

# Arabic Learning Design Based on 21st Century Skills during the Covid-19 Pandemic in Indonesia

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**ABSTRACT** 

The Covid-19 pandemic that hit Indonesia changed learning patterns from offline to online using technology as media. Hence, Arabic language learning must be well designed but still contains elements of 21st century life skills. This study aims to explore the design of 21st century skillsbased Arabic learning which was held during the Covid-19 pandemic at Thursina International Islamic Boarding School Malang, Indonesia. This research adopts a qualitative approach with a case study method. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and document studies. The data collected were analyzed using the theory of Miles and Huberman, namely reducing, presenting, and verifying. Furthermore, the data is validated using data triangulation and data sources. This research shows that the implementation of 21st century skills can be done online during the Covid-19 pandemic; achievement indicators refer to the content of elements in 21st century skills known as 4C (critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity & inovation) terminology; while the challenges of implementing 21st century skills stem from the skills of teachers in operating technology when presenting subject matter to students. The findings of this study describe that 21st century skills encourage students to become globally competitive human resources. The researcher recommends the next research to test the effectiveness of internalizing 21st century skills with online learning models.

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Journal Homepage

21st Century Learning presents new challenges for Arabic language teachers in Indonesia. This challenge is in line with the massive development of technology. Today's students are expected to have skills that support their future work success (Valtonen et al., 2021). Arabic learning design must be designed according to the needs of students in the 21st century (Ritonga et al., 2021). Major changes in the learning system are inevitable. The learning objectives of the 21st century are directed at sustainable human resource development (Care et al., 2018). All elements of education such as teachers, management, government, coordinate with each other in implementing 21st century skills-based learning. Because this big responsibility cannot be delegated to one party alone.

The implementation of 21st century skills has always received serious attention in education. This is evidenced by the shift from classical education to a digital-based modern education model (García-Redondo et al., 2019). Teachers and students can use technology to find answers from various credible sources, both print and online (Braten & Braassch, 2017). Learning is intended to improve students' communication skills, collaboration, critical thinking and problem solving, creativity and innovation (Hasnine et al., 2021). The complexity of 21st century learning indicators is getting higher in the midest of a surge in pandemic outbreaks.

The high spread of Covid-19 in Indonesia threatens the implementation of face-to-face learning. However, this pandemic cannot be used as an excuse to reduce the value of 21st century skills (Ritonga & Fitri, 2021; Septanta, R., et al., 2022; Rahimah, R., et al., 2022). In a more specific sense, 21st century skills must still be implemented in learning even in pandemic conditions (Pesha & Kamarova, 2020). Teachers and students are required to be able to use educational technology as a learning medium during the Covid-19 pandemic (Ritonga et al., 2020). Various platform-based applications that can be used as learning media during the Covid-19 pandemic are information technology applications, including smart classrooms, e-learning, smart environments, smart teachers, smart campuses, smart schools, etc (Islamy, M. R. F., et al., 2022; Nguyen & Chung, 2020).

In learning Arabic in particular, 21st century skills are also a necessity that students must have. The reason is that Arabic has also adopted technology as a learning medium (Hashim et al., 2017). During the Covid-19 pandemic, technology-based learning was intensively carried out to support the achievement of online learning goals (Marpa, 2020). Learning using technology is required to be able to improve students' collaborative skills in the active learning process (Hasnine et al., 2021). So that students feel the value of learning Arabic well. Soliman, (2017) describes that Arabic language skills are not only for students' individual skills but are a need for other stakeholders who continue to look for people who are proficient in the Arabic language in the technological era. Technological intervention in learning Arabic becomes more evident when we reflect on the Covid-19 pandemic situation where all teachers and students carry out online learning.

Based on the above interests, the researcher considers it important to raise the issue of effective and targeted Arabic learning design with consideration of active and optimal learning. Realizing active learning in Arabic requires the role of teachers and school management holistically. Active learning policies must be formulated by school management together with teachers as executors in the learning process. The formulation of active learning is in the form of an implementation process, goals to be achieved, indicators to evaluations to measure the level of achievement of active learning in each lesson stated that the active learning process can facilitate the implementation of 21st century learning indicators.

Research on 21<sup>st</sup> century Arabic learning has been widely carried out. This is based on the many dynamic changes in Arabic word order (Pabbajah & Pabbajah, 2020). Research findings by Frache et al., (2017) show that 21<sup>st</sup> century learning policies are still difficult to implement due to the low enthusiasm of students in participating in learning that supports 21<sup>st</sup> century life skills, because students are more interested in practice-based learning. Therefore Albantani & Madkur, (2019) adds that government support, demands for Arabic language skills in the workplace, and the availability of

interactive multimedia support the implementation of 21st century skills-based Arabic learning. Erdoğan, (2019) explains that 21st century skills are an important basis for students to succeed in college, career paths and life outside of education. The 21st century skills must be provided to students from elementary school to tertiary education using a digital-based learning system (Ichsan, 2019; Zahra, 2020). Digital Learning System (DLS) as an alternative technology-based learning solution that can be accessed by all teachers and students for the ongoing learning process during the Covid-19 pandemic with an online learning system (Al-Khayyat, 2020).

Based on the results of the analysis of previous studies, this research is different from research that has been done before. The focus of this research is on the design of 21st century skills-based Arabic learning amidst the surge in the Covid-19 pandemic. Learning during the Covid-19 pandemic adopted an online learning model as an effort to break the transmission of the Corona virus in Indonesia. Through this study, it is hoped that there will be harmony between learning Arabic online using technology networks and the application of 21st century skills in Indonesia. So that Arabic language teachers understand the concept of 21st century learning holistically which in turn can apply 21st century skills in the learning process.

### **METHODS**

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study method. The qualitative research aims to explore the design of 21st century skills-based Arabic learning implemented by teachers during the Covid-19 pandemic with an online learning system. The case study research process is based on word descriptions and language according to the current conditions (Moleong, 2017). The case study methods chosen because of the need to explore the efforts of teachers at Thursina International Islamic Boarding School (IIBS) Malang, Indonesia in designing 21st century skills-based Arabic learning during the Covid-19 pandemic. Data collection techniques used include interviews, observation, and documentation. Interviews were conducted with Arabic language teachers in grades X, XI and XII during the period February-April 2021 to find answers about the indicators set as a reference for 21st century skills. Furthermore, observations were used to obtain information about the implementation of 21st century skills in Arabic learning during the pandemic Covid-19 with an online learning system. Documentation is used to collect information about administration which is compiled as a learning process requirement. The data analysis technique used is based on the theory of Miles and Huberman, namely through collecting data, reducing, presenting and verifying. The data that has been analyzed is then validated using data triangulation and data sources. That way, the data received is in accordance with research needs and is ready to be presented in the form of a research report.

# **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

# Implementation of 21st Century Skills in Arabic Learning

Learning during the Covid-19 pandemic must be done well. Every teacher should design learning that adapts to the conditions of the Covid-19 pandemic. The selection of media, methods, allocation of study time and learning strategies must be adapted to online learning conditions (Fauzi & Khusuma, 2020). So that active, creative, effective, and fun Arabic learning is still felt by teachers and students. Today, teachers must be able to compete in the process of creating active and fun Arabic learning so that the learning process becomes meaningful for students.

The 21st century skill-based Arabic learning design is a necessity. This effort is carried out as an attitude to prepare potential students to face the growing 21st century life skills (Alismail & McGuire, 2015). If it is associated with national education goals, Arabic learning can be directed at forming the character of students who are able to coexist and compete with other nations in the world (especially Arab countries) in a positive and productive manner (Hadiyanto et al., 2020). Students' attitudes and skills affect 21st century survival.

The implementation of 21st century skills in learning Arabic includes a new program at Thursina IIBS Malang. It is characterized by the lack of competence of some Arabic language teachers to design learning according to the demands of 21st century life. Meanwhile, teacher competence in implementing 21st century life skills is a factor that influences the success of achieving the expected learning goals (Abdullah et al., 2018). Learning designs that are in accordance with today's needs also invite student participation in learning. The teacher's role is to ensure that learning is meaningful and can be useful for students' future.

Many factors determine the achievement of learning objectives. If you want to realize 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, teaching materials used in learning must contain material and discussion that leads to the intended goal. The teaching materials are intended to develop problem-solving abilities to problems faced by students (Anisah & Lastuti, 2018). In addition to teaching materials, the skills of teachers in designing lessons and delivering them to students are an indicator of the realization of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills in students.

The teacher uses the cooperative learning model as a strategy for applying 21st century skills. The students gather in several groups which are divided into students who are weak and intelligent in the field of Arabic. The cooperative learning model is intended to direct students to be able to complete learning in groups or collaborations. Nugrawiyati, (2017) noted three main objectives of cooperative learning, namely: (a) to improve student performance in academic tasks, (b) cooperative learning to provide opportunities for students with diverse backgrounds in Arabic skills to learn to respect one another. (c) Teach students cooperation and collaboration skills.

Collaborative learning to complete school assignments has become a 21st century skill demand. Learning that was originally teacher-centered has turned into student-centered. Teachers are expected to be more creative and innovative in presenting subject matter using various media and methods (Beddu, 2019). Because the selected media and methods greatly affect the achievement of the expected learning objectives. In the midst of massive technological advancements, Arabic learning media also had a significant positive impact, including teachers being able to use online media with the help of technology such as Quizizz media with complete features.



Figure 1. The Student Collaboration Task





Figure 1 above illustrates the Arabic learning process carried out by teachers using a variety of media to make learning fun and enjoyable. First, the teacher demonstrates the steps of learning activities, objectives, media, and making learning products. Second, the teacher distributes a sheet of paper to students containing an illustrated picture of a child's activities in class and at home, the students are asked to analyze the picture. Third, students write their opinions in the assignment book about the activities of the illustrations given. Fourth, students work on questions in the form of a quizzz test which is adopted from the illustration images contained in students' papers. Fifth, after students complete the learning steps the teacher provides feedback and reviews of student learning activities. Arabic teachers uses Quizizz as an online learning medium. Quizizz's attractive and accessible design is the main reason for its use in learning Arabic. Mei et al., (2018) describe that the Quizizz media is a tool for assessing students' Arabic skills which is run using an online computer program. The use of computers is not only an entertainment tool, but also a learning medium that supports 21st century skills as the main education (Chalkiadaki, 2018). Therefore, the skills of teachers in teaching using technology must be improved to suit world trends (Nguyen & Chung, 2020).

The current era of technology should be maximized by both teachers and students. Because, the ease that arises from the impact of technology is increasingly felt by educational institutions in Indonesia (Susanto et al., 2022). Therefore, Arabic language teachers have a big responsibility to ensure the transformation of conventional learning into online through technology (Ritonga et al., 2021). Learning Arabic has a great opportunity to become a favorite subject for students in Indonesia

when teachers are able to maximize technology as a medium and learning tool anytime and anywhere.

# Indicators of 21st Century Skills in Arabic Learning

The Thursina IIBS Institute of Malang does not formulate specific indicators for the achievement of 21st century skills. Teachers in the Arabic language subject group are given the freedom to arrange subject matter. During the Covid-19 pandemic, interesting lessons have become public attention that must be implemented. Considering that technology-based learning during the Covid-19 pandemic made students bored and bored following online learning (Li et al., 2020). The researcher tried to review the provisions and indicators of 21st century skills in learning Arabic at Thursina IIBS and the Arabic teacher answered as follows:

"Thursina does not formulate specific indicators of attainment of 21st century skills for students. However, all Arabic language teachers are given the freedom to formulate indicators according to the complexity of their respective materials. However, the management team of Thursina IIBS emphasizes on every Arabic teacher to strive to improve students' higher order thinking skills in the learning process (SA, Interview, 2021)"

Researchers see that higher order thinking skills are part of the 21st century skills that students will need in the future. The formulation of indicators for achieving 21st century skills is the basis for teachers in delivering subject matter to students (Sholihah & Lastariwati, 2020). The 21st century skill indicators at Thursina IIBS Malang are adjusted to the description points in the 21st century skills. Arabic teachers refer to 21st century life skills which are commonly referred to as 4C (Critical Thinking, Communication, Collaboration, and Creativity & Inovation) terminology as a teacher's reference in designing Arabic learning and teaching it. Through technology as a learning medium, it is expected to be able to create students who are active in participating in learning (Hasnine et al., 2021).

The content of 4C as a learning direction to prepare students for the 21st century includes creativity skills, critical thinking and problem solving, collaboration and communication. In addition to these four skills, Van Laar et al., (2017) added five contextual skills that students must possess, namely ethical awareness, cultural awareness, flexibility, self-direction, and lifelong learning. Four indicators of 21st century skills complemented by five contextual skills make learning meaningful for students.

The goal of realizing effective learning for students is not an easy thing. The first effort that must be made is to equip teachers with 21st century skills which include learning and innovation skills, communication skills, media and technology, life, and career skills. These skills are applied in well-prepared learning activities using technology (Dvir & Schatz-Oppenheimer, 2020) As an effort to develop the talents that are embedded in students.

Student skills become the orientation of learning Arabic in the technological era at Thursina IIBS Malang. Wagner, (2008) identified the competencies and survival skills needed by students in dealing with the future life, world of work, and citizenship in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, emphasizing the following seven skills: (1) critical thinking and problem solving skills, (2) collaboration and leadership, (3) dexterity and adaptability, (4) initiative and entrepreneurial spirit, (5) able to communicate effectively both orally

and in writing, (6) able to access and analyze information, and (7) have curiosity and imaginative.

Arabic language learning based on 21st century skills is going well Thursina IIBS. The teacher designs Arabic learning and then presents it to students with adequate infrastructure. Teachers involve students to explore learning actively. Teachers help students solve learning problems together according to current needs (Care et al., 2018). Making judgments and decisions includes (1) analyzing and evaluating evidence, arguments, claims, and beliefs effectively, (2) analyzing and evaluating alternative views, (3) synthesizing and making connections between information and arguments, (4) interpreting information and drawing conclusions. conclusions based on the best analysis, and (5) critically reflecting on the learning process and experience.

The 21st century learning model is actually not something new. The 2013 curriculum design demands student-centered learning is the aspiration of 21st century learning (Maskur et al., 2020). In this learning, students are conditioned in a learning atmosphere that can develop critical thinking and problem solving skills, creativity and innovation, collaboration, and communication (Chalkiadaki, 2018). This can be done well if the teacher is able to present the material according to the students' thinking level.

The 21st century skill-based Arabic learning model goes hand in hand with higher order thinking skills. Students who are equipped with 21st century skills have a systematic and characteristic thinking power towards a successful, productive life and are actively involved in social activities (Anagün, 2018). Because students who have high-order thinking skills are able to analyze and assess something good for their future life (Baransi & Burbara, 2019).

Indicators of 21st century skills have similarities with higher order thinking components, namely analyzing, evaluating, and creating. The curriculum in 21st century skills must provide opportunities for students to develop literacy skills such as finance, global awareness, independence, not limited to filling in aspects of knowledge related to learning (Alismail & McGuire, 2015). That way, 4C skills in Arabic learning activities can be carried out by teachers and students simultaneously. Because the integration of higher order thinking can be realized in language learning through aspects of learning strategies that are in accordance with the needs of students (Saleh, 2019). 4C skills are given to students to complement their needs to face the life to come (Erdoğan, 2019).

# The Challenges and Solutions for Implementing of 21st Century Skills in Arabic Learning

Implementation of 21st century skills in learning Arabic is a new challenge for Arabic teachers. This challenge has been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic. In addition to teaching Arabic language based on 21st century skills, teachers must also have skills in operating computers as online learning media during the Covid-19 pandemic (Nguyen & Chung, 2020). So that 21st century skills-based learning can be implemented properly if teachers are able to operate technology well and can present learning in accordance with the needs of 21st century life (Marpa, 2020). The challenge of implementing 21st century skills in learning Arabic comes from three main factors, namely teachers, students and school facilities.

Weak teacher knowledge of the concept of 21st century skills is a serious challenge for teachers. Applying the concept of 21st century life in learning Arabic will be more difficult if the teacher does not understand the concept of 21st century skills in

depth. In these conditions, the teacher's knowledge of the concept of 21st century skills must be addressed first. In principle, learning is directed at increasing the thinking power of students who are more mature in dealing with various life problems. Therefore, Zohar, (1999) suggests providing training to teachers on the application of 21st century skills in learning activities.

The importance of providing training to teachers on the concept of 21st century skills in accordance with the demands of global education developments. This reason is further strengthened by the issue of 21st century skills which are relatively new in learning Arabic. So it is understandable that there are still many Arabic teachers who do not understand the concept of 21st century skills in depth. In fact, there are still many Arabic language teachers in Indonesia who have just heard the term 21st century skills which are now the direction of learning Arabic in the Decree of the Minister of Religion Number 184 of 2019 (Ritonga et al., 2021).

Implementation of the Arabic language curriculum that leads to 21st century skills is held online during the Covid-19 pandemic. Online learning in the Covid-19 pandemic era is carried out for a limited time in accordance with the policy of the minister of education, which is 30 minutes for every learning meeting. Meanwhile, to apply 21st century skills to the fullest, it takes a lot of time, so that the desired learning objectives can be realized properly (Putri & Sofyan, 2019). Moreover, what is taught is Arabic which is a difficult subject in the perspective of some students in Indonesia.

Students' Arabic language skills affect the successful implementation of 21st century skills. The level of students' speaking Arabic skills has an impact on the application of 21st century skills. Students who have good Arabic skills will be easier to give 21st century skills, because they already have good Arabic concepts (Abdullahi et al., 2018). Meanwhile, teaching Arabic language based on 21st century skills to students who have low Arabic language skills starts from the introduction of Arabic first which takes a long time. The impact is that during the learning process there are still students who do not focus on the material, play alone, or do other activities outside the learning context (Makruf & Barokah, 2020). This will affect the achievement of student learning outcomes that are less than optimal.

In addition to the factors mentioned above, the teaching materials used in learning Arabic must be considered. Teaching materials used in learning Arabic must emphasize the strengthening of 21st century skills (Schell & Mohan, 2013). This is done so that the material presented by the teacher is in line with the textbook guidelines owned by each student. This method can make it easier for students to understand the concept of 21st century learning independently without direct teacher guidance.

The challenges of implementing 21st century skills must be resolved immediately. Challenges that are not resolved immediately will turn into obstacles that affect the quality of learning. However, if teachers are alert and develop skills, 21st century skills-based learning will be realized. Students who have 21st century skills are prepared to become globally competitive human resources (Hadinugrahaningsih et al., 2017). Opportunities to compete with other nations can be seen through the seriousness of teachers in facing the 21st century.

Obstacles in implementing 21st century skills must be resolved immediately. School management should make productive efforts to answer the problems faced by teachers. Among the efforts that can be done are such as conducting workshops on 21st century skills-based learning. Experts from universities, researchers, governments who formulate 21st century skills learning policies can be used as collaborative partners as speakers in every workshop activity, even though it is done online in the middle high

prevalence of Covid-19. Online learning requires adequate infrastructure. Optimization of online learning infrastructure supports the continuity of the learning process properly. Often the poor learning infrastructure is a non-technical obstacle faced by teachers when delivering teaching materials during the Covid-19 pandemic. These obstacles come from network trouble, internet data packages, smartphones, isolated locations, etc. (Al-Maroof et al., 2020; As Sabiq & Fahmi, 2020). Even though technological advances are supported by the thinking intelligence of teachers and students, the quality of education must be prioritized, and there are no more findings of non-technical obstacles originating from the internet network (Hadinugrahaningsih et al., 2017). The central government and local governments must pay serious attention to the quality of education in the country free from small and large problems and obstacles. That way, learning Arabic in the era of the Covid-19 pandemic will still be meaningful for students and teachers.

The learning media used determines the level of success in learning. Using media and methods that are varied and attract the attention of students is a necessity that must be done by the teacher. Internet-based media that can be accessed online are the main media that must be mastered by teachers during the Covid-19 pandemic (Abdillah et al., 2021; Rini, 2022; Basir, et al., 2021). That way, the obstacles to the learning process will turn into a good opportunity in bringing students to the gates of success in the 21st century life that is getting closer (Conklin, 2012). Another positive impact is that the image of Arabic learning will be better in the eyes of the community because of the power of teachers who are able to turn a problem into a big opportunity for student success in the future.

The results of the study identify the urgency of Arabic learning design when the Covid-19 pandemic is disturbing. Research that has developed a lot with learning issues during the Covid-19 pandemic tries to review the relevant learning media used (Abdillah et al., 2021). There is also a phenomenal study that discusses teacher strategies in creating fun and enjoyable learning in the Covid-19 pandemic situation (Valtonen et al., 2021). Other research also examines the challenges and problems faced by teachers in the era of the Covid-19 pandemic (Hadinugrahaningsih et al., 2017). Meanwhile, this study reveals the design of Arabic learning in detail and comprehensively based on facts in the field of education that are the complaints of Arabic teachers. Thus, this study reflects significant differences with previous studies in the aspect of depth of material content, data presentation techniques through a historical approach, and the level of complexity of the research object.

Based on the research flow above, this study can be useful for Arabic language teachers to improve the quality and quality of Arabic learning in Indonesia. Dissemination of information about the formulation of good Arabic learning in Indonesia must be massive. Today, Arabic teachers are still busy with administrative activities so they don't pay too much attention to the content and quality aspects of the material. This happens because of the lack of information about Arabic learning designs that are in accordance with the needs in the Covid-19 pandemic era with the survival of 21st century students (Pabbajah & Pabbajah, 2020). Therefore, the presence of this study is an inspiration and reference for all Arabic language teachers in Indonesia so that they can be more optimal in formulate an Arabic learning design according to the needs of the times.

However, this research is still limited in the learning design space. While the validity of the design formulated by the researcher has not been tested scientifically so that the fundamental need for this research is to test the validity and effectiveness of

the learning design described in the discussion. The presence of researchers should be able to fill the void in the literature needed by all Arabic language teachers in the learning process. The literature offered must also have passed the feasibility test of use based on the needs of 21st century life skills. Of course, the validity and effectiveness tests carried out by the next researcher as a follow-up to this research through a larger research object, using complete data, and with research methods that comprehensive. That way, research on Arabic learning design based on the demands of the 21st century life during the Covid-19 pandemic deserves to be a national reference after testing the validity and effectiveness of the next researcher.

### **CONCLUSION**

Arabic learning innovation must be carried out in accordance with the development of such a massive era. Therefore, the internalization of 21st century skills is absolutely implemented in Arabic learning. So that the position of Arabic subjects is in line with other subjects that already contain 21st century skills. This research shows that: a) the implementation of 21st century skills during the Covid-19 pandemic can be done using technology as an online learning medium; b) indicators of achievement of 21st century skills refer to the elements contained in these 21st century skills such as creative and innovative skills, communication skills, critical thinking and problem solving, collaboration skills; c) the challenges of implementing 21st century skills are getting higher during the Covid-19 pandemic, because learning is technology-based, it requires teachers to have technology operating skills when presenting subject matter to students. The findings of this study also show that 21st century skills lead students to career, educational and social success, as well as become human resources with global competitiveness. Through this research, it is hoped that creative ideas from Arabic teachers and other researchers will emerge to test the effectiveness in implementing 21st century skills with various media innovations and methods that are carried out online.

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# **AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT**

This research was conducted in collaboration between Postgraduate PTIQ Jakarta, STAI As-Syifa Subang, West Java, and STAI Sabili Bandung, West Java. Susanto is responsible as the evaluator of the article manuscript, Apri Wardana Ritonga as the writer of the research manuscript and Ayu Desrani as the translator of the manuscript form Indonesian language to English.

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