Developing a CEFR A1 Arabic Language Teaching Module through Integrated Instructional Design Models

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ABSTRACT

Arabic language education in Malaysia has been implemented through diverse approaches, yet its effectiveness remains constrained by the lack of integrated modules that align with international standards. Existing modules are generally generic, insufficiently tailored to learners' actual proficiency levels, and offer limited instructional guidance for teachers in planning instructional activities. Accordingly, this paper aims to develop an Arabic language teaching module at the CEFR A1 level through the integration of three major instructional design models; Dick and Carey (1978), ADDIE (2009), and the Successive Approximation Model- SAM (2012). Conceptual analysis is employed to explore the contribution of each model across five phases—analysis, design, development, implementation, and evaluation. The integration of these models results in a hybrid framework that ensures alignment among objectives, strategies, and assessment, while incorporating flexibility through prototyping and iterative refinement. The proposed module is expected to provide teachers with practical guidance, including clearly defined learning outcomes, theme-based communicative activities, and assessment instruments aligned with CEFR A1 descriptors. This study underscores a systematic and practical approach to the development of CEFR A1 Arabic language modules, thereby enhancing teaching and learning effectiveness while supporting international standards in foreign language education.

Keywords: (Instructional Design- Module - CEFR -Arabic Language)

INTRODUCTION

Foreign language education in Malaysia, particularly Arabic, begins as early as pre-school and continues to be offered at the university level, either as an elective subject or a supplementary course (Shaharuddin et al., 2024). Despite this, the teaching of Arabic continues to face significant challenges, especially in the development of systematic, interactive, and level-appropriate instructional materials (Ateyh, 2024; Samah & Isahak, 2024). The limited variety in curriculum and instructional strategies has diminished learners' motivation to study and apply Arabic in real-life contexts (Aldebsi & Eldesoky, 2023). Furthermore, most available Arabic learning modules focus primarily on learners, with little emphasis on providing teachers with clear instructional guidance. Consequently, many teachers are compelled to design their own modules due to the lack of suitable resources (Ateyh, 2024). However, such teacher-developed modules are often not fully aligned with the CEFR framework, as many teachers remain insufficiently trained in integrating CEFR principles into instructional module design (Sahib & Stapa, 2021).

In line with this need, the present concept paper outlines several instructional design models as the foundation for developing an Arabic language teaching module at the CEFR A1 level.

Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) is an international standard developed by the Council of Europe (2001) to systematically assess foreign language proficiency. It divides language learning into six levels: A1–A2 (basic), B1–B2 (intermediate), and C1–C2 (advanced), with a strong emphasis on communicative competence in real-life contexts (Council of Europe, 2001). In the context of Arabic, CEFR serves as a foundation for the development of interactive, contextual, and learner-centered modules that align

with the demands of 21st-century education. Designing teaching and learning modules in accordance with CEFR is crucial to ensuring that content remains appropriate and relevant to learners' proficiency levels (Sahib & Stapa, 2021).

Instructional Design Models

Dick & Carey Model (Dick & Carey, 1978)

This model is one of the earliest approaches to module development. It provides a detailed and systematic sequence of steps for constructing instructional modules and consists of nine distinct phases.

Identifying instructional goals: This phase involves analyzing students' and teachers' needs as the foundation for setting instructional goals. The goals should describe the expected competencies and the instructional tools to be integrated into the teaching process.

Conducting instructional analysis: Following the establishment of instructional goals, this phase specifies the essential skills and knowledge to be attained by learners. The analysis is guided by established learning domains, particularly the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains as outlined in Bloom's Taxonomy and related pedagogical frameworks.

Analyzing learners and context: This phase requires a systematic examination of learners' proficiency levels and existing knowledge. Particular attention is directed toward their abilities and skills, prior learning experiences, academic motivation, and preferred learning styles, as these factors critically influence the design and effectiveness of instructional strategies.

Writing performance objectives: This phase establishes measurable indicators of student achievement upon completion of the learning session. The formulation of performance objectives emphasizes three critical elements: clearly defining the learning situation, applying appropriate theoretical or conceptual frameworks, and demonstrating mastery through the selected concept or theory (Chaparro et al., 2018).

Developing assessment instruments: Assessment instruments are developed to ensure learners meet prerequisite skills, monitor progress toward instructional goals, and assess the overall effectiveness of the instructional process.

Develop instructional strategy: This phase involves selecting appropriate pedagogical approaches for delivering instructional content, ensuring alignment between goals, delivery methods, and learner engagement.

Developing & selecting instructional materials: This phase involves preparing instructional content for learners, whether designed for independent learning or facilitated by a teacher. The materials may include structured guidance, explanatory information, and resources tailored to the chosen mode of delivery.

Designing and conducting formative evaluation: This phase involves continuous assessment during classroom implementation to ensure ongoing improvement of the instructional materials. The evaluation provides feedback that supports continuous refinement and enhancement of instructional quality.

Designing and conducting summative evaluation: This phase assesses the effectiveness of the instructional materials after full implementation. The evaluation measures the achievement of intended instructional goals and provides evidence of instructional impact.

ADDIE Model (Branch, 2009)

This model is one of the most well-known frameworks in instructional module development. It consists of five phases:

Analysis: This phase focuses on identifying learners' needs, competencies, and prior knowledge. This process establishes a foundation for setting instructional goals that define the expected learning outcomes. An

instructional analysis is then developed to break down the learning process into clear and achievable steps, providing teachers with guidance in addressing learners' challenges effectively (Aldoobie, 2015).

Design: This phase involves planning the content, structure, and layout of the instructional materials. At this phase, appropriate delivery methods and instructional strategies are selected to optimize classroom instruction. Careful design at this stage ensures the instructional material is practical and aligned with the intended learning objectives.

Development: This phase focuses on production and integration of instructional components such as teacher guides, learner worksheets, and multimedia support. Instructional materials are constructed in accordance with the design specifications.

Implement: This phase involves applying the instructional materials in real classroom settings. Teachers use the instructional materials to deliver lessons, while data are collected to evaluate instructional delivery, learner engagement, and contextual adaptability.

Evaluation: This phase encompasses both formative and summative assessments to determine the instructional materials' overall effectiveness (Aldoobie, 2015). Data obtained from learners and teachers provide evidence for continuous improvement, ensuring alignment with learning objectives.

Successive Approximation Model-SAM (Allen, 2012)

This model is widely used in instructional module development due to its faster and more flexible process. The strength of SAM lies in its use of prototypes, which can be evaluated and refined continuously throughout the development cycle, unlike traditional models that require a complete product before evaluation (Jung et al., 2019). SAM consists of three phases:

Preparation phase: Unlike other models that emphasize formal needs analysis, the Successive Approximation Model (SAM) emphasizes information gathering as its initial step. This phase involves gathering information on learners, goals, and content requirements. This is followed by the "Savvy Start," a structured brainstorming session designed to identify instructional challenges and propose practical solutions for module development.

Iterative design phase: In this phase, initial prototypes of learning activities and materials are developed based on ideas generated during the Savvy Start. These prototypes are tested, reviewed, and refined through continuous feedback, allowing for incremental improvement. Rather than requiring a fully completed module before evaluation, SAM emphasizes iterative refinement, enabling researchers to design, evaluate, and revise prototypes in cycles until they are ready for full development (Essel et al., 2016).

Iterative development phase: Following the refinement of prototypes, researchers proceed to the development of a complete instructional materials or a design proof. The design proof is implemented and evaluated by users, with subsequent revisions producing successive versions known as alpha, beta, and ultimately, the gold version. The gold version represents the finalized instructional materials ready for full implementation. This process is more efficient compared to traditional models, which require the construction of a complete instructional materials prior to testing and evaluation. By allowing ongoing refinement at different stages, SAM minimizes the need to restart from earlier phases and ensures a faster, more adaptive development cycle.

Integrated Instructional Design Framework for Arabic Language Teaching Module (CEFR A1)

Analysis: In this phase, both the ADDIE and Dick & Carey models emphasize the identification of learner and teacher needs. For learners, particular attention is given to prior knowledge, language proficiency, and ability levels, while for teachers, the focus lies on constraints encountered in instructional practice. The SAM model contributes through information gathering and the Savvy Start, where researchers engage in brainstorming to identify problems and potential solutions from the perspectives of learners, teachers, and other stakeholders. This integrated process ensures that the instructional objectives remain aligned with the CEFR A1 framework, which emphasizes language learning that is tailored to learners' specific proficiency levels.

Design: The application of the Dick and Carey model in the design phase is particularly important, as it provides detailed guidance on the alignment of instructional goals, strategies, and assessments. Teachers are provided with clear course learning outcomes, comprehensive teaching instructions, and suggested classroom activities such as role-plays, guided dialogues, and listening drills. The ADDIE model complements this process by supporting the careful organization and structuring of content. Meanwhile, the SAM model facilitates rapid prototyping, enabling teachers to test instructional materials in the classroom without waiting for the full module to be completed. This approach aligns with the CEFR A1 framework, which emphasizes not only the development of modules according to learners' proficiency levels but also the use of thematic organization (e.g., self-introduction, family, food) in structuring instructional content (Abd Rahman et al., 2024).

Development: In the development phase, the ADDIE model provides a linear framework for producing the module, while SAM introduces iterative refinement through prototype testing. The outputs of this phase include teacher guides, worksheets, sample lesson plans, audio and video resources, and assessment rubrics. Teachers are supplied with ready-to-use classroom instructions as well as alternative activities that can be adapted to learners' varying proficiency levels. The iterative cycle allows for continuous improvement until the module reaches a classroom-ready version (Ali et al., 2021). At this stage, it is essential to ensure that the content developed strictly adheres to the CEFR A1 framework, particularly with respect to thematic organization and the appropriateness of vocabulary, phrases, and sentence structures for beginner learners.

Implementation: The implementation phase draws primarily from ADDIE's structured delivery, ensuring that the module can be systematically applied in real classroom contexts. Teachers follow the provided instructional steps and integrate recommended activities—such as simulation, pair dialogues and oral questioning—into their lessons. SAM contributes flexibility, allowing teachers to adapt activities based on learner responses and classroom dynamics (Ali et al., 2021). This ensures that the module is not only consistent across different teachers but also adaptable to varying contexts. Furthermore, the activities are mapped to CEFR A1 descriptors, ensuring that learners engage in tasks relevant to their communicative level. In this way, the implementation process guarantees that classroom practices remain aligned with the thematic content and proficiency outcomes expected at CEFR A1.

Evaluation: The evaluation phase integrates ADDIE's emphasis on both formative and summative assessment with SAM's iterative feedback cycle. Teachers conduct ongoing evaluations during lessons through observation, oral questioning, and worksheet completion, while summative tasks such as short self-introductions and thematic quizzes assess overall achievement. Feedback from teachers and learners is then used to refine and improve the module for future application. Importantly, all evaluation instruments are designed in line with CEFR A1 descriptors, ensuring that assessments accurately measure learners' communicative competence at the beginner level. This alignment guarantees that learners' progress is systematically tracked against internationally recognized proficiency standards.

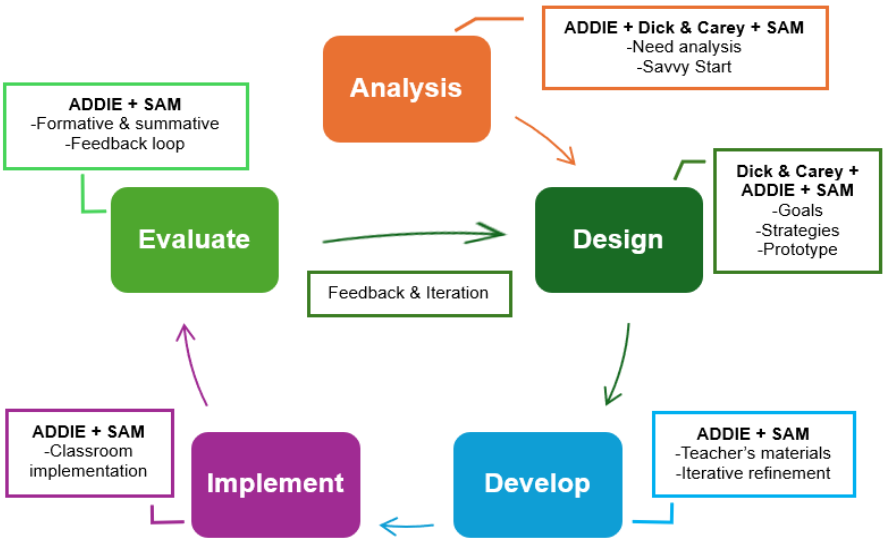

Figure 1 Integrated Instructional Design Models

Potential Challenges in Implementation

Despite the strengths of this integrated framework, several challenges may arise during actual implementation. Teachers may require specific training to familiarize themselves with CEFR descriptors and the blended use of multiple instructional design models (C. Alih et al., 2020). Furthermore, institutional constraints such as limited time allocation, resource availability, and varying levels of administrative support could hinder systematic adoption (Jamain & Jamaludin, 2023). Addressing these challenges requires targeted professional development workshops, supportive policy measures, and a gradual piloting process within selected institutions before wider implementation.

CONCLUSION

This paper has outlined a hybrid instructional design framework for developing an Arabic language teaching module at the CEFR A1 level, integrating elements from the Dick & Carey, ADDIE, and SAM models. The framework emphasizes systematic alignment between objectives, strategies, and assessments while maintaining flexibility through prototyping and iterative refinement. Although developed for the Malaysian context, the framework has wider applicability due to its alignment with CEFR standards, making it adaptable to other languages and educational settings. By combining theoretical grounding with practical guidance, this study contributes to international discussions on instructional design in language education.

As this study is conceptual, future pilot testing and case implementations are essential to validate its practicality. Empirical data on learner outcomes and teacher experiences will provide stronger evidence of its effectiveness and guide further refinement.

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