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## **Design of Arabic Writing Skills Test for Beginners According to Standardization of the American Council On The Teaching Of Foreign Languages (ACTFL)**

**Ihwan Mahmudi<sup>1</sup>, Maghfirotul Hasanah<sup>2</sup>, Moh. Ismail<sup>3</sup>, Ahmad Saifulloh<sup>4</sup>, Izzul Fatawi<sup>5</sup>,**

<sup>1,2,3,4</sup> Universitas Darusalam Gontor, Ponorogo, Indonesia.

<sup>5</sup> Universitas Terbuka, Indonesia.

\*Corresponding E-mail: [ihwanm@unida.gontor.ac.id](mailto:ihwanm@unida.gontor.ac.id)

### **Abstract**

Tests or questions that use ACTFL standards at level Novice is one way to find out Arabic language learning standards and students' ability standards, especially writing skills tests. ACTFL standardization at the Novice level consists of 3 levels, namely Novice High, Novice Mid, and Novice Low. The research uses a qualitative method through a literature study by studying the Skills Guide book American Council on The Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) and other literature such as articles and books. Based on the results of the analysis carried out in this research, there are 20 tests or questions according to ACTFL standardization at the level Novice that is 20% of the questions of difficulty level or Novice High, 50% of the questions are medium level or Novice Mid, and 30% easy level questions or Novice Low.

**Keywords:** Test, Arabic Writing Skills, Novice, ACTFL.

### **A. Introduction**

Writing skills have two meanings, namely the ability to express in writing and the ability to describe something with language concepts that are clear and understood by the reader (Zaid, Bahroni, & Sari, 2019). Writing skills are one of the Arabic language skills taught in all educational institutions in Indonesia, from kindergartens to Universities (M., 2022). The writing skills taught have a specific aim, namely so that students can write Arabic and improve it over time according to their level of ability (Nufus, H., 2019), and this can be achieved if training is carried out continuously (Zaid, 2017). Not only that, writing skills are also the most important Arabic language skills because writing is the standard for success in learning Arabic and the greatest proof of the urgency and superiority of language as a communication tool (Zaid,

Maha, Fikriyah, Mahmudi, & Zalzuli, t.t.).

Standards for success in learning Arabic can be achieved in various ways, one of which is through tests given to students. This is in line with Muhammad Habib Thaha's opinion in Moh's article. Ismail and Aufa Alfian Musthafa that the tests given to students are a standard for success in learning Arabic and to determine students' abilities (Ismail & Musthafa, 2018). This opinion is also agreed with by Ihwan Mahmudi and Riska Hanan Nurahmah that tests are a measure of a person's knowledge and abilities in their field (Mahmudi & Nurahmah, 2023), one of them is an Arabic writing skills test. However, in the Arabic writing skills tests, numerous challenges are encountered by both teachers and students, including issues related to spelling or imla (Maharani, Fatkhurrahman, Astina, & Faida, 2022) and errors in grammar, encompassing both syntax (nahwu) and morphology (shorf) (Soleckah, Putra, & Salma, 2023).

Talking about the Arabic writing skills test and its aim to improve students' writing skills (Rusli dkk., 2024), of course the writing skills test given to students is adjusted to their level of ability so that the goal can be achieved well and perfectly. In this case, the researcher specified a writing skills test at the beginner level (Novice) using standardization American Council On The Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). There are three levels of beginner level writing skills from the ACTFL perspective, namely low beginner level, medium beginner level and high beginner level (*PEDOMAN KEMAHIRAN 2012 © ACTFL, INC., 2012*).

Based on the Arabic writing skills test for beginners or Novice According to ACTFL standards, preparation and readiness is also needed in designing tests so that the tests given to students are in accordance with their level of ability, namely by paying attention to test validity, test reliability, level of difficulty and different strengths (Ainin, 2016).

However, there are quite a few Arabic writing skills tests given to students that are not in accordance with their level of ability and do not pay attention to the 4 components in making the test, namely test validity, test validity, test reliability, level of difficulty and different strengths, so that students become confused in doing it.

In this research, researchers present solutions in designing Arabic writing skills tests, especially for beginners or Novice by using ACTFL standardization and still paying attention to the process of test validity, test reliability, level of difficulty and different strengths, so that the objectives of learning Arabic in writing skills can be achieved properly and correctly.

## **B. Method**

The method used in this research is a qualitative type through literature study, namely focusing on a number of references in the form of writings (books, articles, journals, etc.) which are then used as reference sources for the writings compiled (Sugiyono, 2019). The literature

study in this research was by reviewing the Skills Guide book *American Council On The Teaching Of Foreign Languages (ACTFL)* and other literature such as articles and books related to Arabic writing skills tests for high-level beginners.

Data collection was carried out by reviewing documents from the *Guidebook of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL)* and various related literature on Arabic language testing. Based on the indicators outlined in the guidebook, the researcher then developed test items for Arabic language assessment.

Data analysis was conducted by evaluating the validity of the test items that were developed. The validation process included theoretical validity, carried out by experts who examined the language, rules (*qawaid*), and test content, aligning them with the indicators for each proficiency level.

### C. Result and Discussion

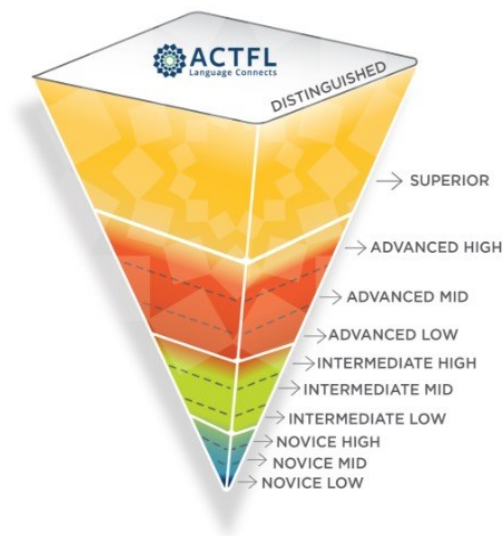
Tests are systematic procedures created in the form of standardized tasks and given to individuals or groups to be done, answered, or responded to, either in written, verbal or action form (Ramadhan, Siroj, & Afgani, 2024). This was also conveyed by Azwar that the test is a systematic procedure, namely that the items in the test are arranged according to certain methods and rules (Azwar, t.t.). This was also agreed by Silverius in an article written by Zulkifli that a test is a systematic procedure for observing and assessing one or more characteristics of a person using a numerical scale or category system (Matondang, 2009). Ihwan Mahmudi and Ayu Mur Baha expressed the opinion in their work that tests are one method of evaluation that is commonly carried out in most societies (Mahmudi & Baha, 2023). Ihwan Mahmudi also added his opinion that tests are also used to find out how proficient students are in using correct grammar and vocabulary in a communication context, then proceed with correcting deficiencies and providing evaluations (Mahmudi, Samiyah, & Khoiriyah, 2023).

The test can be said to be good if it is in accordance with the ability level of Ihwan Mahmudi and Iffatunnisail Badriyah students (Mahmudi & Badriyah, t.t.) and it has been said to be valid. Validity comes from the word validity which means the extent to which the accuracy and accuracy of a measuring instrument (test) in carrying out its measuring function (Ramadhan dkk., 2024). Azwar also expressed his opinion in an article written by Andi Maulana that validity is a measure that shows that the variable being measured is truly a variable (Maulana, 2022).

Talking about tests or questions given to students with test validity alone is not enough, but test reliability is necessary. Notoatmodjo said that reliability is an index that shows the

extent to which a measuring instrument can be trusted or relied upon using the same measuring instrument (Sugiono, Noerdjannah, & Wahyu, 2020). This is in accordance with the opinion of Anastasi and Urbina in an article written by Prasetyo Budi Widodo who said that reliability is an understanding of the ability of a measuring instrument to be trustworthy and become a basis for decision making (Widodo, 2006).

Based on tests or question items that meet valid and reliable components, researchers present tests or question items that are adapted to the students' level of writing ability using ACTFL standards. The ACTFL standardization can be seen through the following chart:



From the chart above, there are levels of ability using ACTFL standards referring to standards *Novice*. *Novice* divided into three levels, namely *Novice High* (high beginner level), *Novice Mid* (intermediate beginner level), and *Novice Low* (low beginner level). As for *Novice High* (high beginner level) is a basic and limited writing skill carried out by students using lists, short messages, postcards and simple notes, that is, students are able to express themselves in the context of the language they have learned, relying on most of the material they have learned. High level beginners at the ACTFL standard are also not always about writing sentences because the vocabulary or grammar is inadequate and can only be understood by students who are not native speakers (PEDOMAN KEMAHIRAN 2012 © ACTFL, INC., 2012). Then *Novice Mid* (intermediate beginner level) is the result of the production from memory of a small number of words and expressions in context to provide limited information in simple forms and documents, as well as basic biographical information such as names, numbers, and nationalities (PEDOMAN KEMAHIRAN 2012 © ACTFL, INC., 2012). Followed by *Novice Low* (low beginner level) namely students are able to copy or note down known words or expressions, form letters in an alphabetic system, and copy or produce isolated basic strokes in a language that uses a list of

syllables or characters (*PEDOMAN KEMAHIRAN 2012* © ACTFL, INC., 2012). Thus, it can be concluded that *Novice* in ACTFL standardization it is one of the references in designing Arabic writing skills tests for beginners.

The research results are in the form of test designs or Arabic writing skills questions that will be given to students referring to the ACTFL standardization at the *Novice*, namely 20 test items or exam questions that are adjusted to the student's level of ability and have fulfilled the important components in making tests or questions, namely valid, reliable, level of difficulty and different power (Rezi & Aulia, 2020).

There are 20 tests or questions that will be given to students based on ACTFL standards at the level *Novice* with details of 20% high level questions or *Novice High* (4 questions), 50% of the questions are intermediate level or *Novice Mid* (10 questions), and 30% low level questions or *Novice Low* (6 questions). The form of the test or questions is as follows:

المستوى	ACTFL (Novice)	المؤشرة	النمرة	الأسئلة
المبتدئ	Novice Low	قدرة الطلاب على ذكر الألوان	1	مَا لَوْنُ لَوَاءِ بَلَدِ إِنْدُونِيْسِيَا؟ (لَوْنُ لَوَاءِ بَلَدِ إِنْدُونِيْسِيَا أْبْيَضُ وَأَحْمَرُ)
	Novice Low	قدرة الطلاب على ذكر الأصابع	2	اذْكُرْ خَمْسَةَ أَصَابِعِ! (خَمْسَةُ أَصَابِعِ هِيَ إِنْهَامُ، سَبَابَةُ، وُسْطَى، بِنَصْرٌ، وَخِنْصَرٌ)
	Novice Low	قدرة الطلاب على ضبط الكلمة	3	اكْتُبِ الحَرَكَاتِ عَلَى الكَلِمَةِ الآتِيَةِ! 1. باب (بَابُ) 2. كتاب (كِتَابُ) 3. قلم (قَلَمٌ) 4. مكتب (مَكْتَبٌ) 5. ساعة (سَاعَةٌ)
	Novice Low	قدرة الطلاب على وضع الكلمة	4	صَعِّ كُلَّ كَلِمَةٍ مِنْ الكَلِمَاتِ الآتِيَةِ فِي جُمْلَةٍ مُفِيدَةٍ! 1. الحَدِيقَةُ (الحَدِيقَةُ جَمِيلَةٌ)

<p>2. الشَّجَرَةُ (الشَّجَرَةُ مُرْتَفَعَةٌ) 3. الأَزْهَارُ (يَشْمُ عَلَيَّ الأَزْهَارَ)</p>		<p>المناسبة في الجملة المفيدة</p>		
<p>اَكْتُبِ التَّمْرَةَ الآتِيَةَ بِاللُّغَةِ الْعَرَبِيَّةِ! (10 - 5 - 6 - 4 - 3 - 8 - 2 - 7) (10: عَشْرَةٌ، 5: خَمْسَةٌ، 6: سِتَّةٌ، 4: أَرْبَعَةٌ، 3: ثَلَاثَةٌ، 8: ثَمَانِيَةٌ، 2: اِثْنَانِ، 7: سَبْعَةٌ)</p>	5	<p>قدرة الطلاب على معرفة النمرة وكتابتها باللغة العربية</p>	Novice Low	
<p>أَدْنِشِيْ إِِنْشَاءً عَنِ الْمَدْرَسَةِ! <b>الإجابة</b> الْمَدْرَسَةُ مَكَانٌ جَمِيْلٌ نَتَعَلَّمُ فِيهِ كَثِيْرًا مِنَ الْأَشْيَاءِ الْمُفِيْدَةِ. وَذَهَبْتُ إِلَى الْمَدْرَسَةِ كُلِّ يَوْمٍ أَيْ الْإِثْنَانِ، الثَّلَاثَاءِ، الأَرْبَعَاءِ، الْخَمِيْسِ، وَالْجُمُعَةِ. وَنَلْتَقِي بِأَصْدِقَائِنَا وَمُعَلِّمِنَا الَّذِينَ يُسَاعِدُونَنَا فِي التَّعَلُّمِ.</p>	6	<p>قدرة الطلاب على مواصفات المدرسة في الجملة البسيطة</p>	Novice Low	
<p>صِلْ الْحُرُوفَ الآتِيَةَ حَتَّى تَكُوْنَ كَلِمَةً كَامِلَةً! 1. س - ج - و - د (سُجُودٌ) 2. ص - ل - ا - ة (صَلَاةٌ) 3. ت - ع - ل - ي - م (تَعْلِيْمٌ)</p>	1	<p>قدرة الطلاب على وصل الحروف حتى تكون كلمة كاملة</p>	Novice Mid	المتوسط
<p>اسْتَخْرِجِ الْمِثَالَ مِنْ الْكَلِمَاتِ الَّتِي فِيهَا "ال" الْقَمَرِيَّةُ وَ"ال" الشَّمْسِيَّةُ! - (الْقُرْآنُ وَالشَّجَرَةُ)</p>	2	<p>قدرة الطلاب على تفريق "ال" الْقَمَرِيَّةُ وَ"ال" الشَّمْسِيَّةُ وإتيان المثال منهما</p>	Novice Mid	

<p>تَرْجِمْ هَذِهِ الْمُفْرَدَاتِ إِلَى اللُّغَةِ الْعَرَبِيَّةِ!</p> <p>1. Baju (لِبَاسٌ)</p> <p>2. Jilbab (خِمَارٌ)</p> <p>3. Sepatu (خِذَاءٌ)</p>	3	<p>قدرة الطلاب على ترجمة الكلمة الإندونيسية إلى اللغة العربية</p>	Novice Mid	
<p>عَيِّنْ هَذِهِ الْكَلِمَةَ الْآتِيَةَ بِالضَّمَائِرِ!</p> <p>1. Dia Perempuan (هِيَ)</p> <p>2. Dia Laki-laki (هُوَ)</p> <p>3. Mereka Laki-laki (أَنْتُمْ)</p>	4	<p>قدرة الطلاب على تعيين الكلمة بالضمائر الصحيحة</p>	Novice Mid	
<p>اذْكُرْ الْكَلِمَةَ الْمُضَادَّةَ مِنَ الْكَلِمَةِ الْآتِيَةِ!</p> <p>1. كَبِيرٌ (صَغِيرٌ)</p> <p>2. كَثِيرٌ (قَلِيلٌ)</p> <p>3. قَبِيحٌ (جَمِيلٌ)</p>	5	<p>قدرة الطلاب على ذكر الكلمة المضادة الصحيحة</p>	Novice Mid	
<p>رَتِّبِ الْكَلِمَاتِ الْآتِيَةَ حَتَّى تَكُونَ جُمْلَةً مُرَكَّبَةً كَامِلَةً!</p> <p>1. الْمُصَلِّيُّ - يُصَلِّيُّ - الْمُصَلَّى - فِي (يُصَلِّيُّ الْمُصَلِّيُّ فِي الْمُصَلَّى)</p> <p>2. نَوْمًا - مُحَمَّدٌ - نَامَ (نَامَ مُحَمَّدٌ نَوْمًا)</p> <p>3. الرُّزَّ - أَحْمَدُ - أَكَلَ (أَكَلَ أَحْمَدُ الرُّزَّ)</p>	6	<p>قدرة الطلاب على ترتيب الكلمة حتى تكون جملة كاملة مرتبة</p>	Novice Mid	
<p>كَوِّنْ جُمْلَةً مُفِيدَةً مِنَ الْكَلِمَاتِ الْآتِيَةِ!</p> <p>1. الْمَسْجِدُ (يُصَلِّيُّ مُحَمَّدٌ فِي الْمَسْجِدِ)</p> <p>2. الْحُجْرَةُ (الْحُجْرَةُ وَاسِعَةٌ)</p>	7	<p>قدرة الطلاب على تكوين الجملة</p>	Novice Mid	

3. الْفَصْلُ (ذَهَبْتُ إِلَى الْفَصْلِ)		المفيدة من الكلمة المقررة		
املاً الفَراغ بِكَلِمَةٍ مُنَاسِبَةٍ! 1. هَذَا صَدِيقِي ... عَلِيٌّ (هُوَ) 2. هَذِهِ أُمِّي اسْمُهَا فَاطِمَةٌ هِيَ .....(مُدْرَسَةٌ)	8	قدرة الطلاب على إكمال الجملة بكلمة مناسبة	Novice Mid	
عَيْنٌ هَذِهِ الضَّمَائِرُ الْآتِيَّةُ بِأَمْثَلَتِهَا! 1. هُوَ (يَقْرَأُ عَلَيَّ الْجَرِيدَةَ) 2. هِيَ (مَزَقَتْ الْبِنْتُ الْقِرْطَاسَ) 3. أَنْتَ (تَقْرَأُ الْوَلَدُ الْكِتَابَ) 4. أَنَا (تَعَلَّمْتُ عُلُومَ الْحَدِيثِ)	9	قدرة الطلاب على تعيين الضمائر بإتيان المثال	Novice Mid	
تَرْجِمْ هَذِهِ الْجُمْلَةَ الْآتِيَّةَ إِلَى اللُّغَةِ العَرَبِيَّةِ! 1. Saya sedang belajar Bahasa Arab (أَتَعَلَّمُ اللُّغَةَ الْعَرَبِيَّةَ) 2. Ibu saya telah memasak nasi (طَبَعْتُ الْأُمِّي الرُّزَّ) 3. Ayah saya adalah guru (أَبِي هُوَ الْمُعَلِّمُ)	10	قدرة الطلاب على ترجمة الجملة الإندونيسية إلى اللُّغَةِ الْعَرَبِيَّةِ الصحيحة	Novice Mid	
صَحِّحِ الْخَطَأَ فِيمَا يَلِي وَاكْتُبِ الصَّحِيحَ بَيْنَ الْقَوْسَيْنِ! 1. حُجْرَتُنْ، نَائِمٌ، صَالِحُنْ (.....) (حُجْرَةٌ، نَائِمٌ، صَالِحٌ) 2. نَصْنُ، وَالدُّنْ، صَبِيُّنْ (.....) (نَصٌّ، وَالدُّ، صَبِيٌّ)	1	قدرة الطلاب على تصحيح خطأ الكلمة بكلمتها الصحيحة	Novice High	المتقدم



<p>أَصْلِحِ الْكِتَابَةَ الْمُخْطِئَةَ فِي الْمَقَالَةِ الآتِيَةِ!</p> <p><b>الفصل</b></p> <p>هُنَا فَضْلٌ، فِي الْفَصْلِ تَلْمِيذًا وَمَكْتَبٌ وَمَقْعَدٌ. الْمَكْتَبُ تَحْتَ السَّقْفِ. عَلَى الْمَكْتَبِ كُرَّاسَاتٌ. لِلْمَكْتَبِ دُرُجٌ. فِي الدَّرَجِ كِتَابٌ وَقَلَمٌ فِي الْقَلَمِ حَبْرٌ.</p> <p><b>الإجابة</b></p> <p>(هُنَا فَضْلٌ، فِي الْفَصْلِ تَلْمِيذَاتٌ وَمَكْتَبٌ وَمَقْعَدٌ. الْمَكْتَبُ تَحْتَ السَّقْفِ. عَلَى الْمَكْتَبِ كُرَّاسَاتٌ. لِلْمَكْتَبِ دُرُجٌ. فِي الدَّرَجِ كِتَابٌ وَقَلَمٌ فِي الْقَلَمِ حَبْرٌ).</p>	2	<p>قدرة الطلاب على إصلاح الكتابة المخطئة بكتابتها الصحيحة</p>	Novice High	
<p>صِفْ هَذِهِ الصُّورَةَ الْآتِيَةَ!</p> <p>1.</p>  <p>(في هذه الصورة، يمكن رؤية أربع نساء تجلسن في مكتبة. تجلسن حول مكتب حمراء كبيرة، وتقرأ الكتب. تبدو المكتبة مليئة بالكتب. الفتيات يبدو عليهن التركيز والاستمتاع بوقتهن في القراءة والتعلم. البيئة هادئة ومنظمة، مما يوفر جواً مناسباً للدراية والبحث).</p>	3	<p>قدرة الطلاب على وصف الصور في الفقرة البسيطة</p>	Novice High	

2.



(في هذه الصورة، نرى عدة صناديق بيضاء مملوءة بالأسماك. تبدو الأسماك متشابهة في الحجم والشكل، مما يشير إلى أنها من نوع واحد. الصناديق موضوعة على الأرض في مكان يبدو كأنه سوق سمك أو مرفق لتوزيع الأسماك. البيئة المحيطة نظيفة ومنظمة، مما يعكس اهتمام العاملين بالنظافة والصحة العامة. الأسماك مرتبة بشكل جيد داخل الصناديق، مما يسهل عملية النقل والتوزيع).

3.



(في هذه الصورة، نرى صيادًا يقف على قارب صغير في المياه، مرتديًا قبعة واسعة الحواف وملابس بسيطة. الصياد يمسك بشبكة صيد ويقوم بإلقائها في الماء. المشهد يُظهر وقت الشروق أو الغروب، حيث تكون

السماء ملونة بألوان دافئة من البرتقالي والأصفر).			
<p>أَكْمِلْ هَذِهِ الْمُحَادَثَةَ بِالْكَلِمَةِ الْآتِيَةِ!</p> <p>1. ....؟ أَنَا بِيَجْزِي شُكْرًا! (كَيْفَ حَالِكِ؟)</p> <p>2. أَيَّنَ أَنْتَ الْآنَ؟ ..... (أَنَا الْآنَ فِي الْمَدْرَسَةِ)</p> <p>3. ....؟ أَذْهَبُ إِلَى السُّوقِ (أَيَّنَ تَذْهَبُ؟)</p>	4	<p>قدرة الطلاب على إكمال المحادثة بالجملة المناسبة</p>	<p><b>Novice High</b></p>

Based on the table presented above, it can be concluded that the development of Arabic language test items for each proficiency level must align with the specific indicators for that level. This alignment ensures the validity of the test items used as a tool to measure Arabic language proficiency at the beginner level.

#### D. Conclusion

Tests or questions are one way to find out the standards of success in learning Arabic and the standards of students' abilities. Tests or questions can be designed with various standards or perspectives, one of which is using standardization American Council on The Teaching Of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), where ACTFL standardization is one way to determine the suitability of tests or questions that are appropriate to the level of students' writing skills, especially writing skills tests at beginner or beginner levels. Novice. The ACTFL standardization at the level Novice consists of 3 levels, namely Novice High (high beginner level), Novice Mid (intermediate beginner level), and Novice Low (low beginner level). Based on the results of the analysis carried out in this research, there are 20 tests or questions according to ACTFL standardization at the level Novice that is 20% of high-level questions or Novice High (4 questions), 50% of the questions are intermediate level or Novice Mid (10 questions), and 30% low level questions or Novice Low (6 questions).

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