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Measuring the Effectiveness of Arabic Immersion: A Critical Evaluation of the CIPP Model in the PBA International Class

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Abstract

This study aims to determine the effectiveness of the Arabic immersion program in improving the language proficiency of international class students of PBA study program at UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta with the CIPP model. The research method used is qualitative with case study analysis that focuses on the effectiveness of the immersion method implemented. Data were obtained using in-depth interviews, observation and documentation and analyzed inductively. The results of the CIPP evaluation holistically show that the immersion program in international classes is effective for improving competence, it is shown that the context analysis confirms the suitability of the program with academic needs, input/input evaluation shows good human resource readiness, although there are some technical deficiencies, process evaluation shows implementation in accordance with the principles of immersion, while product evaluation shows an increase in student skills.

Keywords: Arabic language education, Arabic immersion, CIPP model, International classroom

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Introduction

In the era of globalization and seemingly seamless international relations, foreign language proficiency is highly urgent, particularly in Islamic higher education institutions. Arabic, as the language of the holy scriptures and various classical Islamic literature, plays a strategic role in developing students' academic competence and professionalism. Arabic language proficiency for Arabic language students is a prerequisite. Academic demands and future career development are certainly among the reasons contributing to the urgency of Arabic language proficiency.

Arabic language learning in Indonesia still faces problems and challenges, including teacher language competency, pedagogical competence, facilities and a supportive language environment, linguistic issues, curriculum, and sociological issues (Al Qolbi et al., 2024). These challenges require study and solutions from various parties with interests and concerns about Arabic language education. Philosophically, the purpose of learning Arabic depends on whether the language is a means of communication or a means of understanding Arabic texts (Rifa'i, 2021).

The use of language teaching methods also has a significant influence on students' mastery of language competencies (Maisarah et al., 2022). One language teaching method considered effective for improving language learning skills is the immersion method. Immersion, according to Myriam (Addi & Teimi, 2025), is a form of language teaching in which teachers use the target language as the language of instruction to improve language skills without involving the native language . The immersion method has been proven to improve foreign language skills in many countries. In Canada, this program has been implemented for approximately 60 years and has proven effective in improving students' language competencies (Bigelow & Kananen, 2015). Meanwhile, in Indonesia, the

application of the immersion model in Arabic learning is still relatively limited and requires further evaluation to determine its effectiveness.

The international class program launched by the Arabic Language Education study program, Faculty of Islamic Education and Teacher Training, UIN Sunan Kalijaga, is a response to the challenge of UIN Sunan Kalijaga becoming *a World Class University*. In the implementation of the international class program, the immersion method is one solution in teaching courses in the Arabic Language Education study program, where courses are taught in two languages, namely Arabic and English. Therefore, the international class program is also designed to create an academic environment that supports the active use of Arabic and English. The demand for students to speak Arabic actively in this international program certainly requires further evaluation of its effectiveness. There are not many studies that comprehensively evaluate the effectiveness of the program. This issue is a gap in the literature, especially in ensuring that immersion is able to improve students' language skills competency.

Context, Input, Process, Product) evaluation model is an evaluation model developed by Stufflebeam, where this model offers a comprehensive framework for assessing educational programs from various aspects. (Sartika, 2025). Previous studies using this model have shown that the CIPP model is effective in assessing the quality of educational programs. Evaluation of Arabic language learning at MTsN 5 Jombang using the CIPP model showed that 80% of students achieved competency standards, although *kalam proficiency* needed to be improved (Maftuhah et al., 2024). Evaluation of the bilingual program at the An Nawawi Berjan Islamic Boarding School showed that the bilingual program had been running well overall, especially in the learning process aspect. (Mahmud, 2025). Furthermore, a study of the bilingual (Arabic-Indo) *Khitobah program at Ma`had Al Azhar MTsN 2 Kediri showed that the implementation of structured communication strategies was able to increase the self-confidence and language skills of students* (Intan et al., 2025). Of the several studies above, there has not been a study that specifically combines the language immersion approach and the CIPP model in the context of international classes based on Arabic language education in higher education.
Based on previous research, this study aims to determine the effectiveness of Arabic language immersion in improving students' language skills through an evaluation of the Arabic language immersion program based on the CIPP model in the PBA study program at UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta.

Methods

This *study* uses a qualitative approach to explore environmental contextual phenomena in depth (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Qualitative research is a research method used to investigate the conditions of natural objects, with the researcher serving as a key guide (Sugiyono, 2013). Qualitative research uses data and theory to provide explanations and descriptions (Nasution, 2023) Qualitative research uses a purposive and snowball approach to data source sampling, uses triangulation (combined) collection techniques, and conducts inductive or qualitative data analysis. The results of this study emphasize meaning rather than generalization (Harahap, 2020).

The type of research used is a case study. A case study is a series of scientific activities carried out comprehensively. and in-depth study of a program, event, or activity, whether at the individual, group, institution, or organizational level, with the aim of gaining a deep understanding of the event. The selected event, hereinafter referred to as a case, is usually a real-world event, which is currently taking place, not something that has already passed (Nasution, 2023).

Results and Discussions

In In English, "immersion" means to dip, soak, combine, mix, and submerge (Musthofa, 2023) . In Arabic, immersion is called *inghimas,* which comes from *Inghamasa-yanghamisu-inghimaasan.* In Al-Munawwir's dictionary, the word *inghimas* means to sink, to sink (Munawwir, 1997) . In terms of terminology, many experts offer their views regarding the definition of language immersion. Genesee

describes immersion (in Brawn, 2024) as a form of bilingual education in which students who speak the majority language receive part of their instruction through the medium of their second language and part through their first language (Genesee, 2015). Bernhardt (1992) describes language immersion as a way of learning a foreign language not as a subject, but as a medium used to convey learning materials (Šikulova, 2020). The immersion approach according to Bernhardt emphasizes the importance of using the target language in meaningful and authentic contexts, thus allowing learners to develop language skills naturally through everyday interactions and learning content (Bernhardt, 1992). Myriam Met defines language immersion as a foreign language teaching method, where the regular curriculum is taught through the foreign language. The foreign language becomes a vehicle for teaching rather than a teaching subject (Met, 1993). Cummins in his theory related to language mastery BICS (*Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills*) and CALP (*Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency*) states that students' ability to master the target language takes 1-3 years, while to reach the native level in use in more complex academic contexts takes 5-7 years (Cummins, 2014) . Haj views that immersion is not just teaching, but a holistic approach that includes: active involvement in the language environment, cultural and linguistic integration, and natural ability development (Bilal & Fatna, 2023).

The immersion program itself first appeared around the mid-1960s at St. Lambert School in Canada (Musthofa, 2023) . Subsequently, this immersion program was successfully implemented in several countries such as Canada, America, China, Estonia, and other countries. This program has been implemented in Canada for approximately 60 years and has proven effective in improving students' language skills. The languages studied in Canada at that time were French and Spanish. As a result, students in Canada experienced an increase and development of language proficiency with the immersion program (Fortune, 2008). Language immersion programs have several variations according to the needs of the learners. Among other variations based on their scope, namely immersion in the classroom and outside the classroom. Furthermore, based on its substance, language immersion is divided into two: true and artificial immersion. True immersion is 100% natural immersion in an Arabic language environment where students are physically taken to an Arab country. Artificial immersion, however, begins with the problem of true immersion, which requires going to an Arab country, which of course not everyone can afford. Furthermore, several organizations concerned with teaching Arabic in non-native environments have attempted to create and provide opportunities to practice the language and learn about its culture through activities that claim to involve native Arabic speakers, such as summer camps and artificial language villages (زمالي, 2023).

Based on learner needs, language immersion is divided into three, namely total immersion, partial immersion, and *two-way immersion*. (Brawn, 2024). Myriam (in Kang et al., 2021) explains that total immersion is one program format among several that have different time spans in terms of time spent learning a foreign language. Total immersion is characterized by studying the entire curriculum in L2, meaning that academic subjects or classes are delivered in the target language. Students are exposed to the target language 100% because it is the medium of instruction; this, in turn, helps them have a high level of proficiency (López et al., 2023). In partial immersion, the use of language and the duration of time are different from total immersion. Partial immersion has approximately 50% of the time of teaching and using a second language (Malik, 2021). This type of immersion is more acceptable to language learners because they can use their native language to express themselves (López et al., 2023) . While *Two-way Immersion* is a form of integration of students from two different groups and the contemporary learning of two languages and subjects related to those languages. This method emerged in Canada in the early 1960s (Uzzell & Ayscue, 2021). It can also be interpreted as *bilingual immersion* , which is a method for integrating students from minority languages and students from the majority language into the same classroom with the goal of academic success and proficiency for the bilingual group (Robbani et al., 2024).

The effectiveness assessment uses the CIPP model evaluation developed by Stuffelbeam, to evaluate the immersion program as a whole to improve the language proficiency of international class students of the Arabic Language Education study program at UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta.

a. Context Evaluation

The aspects that are the object of evaluation in the context assessment are the objectives and background of the Arabic language immersion program. The research results show that the purpose of the international class is to... providing institutional development, broadening students' horizons on international issues , particularly those related to Arabic language development , and providing them with the right to maximize learning and mentoring . The underlying rationale for implementing the immersion method in international classes is that immersion is seen as a language teaching method that is quite effective in improving language proficiency.

This research also shows that the international class program aligns with the university's internationalization vision and the demands for foreign language proficiency in the global era. Genesee's theory emphasizes that language immersion must respond to students' academic and linguistic needs by integrating language and content learning. Abdul Rahman also emphasized that active student involvement in the language learning environment is key to successful immersion. The policy of opening international classes to respond to global challenges for both students and universities is a strategic step that can impact curriculum restructuring, student selection systems, and lecturer orientation. This means there is a close relationship between context evaluation and institutional change policies.

b. Input Evaluation

The objectives of the input evaluation are the readiness of human resources, teaching materials, and supporting facilities. Research shows that student recruitment for international class programs is carried out using a fairly stringent selection system. Lecturers or instructors for international classes are also appointed based on multilingual competence, both verbal and written. The methods used in the input evaluation include field observations, interviews with lecturers and students, and document studies.

The results indicate that human resources are considered superior, although several shortcomings remain, including the availability of Arabic-language learning media, limited student vocabulary, and teaching materials that are not yet fully prepared to support immersion. Myriam emphasized that ideal input for immersion includes relevant teaching materials in the target language, an active language environment, and institutional support. While some components have been met, improvements in technical and material aspects still need to be made.

c. Process Evaluation

The aspects evaluated in this domain are program implementation, teaching strategies, and learning interactions. The immersion model used is total immersion for proficiency-based courses and partial immersion for theory-based courses. The teaching process utilizes several methods, including communicative methods, direct methods, qowaid tarjamah (translation), and eclectic methods.

Evaluation of student progress in each course also includes various tests and non-tests, including video observation, video analysis, writing Arabic papers, presentations, and more. This demonstrates that students are actively engaged in Arabic, both in learning and evaluation. Genesee also emphasized that immersion can be maximized by creating discourse-rich classrooms.

d. Product Evaluation

The object of study in the product evaluation is student learning outcomes and their impact on improving student competency. Field data shows significant improvements in listening (*istima`*) and speaking (*kalam*) skills, as well as positive developments in other *areas* . The method used to evaluate the product is to analyze several student assignments and in-depth interviews. The results indicate that students are more confident and accustomed to using Arabic in both academic and non-academic settings. In line with J. Cummins' theory regarding BICS and CALP, namely that language

competency develops gradually through a supportive environment and intensive exposure to the target language.

Conclusion

The holistic CIPP evaluation shows that the immersion program in international classes is effective in improving competencies, it is shown that the context analysis confirms the suitability of the program to academic needs, the input evaluation shows good human resource readiness, although there are some technical shortcomings, the process evaluation shows implementation that is in accordance with the principles of immersion, while the product evaluation shows an increase in student skills.

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