standard routine letters and faxes (enquiries, orders, letters of confirmation etc.) on familiar topics.
	Can understand short simple personal letters.
A1	Can understand short, simple messages on postcards.
Reading For Orientation	
A2	Can find specific, predictable information in simple everyday material such as advertisements, prospectuses, menus, reference lists, and timetables. Can locate specific information in lists and isolate the information required (e.g. use the 'YellowPages' to find a service or tradesman). Can understand everyday signs and notices: in public places, such as streets, restaurants, and railway stations; in workplaces, such as directions, instructions, and hazard warnings.
A1	Can recognise familiar names, words, and very basic phrases on simple notices in the most common everyday situations.
Reading for Information and Argument	
A2	Can identify specific information in simpler written material he/she encounters such as letters, brochures, and short newspaper articles describing events.
A1	Can get an idea of the content of simpler informational material and short simple descriptions, especially through visual support.
Reading Instructions	
A2	Can understand regulations, for example, safety, when expressed in simple language.
	Can understand multiple instructions on equipment encountered in everyday life – such as a public telephone.
A1	Can follow short, simple written directions (e.g. to go from X to Y).

For the general reading text comprehension scale at stage A1, the reading proficiency standard outlined is that the learner can comprehend straightforward and concise reading texts, phrase by phrase containing commonly used words, understand essential words and phrases, and be ready to reread when needed. At the A2 stage, it is divided into two scales: (1) Able to understand short and easy reading texts containing frequently used vocabulary, including some of the vocabulary used commonly at the international level. (2) Able to understand short and easy-reading texts about ordinary things and often used in daily life or work.

On the second scale, namely reading correspondence, for the A1 level, the standard of reading proficiency outlined is that students can understand simple and concise messages on postcards. Meanwhile, for stage A2, the standard outlined is divided into two levels, namely: (1) The learner can understand short and simple personal letters, (2) The

learner can understand basic things about routine letters and faxes such as enquiries, orders, authorisation letters, and others on commonly used topics.

For the third scale, i.e., reading to gain general knowledge, the standard proposed at stage A1 is that the learner can identify commonly used name words and recognise essential words and phrases in daily life situations. At the A2 level, several standards are outlined, namely: (1) Able to find specific information contained in materials that can be seen in daily life situations such as advertisements, prospectuses, menus, reference lists, and time schedules. (2) To determine specific information from a list and isolate the necessary information. (3) Able to understand daily signs and notices in public places, such as streets, restaurants, and railway stations, or the workplace, such as instructions, notices, and danger warnings.

The fourth scale level pertains to reading to comprehend information and arguments. At this stage, the established criterion at level A1 is that the learner can grasp the main points of concise informational texts and brief descriptions, particularly when accompanied by visual aids. At the A2 proficiency level, it is expected that the student possesses the ability to discern details from concise written materials, such as letters, brochures, and brief newspaper pieces that describe an event.

The final scale, known as the fifth scale, involves comprehending instructions. According to the specified criteria at level A1, the learner can comprehend and adhere to concise and uncomplicated written directives. At the A2 proficiency level, the student can comprehend a regulation, such as safety, when presented in straightforward and accessible language. Furthermore, throughout this developmental phase, the learner demonstrates the capacity to comprehend basic directives found in routine activities, such as telephone instructions.

In conclusion, the research indicates that the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) provides a valuable framework for establishing the Reading Proficiency syllabus criteria. This framework is a helpful tool for educators and researchers in guiding the learning and teaching process. This standard will facilitate educators and students in comprehensively elucidating the principles and application of systematic reading.

The subsequent criteria are suggested to enhance Arabic language acquisition's instructional and educational aspects, explicitly concerning reading skills at the A1 and A2 competency levels defined by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

1. In Stage A1, students are required to:

- The ability to differentiate between letters in written form, mainly the letters أ and ع, ق and س, ث, ك, and خ, ح, and ص, and ط, ز, and هـ, د, and ض, and ظ, and ز, is of significance.
- The ability to differentiate between fundamental reading symbols, such as periods (.), commas (,), question marks (?), and exclamation signs (!), is evident.
- The ability to discern distinctions in vowel marks can be observed.
- The ability to decipher words that are accompanied by vowel marks is present.
- The ability to decipher frequently encountered words in their unvoiced form is present.
- One can harmonise al-nabr and al-tanqim intonation when engaging in oral recitation.
- The individual can identify numerical values sequentially, commencing from one and extending to ten. Furthermore, the individual can recognise numbers ranging from eleven to twenty and the multiplicative numbers divisible by ten, starting from twenty and progressing in increments of ten up to ninety.
- The user acknowledges the passage of time daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly.
- The ability to differentiate between conjunctions such as "و" (and), "ف" (then), "ثم" (then), "أو" (or), "أم" (or), and "أيضاً" (also) can be observed.
- It is identifying suitable locations for pausing (al-waqf) and connecting (al-wasl).
- The ability to identify significant details within a given text can be ascertained.
- Identifying the text's individual, location, and temporal context can be ascertained.
- The ability to ascertain the primary subject matter of a given text.
- The ability to outline the overall narrative structure of a story.
- The ability to comprehend the intended meaning of the inquiry of the reading material.

2. At the A2 stage, learners are anticipated to demonstrate:
- the ability to read the material aloud with clarity and fluency, adhering closely to the written words.
 - The ability to identify and comprehend numerical values within specific ranges is demonstrated in the following intervals: 21-29, 31-39, 41-49, 51-59, 61-69, 71-79, 81-89, 91-99, 100-900, 1000-99,000, 100,000, and 1,000,000.
 - explores the comprehension of temporal terms, including "صَبَاحًا" (morning), "مَسَاءً" (evening), "ظَهْرًا" (noon), "لَيْلًا" (night), "صَبَاحَ الغَدِ" (tomorrow morning), "الشهر القادم" (next month), "السبت الماضي" (last Saturday), "الشتاء القادم" (upcoming winter), and "في الساعة الثامنة صباحًا" (at 8 o'clock in the morning).
 - One can experience the acquisition of unfamiliar vocabulary, phrases, and stylistic elements.
 - The ability to comprehend the central theme of a written passage or a brief dialogue can be acquired through the examination of accessible verses from the Qur'an, concise hadiths, historical sources (al-Turath), contemporary references (al-Kutub al-Mu'asarah), Islamic sermon texts, public speaking materials, short narratives (al-Qasas al-Qasirah), news articles (al-Jaridah), and Arabic articles (al-Maqalat).
 - This inquiry pertains to comprehending the substance of both formal and informal correspondences, commonly referred to as al-Rasa'il.
 - The objective is to ascertain relevant information in succinct daily writings, akin to the content typically found in compact publications.
 - One should possess the ability to structure the narrative presented in a written text by carefully observing the terms that signify the sequence of events, such as "أولًا" (firstly), "ثانيًا" (secondly), "وأخيرًا" (finally), "ف" (hence), "قبل ذلك" (before to that), and "بعد ذلك" (after that).
 - The identification of fundamental components in a short tale or reading material can be achieved through the resolution of five-word problems: "what," "who," "where," "how," and "why." This process involves the extraction of relevant keywords.
 - Examine the correlation between cause and effect within the given reading passage by analysing the presence of keywords such as "لذلك" (hence), "ف" (thus), and "لأن" (because).
 - The objective is to ascertain the semantic interpretation of the phrase al-tafdil, which conveys the concept of preference or interest.
 - Significant information or material is generated through scholarly articles in mass media and the internet.
 - Differentiate the semantic distinction denoting permissibility/impermissibility: **يستطيع/لا يستطيع**.
 - The ability to ascertain the setting, temporal context, protagonist, subject matter, catalyst, and resolution within a narrative can be demonstrated.
 - The individual possesses the ability to comprehend brief and uncomplicated written passages with the aid of visual aids such as images and tables.

Conclusion: -

This work suggests a CEFR-based standard at the A1 and A2 levels, which aims to outline the specific objectives that Arabic language learners should strive to accomplish. The utilisation of the CEFR document as a benchmark in formulating this standard proposal is justified due to its comprehensive coverage of essential facets of language acquisition, including proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing abilities. The CEFR has established a set of scales that can be utilised to assess the level of proficiency in reading skills. These scales serve as a valuable tool in evaluating one's reading abilities. A learner who can attain this minimum benchmark is presumed to have effectively acquired proficient foundational reading abilities. Acquiring such expertise would enhance the learner's self-assurance in actively engaging in learning endeavours constantly, hence playing a crucial role in fostering the learner's lifetime learning journey. Educators must study this text with the CEFR material to gain more information and profound comprehension.

This study aims to establish a fundamental comprehension of the CEFR text. The anticipated outcome of the study, which centers on attaining minimum reading proficiency mastery by students, is poised to offer valuable insights to curriculum and reading proficiency syllabus developers for enhancing their materials. Additionally, instructors can utilise these findings to facilitate the teaching and learning process and the assessment process. Furthermore, it is anticipated that implementing the standardised plan will also facilitate students in conducting self-evaluations of their proficiency in reading abilities. Upon careful examination of the comprehensive range of proficiency indicators outlined in the CEFR document, it has been determined by the evaluators that a correlation exists between the CEFR document and the Arabic curriculum and syllabus. This correlation is established through the proposition of a distinct criterion for assessing students' reading competence level.

This study proposes that more research be conducted to acquire expert validation of the proposed standard, enhancing and reinforcing the proposal. The study additionally proposes the need for future research to establish benchmarks for both basic and advanced levels of proficiency in reading abilities.

Acknowledgment: -

The present study is a component of the short-term research (STG) initiative, designated openly as research code STG-034, conducted under the backings of KolejUniversiti Islam Perlis in collaboration with the Research and Innovation Management Centre (RMIC). Therefore, the researchers would like to thank KolejUniversiti Islam Perlis for providing the research grant.

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