

## Development of a Local-Culture-Based Arabic Conversation Book to Support Junior High School Students' Mahārah Kalām

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### Abstract

*Mahārah Kalām* learning at the junior secondary school level still faces fundamental challenges, particularly students' low confidence, limited fluency, and difficulty in expressing simple ideas orally in Arabic. These problems are closely related to the dominance of reading, translation, and vocabulary memorisation in classroom practices, as well as the limited availability of Arabic conversation books that provide communicative, contextual, and locally relevant speaking activities. This study aims to develop a local-culture-based Arabic conversation book to support meaningful Mahārah Kalām learning for junior high school students. The study employed a research and development approach using the ADDIE model, combined with a convergent parallel mixed methods design. The data were collected through needs analysis, classroom observation, teacher interviews, student responses, expert validation, and a limited trial involving 13 students, one Arabic teacher, one material expert, and one instructional design expert. The needs analysis revealed the necessity of contextual dialogues, familiar local themes, guided speaking practice, role-play activities, and culturally relevant visual materials. The developed book integrates Situbondo local culture into vocabulary, dialogue models, speaking tasks, and role-play

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scenarios. Expert validation indicated that the product was feasible in terms of content and design, while the limited trial showed positive student and teacher responses regarding acceptability, clarity, and practicality. This study suggest that a locally culture-based Arabic conversation book can serve as an alternative communicative teaching material to improve *Mahārah Kalām* learning in Indonesian junior secondary schools.

**Keywords:** Arabic Speaking Skill, Local Culture, Conversation Book, Language Learning Materials.

## Introduction

The teaching of *Mahārah Kalām* at the junior secondary school level continues to face a serious pedagogical problem because students are not yet positioned as active users of Arabic in oral communication. In classroom practice, many students are reluctant to speak, hesitate when producing simple expressions, and often stop mid-utterances because they are unsure how to arrange words into meaningful spoken sentences.<sup>1</sup> Their speaking difficulty is not merely caused by limited practice time, but also by psychological barriers, such as fear of making pronunciation and grammatical errors, low self-confidence, and anxiety when asked to perform dialogues in front of peers. As a result, students who may recognise vocabulary in written form still struggle to use Arabic for basic communicative purposes, such as greeting, asking questions, responding to others, or describing familiar situations. This condition is reinforced by learning practices that remain dominated by reading texts, translating sentences, and memorising vocabulary, while oral interaction receives limited attention. Therefore, *Mahārah Kalām* learning requires teaching materials that not only present language forms, but also provide gradual, contextual, and meaningful conversation activities that encourage students to speak confidently in situations close to their daily experiences.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Mandrasi Amira Sa'Idah et al., "Enhancing Arabic Language Teaching through Artificial Intelligence: Assessing Effectiveness and Educational Implications," in *2024 3rd International Conference on Creative Communication and Innovative Technology (ICCIT)* (IEEE, 2024), 1–8; Dalal Moh'd Al-Assaf, "Challenges of Distance Learning in Language Classes: Based on the Experience of Distance Teaching of Arabic to Non-Native Speakers in Light of the Coronavirus Pandemic," *Journal of Language Teaching and Research* 12, no. 3 (2021): 444–51; Sajjad Esmaili and Danesh Mohammadi Rakati, "Phenomenology of Challenges in Creating Arabic Speaking Learning Environment from Students' Perspective," *Language Related Research* 13, no. 1 (2022): 261–98; Sultan Almelhes, "Enhancing Arabic Language Acquisition: Effective Strategies for Addressing Non-Native Learners' Challenges," *Education Sciences* 14, no. 10 (2024): 1116; Kasmantoni Kasmantoni, Noza Aflisia, and Isma Muhammad 'Atiyah, "Arabic Practice in the Language Environment I Mumarasah Al-Lughah Al-'Arabiyah Fi Bi'Ah Lughawiyah," *Jurnal Al Bayan: Jurnal Jurusan Pendidikan Bahasa Arab* 14, no. 2 (December 31, 2022): 470–85, <https://doi.org/10.24042/albayan.v14i2.12514>.

<sup>2</sup> Nadia Selim, "Adolescent Non-Arab Muslims Learning Arabic in Australian Islamic Schools: Expectations, Experiences, and Implications," *Religions* 14, no. 1 (2023): 71; Ghazali Yusri et al.,

Another factor contributing to students' weak performance in *Mahārah Kalām* is the limited support provided by the classroom teaching materials. The existing Arabic textbooks tend to emphasise reading passages, vocabulary lists, grammar explanation, and translation exercises, while communicative speaking activities are not sufficiently developed. Dialogue materials are often presented in a limited and general form, without adequate guidance for oral practice, pair interaction, or role-play activities. In addition, the vocabulary and expressions introduced in the textbook are not always connected to students' immediate social and cultural environment, making it difficult for them to relate Arabic expressions to familiar communicative situations. As a result, students may understand the meaning of words in written form but remain unable to use them naturally in spoken interaction. The absence of contextual scenarios, local visual materials, and structured speaking tasks also reduces students' opportunities to practice Arabic in meaningful ways. Therefore, the development of a locally culture-based Arabic conversation book becomes a pedagogical necessity to bridge the gap between language knowledge and oral communication practice.

The teaching of *Mahārah Kalām* at the junior secondary school level continues to face a serious pedagogical problem because students are not yet positioned as active users of Arabic in oral communication. In classroom practice, many students are reluctant to speak, hesitate when producing simple expressions, and often stop mid-utterances because they are unsure how to arrange words into meaningful spoken sentences. Their speaking difficulty is not merely due to limited practice time, but also to psychological barriers, such as fear of making pronunciation and grammatical errors, low self-confidence, and anxiety when asked to perform dialogues in front of peers. As a result, students who may recognise vocabulary in written form still struggle to use Arabic for basic communicative purposes, such as greeting, asking questions, responding to others, or describing familiar situations. This condition is reinforced by learning practices that remain dominated by reading texts, translating sentences, and memorising vocabulary, while oral interaction receives limited attention. Therefore, *Mahārah Kalām* learning requires teaching materials that do not only present language forms, but also provide gradual, contextual, and meaningful conversation activities that encourage students to speak confidently in situations close to their daily experiences.

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“Cognitive and Metacognitive Learning Strategies among Arabic Language Students,” *Interactive Learning Environments* 21, no. 3 (2013): 290–300; Amar Faryat and Otman Ahmiani, “Developing Speaking Skills in Arabic Learners Who Are Non-Native Speakers: A Descriptive and Analytical Study: دراسة وصفية تحليلية: تطوير مهارة التحدث عند متعلمي اللغة العربية للناطقين بغيرها: ” *Journal of Arabic Language Learning and Teaching* 3, no. 1 (2025): 69–88; Abdul Muid et al., “Learning Model of Speaking Arabic: Field Research Based on Constructivism Theory at Al Muhsinin Islamic Boarding School Kerinci,” *Alsuna: Journal of Arabic and English Language* 3, no. 2 (November 25, 2020): 140–51, <https://doi.org/10.31538/alsuna.v3i2.822>.

The literature on Arabic language learning shows three main trends in the development of *Mahārah Kalām* teaching materials, but has not explicitly placed local culture as a core design element. The first trend emphasises the effectiveness of *Communicative Language Teaching* in improving speaking fluency.<sup>3</sup> The second trend focuses on the use of functional dialogue, *task-based learning*, and *role-play* to encourage oral interaction.<sup>4</sup> The third trend began to underline the importance of authentic context, but this context was generally understood and not tied to the specific local culture of the learners.<sup>5</sup> Primadana and Anwar demonstrated the effectiveness of the communicative approach in Arabic language learning, but used general dialogue contexts. Saleh highlighted the importance of *pragmatic appropriateness*, while Sul-ton emphasised contextualised speaking tasks, without making the students' local culture the basis for material design.<sup>6</sup> This situation indicates a research gap in the development of *Mahārah Kalām* teaching materials that systematically integrate local culture as a framework for learning communication.

Based on the identified pedagogical gaps, this study aims to develop a culture-based Arabic conversation book to support *Mahārah Kalām* learning among junior high school students. This objective was formulated to address unmet speaking-learning needs, particularly the limitations of contextual dialogue,

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<sup>3</sup> Sultan Almelhes, "Education Sciences Enhancing Arabic Language Acquisition: Effective Strategies for Addressing Non-Native Learners" 2024; Faryat and Ahmiani, "Developing Speaking Skills in Arabic Learners Who Are Non-Native Speakers: A Descriptive and Analytical Study: دراسة وصفية وتحليلية: تطوير مهارة التحدث عند متعلمي اللغة العربية للناطقين بغيرها"; Amy Fitriani Siregar et al., "Issues in Arabic Speaking Skills: A Psycho-Sociolinguistic Approach," *Izdiḥar: Journal of Arabic Language Teaching, Linguistics, and Literature* 7, no. 3 (2024): 319–28.

<sup>4</sup> Salem Abdulhafid et al., "Improvement of Arabic Speaking Skills among Non-Arabic Students through Role-Play Activities," *International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development* 13 (n.d.): 2299–2313; Bingxin Gu and Wail Muin Ismail, "Speaking Skills Problems Encountered By Non-Native Arabic Learners At Universities In Northeast China," *Ijaz Arabi Journal of Arabic Learning* 7, no. 3 (2024).

<sup>5</sup> Sriwahyuningsih R Saleh, Ibnu Rawandhy N Hula, and Chaterina Putri Doni, "Design and Development of Arabic Language Style for the Needs of Beginner-Level Speaking Proficiency Materials," *Arabiyatuna: Jurnal Bahasa Arab* 9, no. 1 (2025): 205–26; Farika Riskiyah and Abdul Adzim Irsyad, "The Effect of a Flipped Classroom Approach Based on the Rahmatan Lil'Alamin Project in Enhancing Speaking Skills of Senior High School Students," *Arabiyatuna: Jurnal Bahasa Arab* 9, no. 2 (2025): 527–46; Ramadhan Jabal Primadana et al., "Development of Listening and Speaking Skills Teaching Materials Based on CEFR Level," *Arabiyatuna: Arabic Language Journal* 8, no. 2 (2024): 559–78; M Anwar et al., "Developing Arabic Speaking Skills through Muḥadatsah: A Case Study at Al-Marhamah Puteri Islamic Boarding School," *Arabiyatuna: Jurnal Bahasa Arab* 9, no. 2 (2025): 433–52.

<sup>6</sup> Primadana et al., "Development of Listening and Speaking Skills Teaching Materials Based on CEFR Level"; Anwar et al., "Developing Arabic Speaking Skills through Muḥadatsah: A Case Study at Al-Marhamah Puteri Islamic Boarding School"; Saleh, Hula, and Doni, "Design and Development of Arabic Language Style for the Needs of Beginner-Level Speaking Proficiency Materials"; Achmad Sul-ton and Saleh Muhammad Kabir, "Integrating Arab Cultural Elements in Arabic Language Education," *Lahjatuna: Journal of Arabic Language Education* 4, no. 2 (2025): 133–46.

low student confidence, and the absence of local cultural integration in the teaching materials used. Therefore, the development of teaching materials focused on the design of simple dialogues, gradual speaking activities, and communication contexts that reflect students' daily lives through a local culture-based approach. Operationally, this study aims to: (1) identify the *Mahārah Kalām* learning needs of junior high school students, (2) design specifications for a locally-based Arabic conversation book using the ADDIE model, and (3) test the feasibility and practicality of the product through expert validation and limited trials involving students and teachers. With these objectives, this research is directed not only at producing teaching materials that are feasible in terms of design and content, but also pedagogically and practically relevant in supporting contextual and meaningful Arabic speaking learning.

*Mahārah Kalām* in the Arabic language learning for foreign or non-Arabic speakers is defined as the capacity of students to engage in effective oral interaction, integrating the aspects of accuracy, fluency, complexity, and pragmatic appropriateness.<sup>7</sup> Recent meta-thematic studies have found that the development of Arabic speaking skills still faces significant obstacles, which are grouped into four broad categories: (1) psychological factors (such as anxiety, lack of confidence), (2) linguistic factors (lack of vocabulary, sentence structure), (3) teaching techniques (methods that are still grammar-centred), and (4) environmental or socio-cultural factors (lack of opportunities for real interaction). Relevant theoretical frameworks include the communicative competence theory (Canale & Swain) and sociocultural theory (Vygotsky) which emphasise that speaking skills cannot be separated from the socio-cultural context and interactive mediation.<sup>8</sup>

In the field of Arabic teaching material development, the literature categorises speaking learning materials into several types: (a) Isolated skill-based materials (controlled practice dialogues), (b) Communicative task-based materials (task-based dialogues, role-plays), and (c) Culturally-embedded materials

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<sup>7</sup> محمد علي الصويركي, "Al'ab Lughawiyah Wa Dauruha Fi Tanmiyah Maharat Lughah Arabiyah by M Ali Shuwairiki," 2005; Soman Ahmed Ibrahim, "A Study on Developing Speaking and Writing Skills for Primary School Students by A Ibrahim Shauman.Pdf," n.d.; "A Study on Teaching Methods for Expression by Najah Kubbah.Pdf," n.d.

<sup>8</sup> Radif Khotamir Rusli et al., "Arabic Language Implementation Viewed from a Social and Cultural Perspective at Maitreechit Withayattan School Bangkok," *International Journal of Language Education* 8, no. 1 (2024): 36–47; Kiki Kustina et al., "The Intercultural Aspect of Teaching Arabic as a Foreign Language in Indonesia," *Mantiqū Tayr: Journal of Arabic Language* 4, no. 1 (2024): 279–93; Ahmad Abdel Tawwab Sharaf Eldin, "Teaching Culture in the Classroom to Arabic Language Students," *International Education Studies* 8, no. 2 (2015): 113–20; Sulton and Kabir, "Integrating Arab Cultural Elements in Arabic Language Education"; Djemai MAHMOUD BOULAARES, "The Importance of Teaching Cultural Context When Teaching Idiomatic Expressions in Arabic," *Journal of Languages and Translation* 5, no. 5 (2025): 71–82.

(culturally-embedded tasks) that involve local and Arabic cultural elements.<sup>9</sup> For example, research in Indonesia shows that the integration of "local cultural contexts" — such as communication practices in Islamic boarding schools or traditional markets — can significantly increase student motivation and engagement. Furthermore, analysis of textbooks found that materials that incorporate Indonesian local wisdom (local wisdom values) into Arabic texts create higher contextual relevance than materials that only emphasize mastery of language structure.<sup>10</sup>

Recent studies show that the integration of local culture in Arabic language teaching through components such as traditional greetings, local socio-economic practices, and dialogue simulations familiar to the students' environment has an influence that can be categorized into three main effects: first: the motivational effect, where local culture facilitates a sense of connection and reduces anxiety about speaking; second, the cognitive-linguistic effect, where the use of cultural scenarios helps internalize vocabulary and pragmatic structures in real contexts; third, the socio-communicative effect, where students are more active in using Arabic in real interactions because they feel "at home" in familiar contexts. For example, a case study at an Islamic school in Salatiga found that a "*bi'ah lughawiyyah*" (linguistic environment) that supports everyday Arabic conversation significantly improves *Mahārah Kalām* performance.<sup>11</sup> Therefore, this study

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<sup>9</sup> Adam Ba'Abdullah and Nuril Mufidah, "Implementation of Contextual Approach in Counselling to Improve Arabic Language Proficiency of Students at MIN 3 Malang," *Maliki Interdisciplinary Journal* 3, no. 6 (2025): 1887–98; Bambang Irawan, "Developing Arabic Teaching Materials Based on Local Culture to Enhance Reading Skills and Its Implications on Self-Regulated Learning," *IJIE International Journal of Islamic Education* 2, no. 2 (2023): 57–72; Ryan Nurdiana et al., "Significance of Local Wisdom in Preparing Arabic Teaching Materials," *Tadris Al-'Arabiyah: Journal of Arabic Language Education and Linguistics* 2, no. 2 (2023): 156–67; Sulton and Kabir, "Integrating Arab Cultural Elements in Arabic Language Education"; Mohamad Zaka, Al Farisi, and Hikmah Maulani, "Folklore: An Ethnographic Study on the Folktales of 'Bandung' Investigating Arabic Language Teaching Materials Based on Indonesian Folklore: An Ethnographic Study on the Folktales of 'Bandung,'" no. March (2024), <https://doi.org/10.1108/AEDS-07-2023-0082>; Puti Zulharby, Yumna Rasyid, and Nuruddin Nuruddin, "The Characteristics of Teaching Material Arabic Speaking Skills in Higher Education," *Jurnal Al Bayan: Jurnal Jurusan Pendidikan Bahasa Arab* 11, no. 2 (2019): 194–213.

<sup>10</sup>Karina Fatwa Priyanti and Doni Wahidul Akbar, "Challenges of Arabic Language Learning: Identity of Factors Affecting Students' Difficulties in Speaking," *Al Mi'yar: Jurnal Ilmiah Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab Dan Kebahasaaraban* 8, no. 1 (2025): 124–32; Abdulhafid et al., "Improvement of Arabic Speaking Skills among Non-Arabic Students through Role-Play Activities"; Faryat and Ahmiani, "Developing Speaking Skills in Arabic Learners Who Are Non-Native Speakers: A Descriptive and Analytical Study: تطوير مهارة التحدث عند متعلمي اللغة العربية للناطقين تحليلية وصفية تحليلية دراسة: بغيرها"; Siregar et al., "Issues in Arabic Speaking Skills: A Psycho-Sociolinguistic Approach."

<sup>11</sup>Chairani Astina et al., "Internalisasi Budaya Arab Melalui Pengenalan Ta'bir Arab Dalam Pembelajaran Maharah Al-Kalam," *Lisanan Arabiya: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Arab* 8, no. 2 (2024): 188–203; Ahmad Rifa'i, "Pendidikan Islam Dan Bahasa Arab Multikultural Di Madrasah," *EMPIRISMA: Jurnal Pemikiran Dan Kebudayaan Islam* 24, no. 2 (2015): 199–213; Muhamad Bisri

positions local culture as the main design variable in the conversation book developed, to facilitate holistic improvement in *Mahārah Kalām* —linguistic, pragmatic, and sociocultural.

This study applied a research and development (R&D) approach with the ADDIE model, which includes the stages of analysis, design, development, implementation, and evaluation<sup>12</sup>. This model was chosen because it provides a systematic and iterative framework for developing teaching materials tailored to learners' needs and allows continuous evaluation of the resulting products. The research approach used is mixed methods with a convergent parallel design, in which quantitative and qualitative data are collected simultaneously to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the feasibility and practicality of Arabic conversation books based on local culture.<sup>13</sup> The analysis stage was carried out through classroom observations, interviews with Arabic teachers, and student perception surveys to identify the factual conditions of Mahārah Kalām learning, the characteristics of the teaching materials used, and the learning gaps that occurred. The findings at this stage formed the basis for the design of an Arabic conversation book that integrates the local cultural context of Situbondo, with a focus on communication themes relevant to the daily lives of junior high school students.

In the development stage, the teaching material prototype was validated by two experts, namely one Arabic language expert and one learning design expert, using a 1–5 Likert scale-based instrument to assess the content, language, presentation, visual design, and integration of local culture. Quantitative data in the form of validation scores were supported by qualitative data in the form of comments and suggestions for product refinement from the experts. Next, the evaluation stage was conducted through limited trials at Darun Najah Islamic Junior High School in Situbondo Regency, East Java, Indonesia, involving 13 seventh and eighth-grade students selected through purposive sampling and one Arabic teacher. Student and teacher response data were analyzed descriptively to assess the acceptability and practicality of the teaching materials, while qualitative feedback was used to interpret the experience of using the product. The integration of these two data types enabled a comprehensive evaluation of the Arabic conversation book's suitability of the before recommending it for wider use.

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Ihwan, *Bahasa Arab Dalam Perspektif Historis Dan Perkembangannya* (Insight Mediatama, 2025); Muh Sabilar Rosyad, Muhammad Farih, and Muhammad Ainul Haq, "Implementasi Paradigma Bahasa Sebagai Budaya Pada Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab Di Indonesia; Problematika Dan Sosuli," *PROSIDING KONIPBSA: Konferensi Nasional Inovasi Pembelajaran Bahasa Dan Sastra Arab* 3, no. 1 (2023): 120–33.

<sup>12</sup> Robert Maribe Branch and İlhan Varank, *Instructional Design: The ADDIE Approach*, vol. 722 (Springer, 2009).

<sup>13</sup> John W Creswell and Vicki L Plano Clark, *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research* (Sage publications, 2017).

## Findings and Discussion

### Teaching Material Needs Analysis

This section presents the results of a needs analysis of Mahārah Kalām learning at the junior high school level as the initial stage in the development of teaching materials. The needs analysis was conducted to identify the factual conditions of learning, the characteristics of the teaching materials used, and the gap between current learning practices and the expected Arabic speaking competencies. The findings at this stage provide the empirical basis for determining the direction of the development of Arabic conversation teaching materials grounded in local culture.

The needs analysis was conducted to identify not only the problems encountered in *Mahārah Kalām* learning, but also the specific needs of students and teachers for developing a local-culture-based Arabic conversation book. Data were obtained from classroom observation, teacher interviews, student responses, and analysis of the Arabic textbook currently used in the classroom. The results of the needs analysis are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Needs Analysis for Developing a Local-Culture-Based Arabic Conversation Book

Source of Data	Identified Problem	Learning Need	Implication for Book Development
Classroom observation	<i>Mahārah Kalām</i> activities were limited, and students were mostly involved in reading, translating, and memorising vocabulary.	Students need more opportunities to practise Arabic orally through structured and gradual speaking activities.	The book should provide guided conversation, dialogue modelling, pair work, and role-play activities.
Classroom observation	Students tended to be passive and hesitant when asked to speak Arabic.	Students need speaking tasks that are simple, familiar, and psychologically safe.	The book should begin with simple expressions and gradually move to short dialogues and communicative tasks.
Teacher interview	The existing teaching materials did not sufficiently support oral communication practice.	Teachers need supplementary materials specifically designed for <i>Mahārah Kalām</i> .	The book should function as a practical conversation book, not merely as a reading or grammar-based textbook.
Teacher interview	Dialogue materials were limited and not closely related to students' real-life context.	Teachers need contextual dialogue models that can be directly used in classroom speaking activities.	The book should include dialogues based on daily situations familiar to junior high school students.
Student responses	Students found it difficult to express simple ideas orally in Arabic and were afraid of making mistakes.	Students need vocabulary, expressions, and sentence patterns that	The book should include functional vocabulary, simple sentence patterns, pronunciation practice,

		are easy to understand and practise.	and guided speaking prompts.
Textbook analysis	The textbook used in class contained limited communicative dialogue and lacked systematic speaking exercises.	Students and teachers need materials that provide clear speaking procedures and communicative tasks.	Each unit should include vocabulary input, dialogue examples, guided practice, role-play, and reflection.
Textbook analysis	Local cultural content was not presented as a context for Arabic conversation.	Students need familiar cultural themes that connect Arabic expressions with their daily environment.	The book should integrate Situbondo local culture through themes, settings, visual images, local objects, foods, tourism places, and social interaction contexts.
Student and teacher needs	Students' confidence in speaking Arabic was low because the materials felt distant from their lived experiences.	Students need culturally familiar and meaningful speaking contexts to reduce anxiety and increase engagement.	The book should use local-culture-based scenarios to make Arabic speaking activities more relevant, meaningful, and motivating.
Product development need	There was no specific Arabic conversation book designed to combine <i>Maharab Kalam</i> practice and local culture.	A new teaching material is needed to bridge the gap between language knowledge and oral communication practice.	The developed product should be a local-culture-based Arabic conversation book with contextual dialogues, role-play activities, visual support, and speaking evaluation.

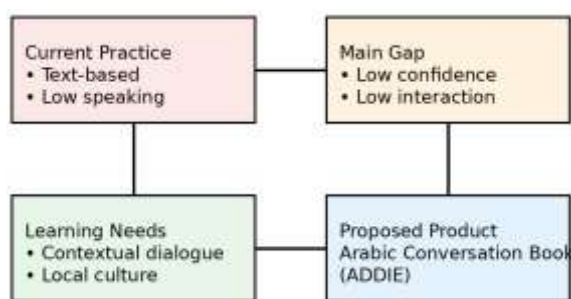


Figure 1. Pedagogical Gap Analysis as the Basis for Material Development

The findings in Table 1 and figure 1 indicate that the main issue in *Maharab Kalam* learning is not only the lack of speaking practice, but also the absence of teaching materials that systematically transform students' learning problems into communicative speaking opportunities. Classroom observation showed that students were mostly involved in reading, translating, and memorising vocabulary,

while oral production was rarely facilitated through structured interaction. This condition created a clear need for a conversation book that provides gradual speaking activities, beginning with simple expressions, functional vocabulary, and guided dialogue models before moving to pair work and role-play. Student responses also revealed that learners needed speaking materials that were easy to understand, psychologically safe, and closely related to familiar situations. Therefore, the book was designed to reduce students' hesitation by presenting short, simple, and contextually relevant Arabic conversations that support oral participation in a more accessible way.

The needs analysis also shows that teachers require supplementary teaching materials that are more practical for developing *Mahārah Kalām* than the textbook currently used in the classroom. The existing textbook was found to provide limited communicative dialogue and insufficient systematic speaking tasks. More importantly, it did not use students' local culture as a meaningful context for Arabic conversation. This finding served as the basis for integrating Situbondo local culture into the book through familiar themes, local settings, visual images, traditional foods, tourist sites, and everyday social interactions. The use of local culture was not intended merely as decoration, but as a pedagogical strategy to make Arabic expressions more meaningful and closer to students' lived experiences. Thus, the needs analysis directly informed the design of the product, particularly in terms of contextual dialogue, support for local vocabulary support, role-play activities, guided speaking procedures, and speaking evaluation.

### Teaching Material Design

This section presents the results of the design stage in the development of an Arabic conversation book compiled based on the findings of the needs analysis in the previous stage. The teaching material design was formulated to address to the limitations of *Mahārah Kalām* learning by emphasising contextual dialogue, gradual speaking activities, and the integration of local culture as a context for communication. This stage serves as a conceptual bridge between learning needs and product development to be implemented.

The design stage translated the findings of the needs analysis into a pedagogical framework for developing the Arabic conversation book. The book was not designed merely as a collection of dialogues, but as a structured speaking material that integrates learning objectives, vocabulary input, dialogue modelling, pronunciation practice, guided conversation, role-play, visual support, and speaking evaluation. The design framework is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Design Framework of the Local-Culture-Based Arabic Conversation Book

<b>Design Component</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Local Culture Integration</b>	<b>Pedagogical Function for <i>Mahārah Kalām</i></b>
Learning objectives	Each unit is designed to help students produce simple Arabic expressions orally in familiar communicative situations.	Objectives are linked to students' daily life in Situbondo, such as greeting people, asking about places, buying food, and describing local objects.	Guides students to use Arabic for basic oral communication, not merely to memorise vocabulary or translate texts.
Unit theme	The book is organised into thematic units based on everyday communication contexts.	Themes include local markets, traditional foods, tourism places, school life, family interaction, and social activities in Situbondo.	Provides meaningful speaking contexts that are close to students' lived experiences.
Vocabulary section	Each unit introduces functional vocabulary needed for the dialogue and speaking tasks.	Vocabulary includes names of local foods, places, cultural objects, and social expressions familiar to students.	Helps students build lexical readiness before producing spoken Arabic.
Dialogue model	Short and simple dialogues are provided as examples of communicative Arabic use.	Dialogue settings are adapted from local situations, such as conversations at the market, school, beach, or food stalls.	Provides oral models that students can imitate, practise, and modify in speaking activities.
Pronunciation practice	Selected words and expressions are practised orally before students perform dialogues.	Pronunciation items are taken from vocabulary related to local themes and daily interaction.	Supports students' confidence and accuracy in producing Arabic sounds and expressions.
Guided conversation	Students practise speaking through structured prompts, substitution drills, and short question-answer activities.	Prompts are connected to local objects, places, and activities that students already know.	Helps students move gradually from controlled practice to more independent oral production.
Pair work and group practice	Students work with peers to practise dialogues and respond to simple communicative tasks.	Tasks require students to talk about familiar local contexts, such as asking directions to local places or ordering local food.	Encourages interaction, reduces speaking anxiety, and increases oral participation.
Role-play activities	Students perform simple communicative scenarios based on the dialogue models.	Role-play scenarios are built around Situbondo cultural and social settings, such as visiting a beach, buying traditional food, or	Trains students to use Arabic expressions in simulated real-life communication.

		interacting in a local market.	
Local visual media	Pictures and illustrations are used to introduce topics and stimulate oral responses.	Visuals include local tourism places, traditional foods, local public spaces, and cultural objects.	Makes speaking tasks more concrete, contextual, and easier for students to understand.
Speaking reflection	Students are encouraged to reflect on their speaking performance after activities.	Reflection questions relate to their confidence in talking about familiar local themes.	Helps students recognise their progress, difficulties, and confidence in speaking Arabic.
Speaking evaluation	A simple speaking rubric is provided to assess students' oral performance.	Evaluation tasks are based on local-culture-based dialogues and role-play activities.	Assesses pronunciation, vocabulary use, fluency, confidence, and communicative appropriateness.

Table 2 shows that the Arabic conversation book based on local-culture based was designed to support gradual oral production in *Mahārah Kalam* learning. Each component of the book has a specific pedagogical function, beginning with vocabulary preparation and dialogue modelling, followed by guided conversation, pair practice, role-play, and speaking evaluation. The integration of Situbondo local culture was applied through themes, vocabulary, visual media, dialogue settings, and communicative tasks. This design enables students to practise Arabic in situations that are culturally familiar and meaningful contexts. Therefore, local culture serves not only as learning content, but also as a contextual bridge connecting Arabic expressions with students' daily social experiences.



Bagian IX (الجزء التاسع)  
Wisata (السّاحة)



الحوار (١)

Ahmad : *Assalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh* أحمد : السّلام عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ  
Umar : *Walaikum salam warahmatullahi wabarakatuh* عمر : وَعَلَيْكُمْ السّلام وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ  
Ahmad : *Kapan hari libur kalian ?* أحمد : متى يَوْمُ العَطلة بِاصْدِيقِيْن ؟

Bagian VII (الجزء الثامن)

Di Pasar Tradisional (في السّوق التّقليدي)



الحوار (١)

Penjual : *Selamat datang* البائع : أهلاً وسهلاً  
Pembeli : *Selamat datang juga* المشتري : أهلاً بك  
Penjual : *Permis, ada yang bisa dibantu ?* البائع : معذرة ، أمي جَدْمِي ؟  
Pembeli : *Saya syari makanan khas kota Situbondo* المشتري : أطلبُ الأَطعمة الخاصّة من مدينة سيتوبندو  
Penjual : *Silahkan sini , dipilih dulu* البائع : تفضّل هنا ، أنت اختاريني أولاً  
Pembeli : *Apa saja yang kamu jual dari makan an khas Situbondo?* المشتري : أمي طعماء تَبْعُدُ من الأَطعمة الخاصّة بِسِتُوبَنْدُو ؟

الفهرس

i	المخالف
ii	المقدمة
iv	الفهرس
vi	تعليمات استخدام الكتاب
viii	خطه أهداف التعليم
1	الجزء الأول (التعارف)
2	الجزء الثاني (التاريخ)
3	الجزء الثالث (في التّصوّر)
4	الجزء الرابع (في التّفهّم)
5	الجزء الخامس (في التّكلم)
6	الجزء السادس (الحوار)
7	الجزء السابع (المحادثة)
8	الجزء الثامن (في السّوق التّقليدي)
9	الجزء التاسع (السّاحة)
10	فلسفة الطّرفوات
11	الأدعية باللسّنة العربيّة
12	الصور المفيدة المحليّة سيّومبو
13	فلسفة المراجع
14	المسرد اللّغوي

Umar : *Saya pergi ke pantai* عمر : أنا أَهْبَدُ إلى سَاطِئِ البَحر  
Ahmad : *Apakah kamu pergi sendiri?* أحمد : هل ستذهب بِفَرْدِكَ ؟  
Umar : *Iya* عمر : نعم  
Ahmad : *Apakah kamu mau pergi jalan-jalan bersama kau?* أحمد : هل تُرِيدُ أن نذهبَ التّرحلة معي ؟  
Umar : *Ayokawan* عمر : هَئِلا بنا نأصحبك  
Ahmad : *Pantai mana yang kamu ingin ?* أحمد : أين تُرِيدُ سَاطِئِ البَحر ؟  
Umar : *Saya ingin pergi ke pantai Situbondo* عمر : أريدُ أن أَهْبَدُ سَاطِئِ البَحر في مدينة سيتوبندو  
Ahmad : *Pantai apa saja yang ada di Situbondo ?* أحمد : ما هي السّاطِئِ في سيتوبندو ؟  
Umar : *Pantai di Situbondo sangat banyak, salah satunya ya pantai Baran , Pasir Putih, Tampora, Blak, Jangkak, Firasus Banongan, Bletok , Patok, Lemuyung, dan banyak lainnya* عمر : سَاطِئِ البَحر سيتوبندو كثيرة جداً أحدها سَاطِئِ البَحر باران ، فِسرَ فُويح ، فُكُورا ، بِلَوك ، جَكانْكار ، فِرَاسُوسَ بانُونْجان ، بِلَيتُوك ، پاتُوك ، لَمويُونْج ، و كَثيرٌ آخَرُ  
Ahmad : *Pantai apa yang kamu akan kunjungi ?* أحمد : لِمَذا تُريدُ سَاطِئِ البَحر سيتوبندو ؟  
Umar : *Saya ingin pergi ke pantai pasir putih saja* عمر : أريدُ أن أَهْبَدُ إلى سَاطِئِ البَحر فِسرَ فُويحَ سيتوبندو فقط

Figure 2. Textbook design

The design of the *Mahārah Kalām* teaching materials embodies the concrete implementation of the design specifications formulated. This approach was chosen to address the speaking learning needs of junior high school students, which require a communicative context that is close to their daily experiences. The data presented through the design specifications, learning unit structure, thematic dialogues, and the use of authentic images of beaches, traditional markets, and Situbondo specialties shows that the theme of *al-ḥayāh al-yaumiyyah fī madīnati Situbondo* is consistently operationalised in the teaching materials. The presentation of simple dialogues, functional vocabulary, and *role-play* activities indicates that the teaching material designed to facilitate oral production through realistic communication situations that are easily understood by students.

The integration of local culture in the design of these teaching materials confirms a pedagogical orientation that focuses on meaningful communication in *Mahārah Kalām* learning. The selection of social contexts, customs, and cultural products of Situbondo is based on the assumption that contextual proximity will help students gradually build their courage to speak and engage in oral communication. The design data show the integration of visual elements, dialogue, and learning activities arranged to support speaking practice from the modelling stage to independent practice. Thus, the developed teaching material design serves as a pedagogical bridge that connecting the learning objectives of *kalam* with the contextual and functional realities of students' local culture.

### Expert validation

Expert validation was conducted to examine the feasibility of the developed Arabic conversation book before it was implemented in the limited trial. Two experts were involved in this stage: one Arabic language/material expert and one instructional design expert. The material expert assessed the relevance of the content to *Mahārah Kalām* objectives, the appropriateness of vocabulary and dialogue, the clarity of language, the gradation of material difficulty, and the integration of Situbondo local culture. Meanwhile, the instructional design expert assessed the layout, readability of Arabic text, typography, suitability of illustration, clarity of instructions, and consistency of learning activity sequences. The validation used a five-point Likert scale, and the scores were converted into percentages to determine the feasibility category.

Table 4. Expert Validation Results of the Arabic Conversation Book

Validation Aspect	Assessment Indicator	Validator	Mean Score	Percentage	Category	Revision Decision
Content feasibility	Alignment with <i>Mahārah Kalām</i> learning objectives	Material expert	4.40	88%	Very feasible	Used with minor revision

Content feasibility	Relevance of dialogue themes to students' communication needs	Material expert	4.20	84%	Very feasible	Used with minor revision
Content feasibility	Clarity and simplicity of vocabulary and expressions	Material expert	4.00	80%	Feasible	Revised based on expert suggestion
Content feasibility	Gradation of material difficulty	Material expert	4.20	84%	Very feasible	Used with minor revision
Local culture integration	Relevance of Situbondo local culture to dialogue contexts	Material expert	4.40	88%	Very feasible	Used with minor revision
Local culture integration	Appropriateness of local themes, objects, and settings	Material expert	4.20	84%	Very feasible	Used with minor revision
Design feasibility	Layout consistency	Design expert	4.00	80%	Feasible	Used with minor revision
Design feasibility	Readability of Arabic text	Design expert	4.00	80%	Feasible	Used with minor revision
Design feasibility	Typography and font size	Design expert	3.80	76%	Feasible	Used with minor revision
Design feasibility	Suitability of illustrations with dialogue content	Design expert	3.80	76%	Feasible	Revised based on expert suggestion
Instructional design	Clarity of learning instructions	Design expert	4.00	80%	Feasible	Used with minor revision
Instructional design	Sequence of activities from vocabulary to role-play	Design expert	4.00	80%	Feasible	Used with minor revision
Overall validation result	Average feasibility score	Material and design experts	4.08	81.67%	Very feasible	Feasible for limited trial after minor revisions

The expert validation results show that the developed Arabic conversation book obtained an overall mean score of 4.08 (81.67%), and was categorised as very feasible. The material expert's assessment indicated that the book's content was appropriate for supporting *Mahārah Kalām* learning. The highest scores were found in alignment with *Mahārah Kalām* learning objectives and the relevance of Situbondo local culture to dialogue contexts, each with a mean score of 4.40 or 88%. These results suggest that the book had strong content relevance as its dialogue themes, vocabulary, and speaking activities were designed to address students' oral communication needs and familiar local contexts.

However, the clarity and simplicity of vocabulary and expressions received a mean score of 4.00 (80%), indicating that several expressions still required minor revision to make them more suitable for junior high school students. The design expert's assessment also showed that the book was feasible in terms of layout, Arabic text readability, typography, illustration suitability, and instructional sequence. The lowest scores were in typography and illustration suitability, each scoring 3.80 (76%). Based on the expert comments, several visual elements and illustration placements were revised to be more proportional and better aligned with the dialogue content. Overall, the validation results confirm that the Arabic conversation book was feasible to be implemented in a limited classroom trial after minor revisions.

### Limited trial results

The limited trial was conducted to examine the initial practicality of the developed Arabic conversation book in *Mahārah Kalām* learning. Student and teacher responses were collected using a five-point Likert scale and analysed descriptively by converting the obtained scores to percentages. The results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Practicality Results of the Limited Trial

Evaluation Aspect	Mean Score	Percentage	Category
Acceptability of the material	4.20	84%	Very practical
Clarity of dialogue and vocabulary	4.10	82%	Very practical
Practicality of book use	4.10	82%	Very practical
Support for <i>Mahārah Kalām</i> activities	4.20	84%	Very practical
Teacher response	4.47	89.4%	Very practical
Overall practicality score	4.21	84.3%	Very practical

The results show that the Arabic conversation book obtained an overall practicality score of 4.21 or 84.3%, which falls into the very practical category. The student responses indicate that the material was acceptable, easy to understand, and useful for supporting dialogue and role-play activities. The teacher's response also showed a very practical result, particularly in terms of alignment with learning objectives and ease of classroom implementation. These findings suggest that the developed book can be used as a practical supplementary material for *Mahārah Kalām* learning. However, because the trial was limited to 13

students and one teacher, the results should be interpreted as initial practicality evidence, not as a broad effectiveness claim.

The findings of this study indicate that the development of a locally-based Arabic conversation book is a relevant pedagogical response to the problems of Mahārah Kalām learning at the junior high school level. This need arises because learning practices are still oriented towards written texts, there is a lack of contextual dialogue, and students have low interest and confidence in speaking Arabic. Empirical evidence from the results of needs analysis, teaching material design, expert validation, and limited trials shows that the integration of the local cultural context of Situbondo into dialogue, vocabulary, and role-play activities can present communication situations that are closer to the students' experiences, while also being considered valid and practical by experts, students, and teachers. Thus, these findings confirm that an instructional material development approach that links Arabic to the realities of the local culture has the potential to increase students' oral engagement and strengthen the learning function of Mahārah Kalām as a meaningful communicative skill. These results are in line with Al-Shumaimeri's (2021) report in Language Teaching Research that relevant communicative contexts improve the oral performance of non-native Arabic learners, and support Byram's (2021) idea that communication competence cannot be separated from cultural competence.<sup>14</sup>

These findings are consistent with international literature on culture-based language learning. Fairuz in the Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics found that the integration of local wisdom increases student engagement in EFL learning.<sup>15</sup> H.T Lu in his findings reported that culturally responsive materials resulted in a significant increase in speaking motivation.<sup>16</sup> Ehsan et al. concluded that local materials strengthen vocabulary retention and increase learning endurance.<sup>17</sup> In the Arab world, Al Rashidi & Al Mutairi found that teaching

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<sup>14</sup> A I Nasirudeen, "The Impact of Language Immersion on Developing Arabic Language Skills in Non-Native Learners: A Descriptive Study," *International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development* 13, no. 4 (2024): 531–44; Jamaica Vizcarra Garcia, "Integration of Intercultural Communicative Competence: A Case of English Language Teachers in Higher Education," *English as a Foreign Language International Journal* 2, no. 1 (2022): 28–58; İsmail Erton, "Raising EFL Students' Awareness of Pragmatic Conventions in Forming Intercultural Competence," *Studies in Linguistics, Culture, and FLT* 2, no. 1 (2017): 169–83; Nataliia Oberste-Berghaus, "The Role of Teaching Foreign Languages in Developing Intercultural Competence," *Revista Românească Pentru Educație Multidimensională* 16, no. 1 (2024): 1–15; K M A Ahamed Zubair, "An Analysis of Integrating Language Skills in Teaching Arabic to Non-Native Speakers," *Journal of Digital Learning and Distance Education* 3, no. 6 (2024): 1108–16.

<sup>15</sup> Ferah Fairus et al., "Integration of Local Wisdom in Learning Implementation in Elementary School," *Jurnal Cakrawala Pendas* 10, no. 2 (2024): 194–205.

<sup>16</sup> H L Tu, "The Impact of Project-Based Learning and Local Cultural Content on EFL Learners' Speaking Proficiency," *Journal of Infrastructure, Policy and Development* 8, no. 13 (2024): 9750.

<sup>17</sup> Ehsan Namaziandost et al., "The Impact of Authentic Materials on Reading Comprehension, Motivation, and Anxiety among Iranian Male EFL Learners," *Reading & Writing Quarterly* 38, no. 1 (2022): 1–18.

Arabic based on local cultural values significantly increased student communicative participation.<sup>18</sup> Thus, this study not only confirms previous studies but also adds empirical evidence through a measurable R&D approach and multi-expert validation—something that is rarely done in Arabic teaching material research.

Practically, the findings of this study have significant implications for Arabic language teaching at the secondary school level. First, teachers can utilise local culture as a contextual source for developing relevant conversation scenarios, thereby connecting learning to students' real-life experiences.<sup>19</sup> Second, integrating local culture has been shown to lower the affective filter because students feel familiar with the situations used. Third, from a curriculum perspective, these results support UNESCO's recommendation on the need for multicultural education that fosters local identity as well as intercultural openness.<sup>20</sup> In particular, the model of the book local culture-based conversation can be an alternative communicative teaching material for the Merdeka Belajar curriculum in Indonesia, in line with Celik's idea in the Asian EFL Journal about the importance of contextual language learning in the post-pandemic era.

Although the results are strong, this study has several limitations. First, the research context was limited to one school with a population of 80 students and a duration of six weeks, so the generalisation of the results needs to be tested through multi-location studies. Second, the one-group pre-post design without a control group limits full causal inference; further research could use a randomised experimental or quasi-experimental factorial design to compare the effects of local versus non-local culture. Third, longitudinal analysis is needed to assess long-term retention and transfer of speaking skill to natural communication situations. Further research is also recommended to integrate technology—such as augmented reality or mobile applications—as suggested by Elgobashi (2024, *Computers & Education*) to expand cultural experiences in language learning.

Conceptually, this study expands the theory of communicative competence by placing local culture as a core design variable in the development of Arabic teaching materials. Until now, many studies have placed culture only as a contextual backdrop, not as an epistemic component in the construction of meaning. The model developed here demonstrates that culturally bound linguistic interactions lead to more natural communication and strengthen students' cultural

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<sup>18</sup> Sulton and Kabir, “Integrating Arab Cultural Elements in Arabic Language Education”; Eldin, “Teaching Culture in the Classroom to Arabic Language Students.”

<sup>19</sup> Irawan, “Developing Arabic Teaching Materials Based on Local Culture to Enhance Reading Skills and Its Implications on Self-Regulated Learning.”

<sup>20</sup> Maria Dasli, “UNESCO Guidelines on Intercultural Education: A Deconstructive Reading,” *Pedagogy, Culture & Society* 27, no. 2 (2019): 215–32; S Joko Prayudha, “Inserting Local Wisdom in English Material: Strategies and Benefits,” 2023; Karta Jayadi, Amirullah Abduh, and Muhammad Basri, “A Meta-Analysis of Multicultural Education Paradigm in Indonesia,” *Heliyon* 8, no. 1 (2022); Fitri Mulyani et al., “Engaging English Learners: Using AI to Integrate Local Legends into Language Lessons in West Kalimantan,” *Journal of English Education Program* 6, no. 1 (2025).

identity. Thus, this study contributes to the formation of a new paradigm of contextual Arabic language pedagogy, which simultaneously integrates linguistic, cultural, and affective dimensions. These findings confirm that Arabic language education aims not only to teach language systems but also to foster cultural and humanitarian awareness in line with the goals of 21st-century global education.<sup>21</sup>

## Conclusion

This study concludes that the development of a locally-based Arabic conversation book is an effective pedagogical approach to support *Mahārah Kalām* learning at the junior high school level. The results of the needs analysis show a significant gap between text-oriented learning practices and the demands of communicative speaking competence, which affect low student participation and confidence. The design of teaching materials that integrate the Situbondo local cultural context through functional dialogues, authentic visuals, and *role-play* activities has been proven to systematically address these gaps. Expert validation confirmed the textbook's content and design were suitable, while limited pilot test results showed high acceptance and practicality from students and teachers. These findings indicate that linking Arabic language learning to local culture realities not only increases students' oral engagement but also strengthens the role of *Mahārah Kalām* as a meaningful communication skill. Thus, the locally developed conversation book has the potential to be used more widely as an alternative communicative teaching material in Arabic language learning, while contributing to the development of contextual, humanistic Arabic language pedagogy relevant to the educational needs of the 21st century.

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<sup>21</sup> Lubna Farah and Abdurrehman Mudassir, "The Role of The Arabic Language in Promoting Cultural Understanding and Tolerance Among People in The Era of Globalisation," *IQAN* 7, no. 1 (2024): 1–4; Rania Izzati et al., "The Relevance of Arabic Language Learning According to Rusydi Ahmad Thu'aimah with Modern Education Strategies," *Mantiqu Tayr: Journal of Arabic Language* 5, no. 1 (2025): 41–55; Widad Ma et al., "Systematic Literature Review of Innovative Arabic Language Teaching Strategies in STEM Education: Sociocultural, Linguistic, and Professional Development Perspectives," *Semarak International Journal of Current Research in Language and Human Studies* 2, no. 1 (2025): 1–25.

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