



Fostering Critical Thinking in Arabic Language Learning: An Integrated Deep Learning–Love-Based Curriculum Approach

تعزيز التفكير الناقد في تعليم اللغة العربية من خلال مدخل التعلّم العميق المدمج

في المنهج القائم على المحبة

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the implementation of the Deep Learning Approach integrated with the Love-Based Curriculum in Arabic language learning and its contribution to developing students' critical thinking skills at MTsN Kota Batu. This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach to understand the learning process, classroom interactions, teachers' experiences and students' responses to the implementation of this integrative approach. Data were collected through observation, semi-structured interviews, documentation and students' reflections. The data were then analyzed using Miles and Huberman's interactive model, which consists of data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing. The findings indicate that the integration of the Deep Learning Approach in Arabic language learning through the theme عِبَادَةُ الْمُرْضَى was able to create meaningful, mindful and joyful learning through discussion, dialogue, reading, role play, presentation and reflection activities. The Love-Based Curriculum was also concretely integrated through the values of Hubbullah, Hubburrasul, Hubbunnafs, Hubbunnaas, Hubbul Bi'ah and Hubbul Wathan, which were reflected in the habituation of prayer, the strengthening of manners, empathy, cooperation, environmental awareness and love for the homeland. The integration of these two approaches contributed to the development of students' critical thinking skills through interpretation, analysis, evaluation, inference, explanation and self-regulation activities. This study concludes that Arabic language learning can be developed as an integrative space for language mastery, the internalization of Islamic values and the strengthening of critical thinking skills. The novelty of this study lies in its emphasis that the Deep Learning Approach and the Love-Based Curriculum not only improve the classroom learning atmosphere but also form a humanistic, reflective, contextual and relevant pedagogical approach that responds to the needs of Islamic education in the twenty-first century.

Keywords: Deep learning approach, love-based curriculum, Arabic language learning, critical thinking skills, Islamic education.

مستخلص البحث

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحليل تطبيق مدخل التعلّم العميق المدمج في المنهج القائم على المحبة في تعليم اللغة العربية وبيان إسهامه في تنمية مهارات التفكير الناقد لدى التلاميذ في المدرسة المتوسطة الإسلامية الحكومية باتو. استخدمت هذه الدراسة المنهج النوعي الوصفي لفهم عملية التعليم والتفاعل الصفّي وخبرات المعلم واستجابات التلاميذ تجاه تطبيق هذا المدخل التكاملّي. جُمعت البيانات من خلال الملاحظة والمقابلات شبه المنظمة والتوثيق وتأمّلات التلاميذ ثم حُللت باستخدام النموذج التفاعلي لماليز وهوبرمان الذي يشمل تكثيف البيانات وعرض البيانات واستخلاص النتائج. أظهرت نتائج الدراسة أن دمج التعلّم العميق في تعليم اللغة العربية من خلال موضوع عيادة المرضى أسهم في إيجاد تعليم ذي معنى وواعٍ وممتع وذلك من خلال أنشطة المناقشة والحوار والقراءة ولعب الأدوار والعرض والتأمّل. كما تبين أن المنهج القائم على المحبة قد اندمج بصورة عملية من خلال قيم حبّ الله وحبّ الرسول وحبّ النفس وحبّ الناس وحبّ البيئة وحبّ الوطن والتي ظهرت في تعويد التلاميذ على الدعاء وتعزيز الآداب والتعاطف والتعاون والعناية بالبيئة وحبّ الوطن. وأسهم تكامل هذين المدخلين في تنمية مهارات التفكير الناقد لدى التلاميذ من خلال

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أنشطة التفسير والتحليل والتقويم والاستدلال والشرح والتنظيم الذاتي. وخلصت الدراسة إلى أن تعليم اللغة العربية يمكن تطويره بوصفه مجالاً تكاملياً يجمع بين إتقان اللغة واستبطان القيم الإسلامية وتعزيز التفكير الناقد. وتكمن جدة هذه الدراسة في تأكيدها أن التعلّم العميق المدمج في المنهج القائم على المحبة لا يقتصران على تحسين بيئة التعليم بل يسهمان أيضاً في بناء مدخل تربوي إنساني وتأملّي وسياقي وملانم لاحتياجات التربية الإسلامية في القرن الحادي والعشرين.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التعلّم العميق، المنهج القائم على المحبة، تعليم اللغة العربية، مهارة التفكير الناقد، التربية الإسلامية

INTRODUCTION

Arabic language learning in madrasahs occupies a strategic position within the Islamic education system, as it functions not only as a medium of religious communication but also as a primary means of understanding the sources of Islamic teachings, particularly the Qur'an and Hadith (Mardhiyah, Masruhani, & Arifa, 2023). Therefore, Arabic language learning should ideally not be limited to the mastery of linguistic aspects, such as vocabulary, grammar, listening, speaking, reading and writing but should also be directed toward character development, the strengthening of spiritual values and the enhancement of students' critical thinking skills (Jannah & Masyfufah, 2024). In the context of Islamic education, language mastery and personality formation cannot be separated, as Arabic serves as a medium for understanding the meanings, values and moral messages embedded in Islamic texts.

However, the practice of Arabic language learning in madrasahs continues to face pedagogical challenges. Learning is often dominated by conventional teacher-centered approaches that emphasize vocabulary memorization, mechanical mastery of grammatical rules and literal text translation (Chan, Cheah, & Choong, 2025). Such learning patterns provide students with limited opportunities to engage in discussion, ask questions, interpret textual meanings, evaluate ideas and connect learning materials with real-life contexts (Koch, McQueen, Terclavers, & Sattar, 2026). As a result, Arabic language learning has not yet fully functioned as a medium for developing higher-order thinking skills, particularly critical thinking skills.

This issue has become increasingly important in the context of twenty-first-century education, which requires students to possess the competencies of critical thinking, creativity, communication and collaboration (Rapti, Tselegkaridis, Sapounidis, & Triantafyllou, 2025). Critical thinking skills are among the key competencies because students are expected to understand information, analyze problems, evaluate arguments, draw conclusions and reflect on decisions rationally (Gani, Yahiji, & Hasbi, 2026). From Facione's perspective, critical thinking includes interpretation, analysis,

evaluation, inference, explanation and self-regulation (Facione, 2023). These six aspects are highly relevant to Arabic language learning because students are not only required to understand word meanings or sentence structures but also to interpret textual content, analyze messages, evaluate ideas, infer meaning, explain reasons and reflect on their understanding.

One approach considered relevant to addressing these issues is the Deep Learning Approach. In the educational context, Deep Learning is not understood as an artificial intelligence technology but rather as a learning approach that emphasizes deep understanding, active engagement, reflection and the connection between knowledge and students' real-life experiences (Iheduru-Anderson & Waite, 2024). This approach encompasses meaningful learning, mindful learning and joyful learning (Benu, Beeh, & Nenotek, 2025). Through meaningful learning, students connect new knowledge with their prior experiences (Flammia, Reznitskaya, & Osborne, 2025). Through mindful learning, students are trained to become aware of their thinking and learning processes. Meanwhile, joyful learning creates a positive, safe, interactive and non-threatening classroom atmosphere, enabling students to become more motivated to participate in learning.

Several previous studies have demonstrated the contribution of the Deep Learning Approach to improving learning quality and critical thinking skills. (Ratnasari, Nurvicalesi, & Wati, 2025) found that deep learning could enhance students' mathematical critical thinking skills. (Salma, Fitriani, & Jamhuri, 2023) also showed that artificial intelligence-based Deep Learning has the potential to improve critical thinking skills in mathematics learning, although its implementation still requires appropriate pedagogical strategies so that learning does not lose its meaning. (Komara & Wahyudin, 2024) emphasized that the implementation of Deep Learning in civic education can promote interactivity, project-based learning and the development of critical thinking. However, these studies were generally conducted in subjects other than Arabic, such as mathematics and civic education and therefore do not directly explain how the Deep Learning Approach is implemented in Arabic language learning in madrasahs.

In the field of Arabic language learning, studies on Deep Learning have also begun to develop, although many of them remain situated in different contexts. (Afendi, 2025) for example discussed Deep Learning in Arabic language learning based on virtual tourism. Meanwhile, several studies on Deep Learning in Arabic texts have been more oriented toward technological domains, such as sentiment analysis, emoji prediction, or

natural language processing, rather than classroom-based pedagogical practices (Pratama, Sunita, & Ghani, 2026). This indicates that the term Deep Learning in Arabic language studies is still frequently used in computational contexts, whereas its implementation as a learning approach for developing students' critical thinking skills in madrasahs has not been widely examined empirically.

On the other hand, strengthening character education in madrasahs has become an important concern in responding to the moral, social and spiritual challenges faced by students in the modern era. One emerging approach is the Love-Based Curriculum, an educational approach that emphasizes the holistic internalization of love-based values, including love for Allah (*Hubbullah*), love for the Prophet (*Hubburrosul*), love for oneself (*Hubbunnafs*), love for fellow human beings (*Hubbunnaas*), love for the environment (*Hubbul Bi'ah*) and love for the homeland (*Hubbul Wathan*) (Hidayat, 2025). These values should not only be taught conceptually but should also be integrated into students' learning experiences so that learning becomes more humanistic, empathetic and meaningful.

Several studies have also examined the Love-Based Curriculum. (Wang & Gu, 2026) explored the Love-Based Curriculum from a humanistic perspective and its implications for Islamic education. (Afryansyah & Sirozi, 2025) showed that the internalization of love-based values in madrasah education can create a more humanistic and meaningful learning process. (Hapsari, 2025) highlighted the synergy between the Love-Based Curriculum and deep learning strategies in building a joyful learning culture in madrasahs. (Nikhlatunnuha, Zaenuri, Islam, & Bin Ahmed, 2025) also examined the Love-Based Curriculum and Deep Learning in strengthening teacher competence within a religious, critical and adaptive ecosystem. Nevertheless, most of these studies have focused on conceptual dimensions, the strengthening of learning culture, or teacher competence and have not specifically examined their implementation in Arabic language learning or their contribution to developing students' critical thinking skills.

Other studies related to higher-order thinking skills in Arabic language learning have also been conducted. (Hijjah & Ridlo, 2025) for instance discussed innovations in HOTS-based Arabic language assessment using audiovisual media to improve listening skills. This study made an important contribution to the development of assessment based on higher-order thinking skills (Rahman, Al-Musyarrif, Moulana, & Pradita, 2026). However, its focus was mainly directed toward assessment and listening skills, rather than the integration of a humanistic pedagogical approach that combines the Deep

Learning Approach and the Love-Based Curriculum. Therefore, research on critical thinking in Arabic language learning still needs to be expanded, particularly in relation to learning approaches that integrate cognitive, affective, social and spiritual dimensions.

Based on the mapping of previous studies, several research gaps need to be addressed. First, studies on the Deep Learning Approach have widely demonstrated its contribution to critical thinking but most have been conducted in general school subjects and have not specifically applied it to Arabic language learning in madrasahs. Second, studies on the Love-Based Curriculum have emphasized the importance of humanistic education and character strengthening but few have directly linked it to the development of students' critical thinking skills. Third, studies on HOTS or critical thinking in Arabic language learning have continued to develop but they generally have not integrated a humanistic and value-based pedagogical approach. Fourth, studies that simultaneously connect the Deep Learning Approach, the Love-Based Curriculum and critical thinking skills in Arabic language learning remain very limited, particularly in the context of Islamic junior secondary schools.

These gaps indicate the significance of the present study. The integration of the Deep Learning Approach and the Love-Based Curriculum in this study is not understood as a mechanical combination of two concepts but as an integrative approach to Arabic language learning. The Deep Learning Approach provides a pedagogical framework for creating learning that is active, meaningful, reflective, collaborative, contextual and student-centered. Meanwhile, the Love-Based Curriculum provides a value framework that positions compassion, empathy, care, respect for students and the internalization of Islamic values as essential components of the learning process.

Conceptually, the relationship among the Deep Learning Approach, the Love-Based Curriculum and critical thinking skills can be explained through three main mechanisms. First, meaningful learning encourages students to connect Arabic language materials with real-life experiences, enabling them not only to memorize vocabulary and language structures but also to understand their meanings and contexts of use. Second, reflective learning provides students with opportunities to become aware of their thinking processes, evaluate their understanding and improve their ways of learning. Third, love-based values create a safe, dialogical classroom climate that respects differences, encouraging students to ask questions, express opinions, engage in discussion and present reasons more confidently. These three mechanisms serve as the foundation for the development of critical thinking skills, which include interpretation,

analysis, evaluation, inference, explanation and self-regulation.

Thus, the novelty of this study lies in its examination of an integrative approach that connects the pedagogical dimension of the Deep Learning Approach, the value dimension of the Love-Based Curriculum and the cognitive dimension of critical thinking within the context of Arabic language learning in madrasahs. This approach distinguishes the present study from previous studies that generally examined the Deep Learning Approach, the Love-Based Curriculum, or critical thinking skills separately. Through this integration, Arabic language learning is positioned not merely as a process of language mastery but also as a space for cultivating students' critical reasoning, reflective awareness, social empathy and religious character.

The context of MTsN Kota Batu is significant because this madrasah has demonstrated efforts to innovate Arabic language learning through the use of theme-based modules, group discussions, conversational simulations or dialogue, role play, presentations and learning reflections. One of the themes used is *عِيَادَةُ الْمُرْضَى* or visiting the sick. This theme is relevant because it connects Arabic language materials with students' real-life experiences, such as empathy, social care, prayer, responsibility and respect for others. Through this theme, Arabic language learning becomes not only a language practice but also a space for constructing meaning, fostering social sensitivity and developing critical thinking skills.

Based on this conceptual framework, this study aims to analyze the contribution of implementing the Deep Learning Approach integrated with the Love-Based Curriculum to the development of Arabic language learning at MTsN Kota Batu. Specifically, this study examines the implementation of this integrative approach in the learning process, its contribution to developing students' critical thinking skills and its role in creating Arabic language learning that is more meaningful, humanistic, reflective, contextual and value-based. Accordingly, this study is expected to provide a theoretical contribution to the development of modern Arabic language pedagogy and Islamic pedagogy, as well as a practical contribution for teachers and madrasahs in designing Arabic language learning that is oriented not only toward linguistic mastery but also toward strengthening students' critical reasoning and character.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach, as it aimed to gain an in-depth understanding of the implementation of the Deep Learning Approach integrated with the Love-Based Curriculum and its contribution to the development of Arabic language learning at MTsN Kota Batu. The study was conducted in Arabic language learning on the theme of *عِيَادَةُ الْمَرْضَى* or visiting the sick, because this theme encompasses both linguistic elements and life values, such as empathy, social care, prayer, responsibility and respect for others.

The data sources consisted of Arabic language teachers, students and madrasah stakeholders, who were selected purposively based on their involvement in the learning process. Data were collected through classroom observation, semi-structured interviews, documentation, students' reflective journals and the outcomes of the teaching module implementation. Observation was used to examine learning activities, including discussion, dialogue, role play, presentation, reflection, teacher-student interaction and students' engagement in the learning process.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore the experiences of teachers, students and madrasah stakeholders regarding the contribution of the approach to pedagogical, sociological and institutional aspects. Documentation was used to complement the data through teaching modules, instructional materials, activity photographs, students' work and reflective notes. The data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's interactive model, which consists of data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing.

Data trustworthiness was maintained through source triangulation and technique triangulation by comparing the results of observation, interviews, documentation, reflective journals and the outcomes of the teaching module implementation. This process was carried out to strengthen the credibility of the research findings.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Integration of Deep Learning in Arabic Language Learning

The findings indicate that the implementation of the Deep Learning Approach integrated with the Love-Based Curriculum in Arabic language learning at MTsN Kota Batu was carried out through the Chapter 6 teaching module entitled *عِيَادَةُ الْمَرْضَى* or visiting the sick. Documentation of the teaching module shows that the learning process

was designed for two meetings, with an allocation of 2 × 3 lesson periods. The module included health-related vocabulary, dialogue, grammar on *fi'il madhi*, reading, writing, reflection, role play and the creation of Recovery Prayer Cards. This design demonstrates that learning was not merely directed toward the mastery of linguistic competence but also toward active engagement, reflective awareness, social empathy and the strengthening of students' critical thinking skills.

Observational evidence shows that, in the opening activity, the teacher began the lesson by greeting the students, leading a prayer, singing the national anthem and warmly asking about the students' condition. The teacher then posed stimulating questions about students' experiences of being ill, visiting sick friends and their feelings when receiving attention and prayers from others. At this stage, students actively responded to the teacher's questions, shared personal experiences and connected those experiences with the Arabic language materials being studied. This finding indicates the implementation of meaningful learning, as the material was not presented merely as vocabulary memorization but was linked to students' lived experiences.

During the core activities, students learned health-related vocabulary through pictures and real-life situations, understood prayers and Hadith related to visiting the sick, read reading texts, discussed the manners of visiting sick people, created Recovery Prayer Cards, performed role play and wrote short stories using *fi'il madhi*. This sequence of activities shows that the principles of the Deep Learning Approach were implemented through the processes of understanding, applying and reflecting on learning experiences. Thus, learning moved from the passive reception of information toward meaning construction and contextual Arabic communication practice.

"When using this module, students appeared more actively engaged in the learning process. They did not merely listen to the teacher's explanation but were also involved in discussions, asked questions and expressed their opinions. Even some students who were usually passive began to show the courage to speak in front of the class." (W/GBA/2026)

The teacher's statement reinforces the observational findings that learning was no longer centered on teacher lectures but provided space for students to ask questions, engage in discussion and express their opinions. This change was also evident in the role-play activities. Students who were initially hesitant to use Arabic began to show confidence in trying simple expressions within the context of visiting the sick. One student stated:

"I usually feel afraid to speak Arabic because I worry about making mistakes. However, during the

discussion and role-play activities, I became more confident in trying to speak because I did it together with my friends.” (W/PD-07/2026)

The interview data indicate that joyful learning not only created an enjoyable learning atmosphere but also reduced students’ anxiety in using Arabic. Group learning and role play provided social support that made students feel safer to try, make mistakes and improve their expressions. Therefore, the integration of the Deep Learning Approach made a direct contribution to students’ speaking confidence and engagement in Arabic language learning.

Table 1. The Integration of Deep Learning in Arabic Language Learning

Principle	Observational/Documentary Evidence	Empirical Data	Interpretation of Findings
Meaningful learning	The teacher connected the themes of illness and visiting the sick with students’ personal experiences.	Students responded to stimulating questions and related the material to their daily life experiences.	The material became easier to understand because it was closely related to students’ lives.
	The teacher used pictures, reading texts, prayers, Hadith and examples of <i>fi’il madhi</i> in the context of visiting the sick.	The module documentation included health-related vocabulary, dialogue, reading, writing and short-story writing tasks.	Language learning became contextual and was not limited to memorizing patterns.
Mindful learning	The teacher guided reflection on empathy, gratitude, prayer and social care.	Students wrote reflections on their feelings when praying for sick people and on forms of care within the school environment.	Students became more aware of the social and spiritual values embedded in the material.
Joyful	Learning was conducted	Students were more	The classroom

learning through discussions, enthusiastic, became more language games, role play, cooperative and active, presentations and Recovery willing to use communicative Prayer Cards. simple Arabic and enjoyable. expressions.

The Integration of the Love-Based Curriculum in Arabic Language Learning

The findings indicate that the Love-Based Curriculum was not merely presented as a normative concept but was concretely integrated into Arabic language learning activities. Documentation of the teaching module shows that the values of *Hubbullah*, *Hubburrosul*, *Hubbunnaafs*, *Hubbunnaas*, *Hubbul Bi'ah* and *Hubbul Wathan* were connected to the theme *عِيَادَةُ الْمُرْضَى*. This integration was reflected in several learning practices, including the habituation of prayer before and after learning, the recitation of prayers for sick people, discussion of the Hadith on visiting the sick, discussion of empathy and manners, group work, maintaining classroom cleanliness and singing the national anthem during the opening activity.

In the dimensions of *Hubbullah* and *Hubburrosul*, students did not only learn Arabic expressions related to illness and recovery but also understood that praying for sick people is part of Islamic morality. The teacher introduced prayers for the recovery of sick friends and presented a Hadith concerning the rights of one Muslim over another, including visiting the sick. This activity demonstrates that Arabic language learning became a space for the internalization of spiritual values and the exemplification of the Prophet's teachings. Arabic was therefore learned not merely as a linguistic structure but also as a medium for understanding Islamic values.

In the dimension of *Hubbunnaas*, the observational findings show that students learned to express empathy through discussions on the manners of visiting the sick, dialogue simulations, role play and the creation of Recovery Prayer Cards. These activities provided students with direct learning experiences that enabled them to understand the feelings of sick people and the importance of offering support to friends. This finding was reinforced by the following student statement:

"I learned that visiting a sick friend is a form of care for others and can make the sick person feel noticed and supported." (W/PD-03/2026)

This statement indicates that love for others was not only understood cognitively but also began to be translated into students' social awareness. The learning theme,

which was closely related to students' everyday lives, helped them recognize the relationship between Arabic language learning, Islamic manners and social actions that can be practiced in daily life.

Table 2. The Integration of the Love-Based Curriculum in Arabic Language Learning

Love-Based Curriculum Value	Evidence of Implementation	Empirical Meaning in Learning
<i>Hubbullah</i>	Prayers before and after learning, prayers for recovery and reflection on gratitude for the blessing of health.	Students understood learning and praying for sick people as part of worship.
<i>Hubburrosul</i>	Discussion of the Hadith on visiting the sick and Islamic manners.	Students learned to emulate the empathy, compassion and noble character of the Prophet.
<i>Hubbunnafs</i>	Reflection on personal health, courage to express opinions and teacher appreciation.	Students became more confident and learned to value their own learning process.
<i>Hubbunnaas</i>	Group discussions, role play, dialogue and Recovery Prayer Cards.	Students learned to care for others, help one another and respect their peers.
<i>Hubbul Bi'ah</i>	Habituation of maintaining classroom cleanliness and the learning environment.	Students connected health with environmental cleanliness.
<i>Hubbul Wathan</i>	Singing the national anthem during the opening activity.	Students received reinforcement of national values within the learning process.

The Development of Students' Critical Thinking Skills

The findings indicate that the integration of the Deep Learning Approach and the Love-Based Curriculum contributed to the development of students' critical thinking skills. This development was reflected in several learning activities, including reading reading texts, identifying vocabulary, analyzing *fi'il madhi*, discussing the manners of visiting the sick, evaluating characters' attitudes, drawing moral conclusions, presenting discussion results and writing reflections. These activities were aligned with Facione's

indicators of critical thinking, namely interpretation, analysis, evaluation, inference, explanation and self-regulation.

In the interpretation indicator, students understood the meanings of vocabulary, prayers and the content of reading texts within the context of visiting the sick. They were not merely asked to translate words but were also encouraged to connect the text with real-life experiences. In the analysis indicator, students examined the forms of *fi'il madhi* and identified social values embedded in the text. In the evaluation indicator, students assessed appropriate and inappropriate behaviors when visiting sick people. In the inference indicator, students drew conclusions about the wisdom behind illness and the importance of social care. In the explanation indicator, students presented the results of their discussions and provided reasons for their opinions. In the self-regulation indicator, students reflected on their attitudes and learning experiences.

Observational evidence shows that discussion and presentation activities provided students with opportunities to express reasons, respond to their peers' opinions and evaluate other groups' answers. The teacher did not immediately judge students' answers as incorrect but instead posed follow-up questions to encourage them to explain their reasoning. This pattern of interaction made students more active and gradually accustomed them to expressing their opinions logically. Students' reflective data also indicate that the material was easier to understand because it was closely related to their experiences.

"I found the material easier to understand because it was related to the experience of visiting sick people and the activities were not limited to listening to the teacher's explanation." (Student Reflection, 2026)

This reflective statement confirms that critical thinking develops when students are provided with relevant and meaningful learning experiences. Learning that is connected to social experiences gives students opportunities to understand, analyze and evaluate the values contained in Arabic texts. Thus, critical thinking skills do not emerge only through questions or tests but also through classroom activities that require reasoning, judgment, conclusion drawing and reflection.

Table 3. Indicators of Students' Critical Thinking Skills in Arabic Language Learning

Facione's Indicator	Evidence of Learning Activities	Empirical Impact on Students
Interpretation	Explaining the content of reading	Students understood the texts

	texts, vocabulary, prayers and expressions of sympathy.	both literally and contextually.
Analysis	Analyzing <i>fi'il madhi, dhamir</i> and social values in the text.	Students were able to examine linguistic structures as well as social meanings.
Evaluation	Evaluating characters' behavior and the manners of visiting the sick.	Students made judgments based on moral and logical reasoning.
Inference	Drawing conclusions about moral messages, the wisdom behind illness and the importance of empathy.	Students drew conclusions from information and discussion.
Explanation	Presenting discussion results and explaining the reasons behind their opinions.	Students became more confident in communicating their ideas.
Self-regulation	Writing reflections on learning experiences and changes in attitude.	Students became aware of their thinking processes and attitudinal commitments.

The Contribution of Integrating the Deep Learning Approach and the Love-Based Curriculum to the Development of Arabic Language Learning

The findings indicate that the integration of the Deep Learning Approach and the Love-Based Curriculum contributed to the development of Arabic language learning in three main dimensions: pedagogical, sociological and institutional. These three dimensions were used to clarify how observation, interview, documentation and students' reflective data supported the research claims. Accordingly the findings are not merely interpretive descriptions but are grounded in traceable empirical evidence.

1. Pedagogical Contribution

From the pedagogical perspective, the main contribution was reflected in the shift from teacher-centered instruction to student-centered learning. During the learning process, students were engaged in reading reading texts, analyzing reading content, participating in group discussions, presenting discussion results, performing role play, preparing Recovery Prayer Cards and writing reflections. These activities demonstrate that students did not merely receive information from

the teacher but constructed knowledge through experience, interaction and reflection.

The interview with the Arabic language teacher showed that the teaching module helped the learning process become more systematic and encouraged students' active involvement.

"The developed module was very helpful because the learning activities were clearly structured and able to make students more active during the learning process." (W/GBA/2026)

This statement indicates that instructional materials designed through the integration of the Deep Learning Approach, the Love-Based Curriculum and critical thinking did not function merely as administrative documents but also served as practical guidelines for teachers to activate students' participation. Pedagogically, this contribution was evident in increased student participation, the use of varied media and strategies, the development of argumentative skills, greater confidence in using Arabic and improved self-reflection.

2. Sociological Contribution

From the sociological perspective, the contribution of learning was reflected in the development of students' empathy, cooperation, mutual respect, interpersonal communication, self-confidence and social awareness. Observational findings showed that during discussions and group work, students helped one another complete the assigned tasks. Students who understood the material better assisted their peers who experienced difficulties, while other group members attempted to contribute according to their respective abilities.

"At first, I felt shy speaking in front of the class but after several presentations and role-play activities, I became more confident." (W/PD-15/2026)

"During group discussions, we helped one another. When a friend did not understand the material, we usually explained it together until they understood." (W/PD-12/2026)

In addition to fostering cooperation, the learning process also encouraged students to respect different opinions. Discussion activities trained students to wait for their turn to speak, listen to their peers' opinions and avoid immediately judging different answers as wrong.

"During discussions, we learned to listen to our friends' opinions and not immediately blame different viewpoints." (W/PD-04/2026)

These statements show that Arabic language learning through this integrative approach contributed to the formation of a healthier culture of discussion. Arabic

was not only treated as a subject matter but also functioned as a medium of social interaction, cooperation and the development of mutual respect. This is important because language learning is essentially a social process that requires courage, a sense of safety and peer support.

The student's statement about increased confidence further shows that role play and presentations contributed to the development of self-confidence. A supportive classroom atmosphere encouraged students to perform more confidently and use simple Arabic expressions in meaningful, real-life contexts.

3. Institutional Contribution

From the institutional perspective, the findings show that the Deep Learning Approach integrated with the Love-Based Curriculum contributed to innovation in Arabic language learning at MTsN Kota Batu. This contribution was evident in the availability of a systematic teaching module, the strengthening of an active learning culture, the internalization of Islamic values in learning and the potential development of this approach in other subjects.

"This learning is not only oriented toward mastering Arabic language materials but also trains students' critical thinking skills and shapes their character through the values integrated into the learning process." (W/KM/2026)

The statement from the madrasah principal indicates that the contribution of this integrative approach was not only viewed from the classroom process but also from the broader direction of madrasah development. Arabic language learning was positioned as part of strengthening academic quality as well as developing students' character. This approach was also considered sustainable because it combined the strengthening of competence, character and social skills.

"An approach like this is highly possible to be developed in other subjects because it is able to integrate the strengthening of students' competence, character and social skills." (W/KM/2026)

These findings indicate that institutional contribution was not limited to the use of a teaching module but also emerged in the form of opportunities to strengthen a more humanistic, reflective and value-based academic and madrasah culture. Therefore, this integrative approach can serve as a reference for developing Arabic language learning that is aligned with the vision of madrasahs as Islamic educational institutions.

Matrix of the Relationship between Raw Data and Interpretive Claims

This matrix shows that each major claim was based on a combination of

observational data, interviews, teaching module documentation and students' reflections.

Research Claim	Observation/ Documentation Data	Interview/Reflection Data	Interpretation
Learning became more active and was no longer teacher-centered.	Observation of discussion, reading, role play, presentation and reflection activities.	The teacher's statement (W/GBA/2026) indicated that students became more active, asked questions and expressed opinions.	There was a shift from teacher-centered instruction to student-centered learning.
Arabic became more communicative and contextual.	Role play of dialogue on visiting the sick and the use of <i>fi'il madhi</i> in experience-based stories.	A student's statement (W/PD-07/2026) showed increased confidence in speaking Arabic.	Students used language in social contexts that were closely related to their experiences.
Love-based values fostered empathy and social care.	Prayers for sick people, Hadith on visiting the sick, Recovery Prayer Cards and discussion of manners.	A student's statement (W/PD-03/2026) described visiting sick friends as a form of care.	The Love-Based Curriculum was internalized through learning experiences, not merely through advice.
Critical thinking skills developed.	Analysis of reading texts, evaluation of characters' attitudes, inference of moral messages, presentations and reflections.	Students' reflections in 2026 indicated that the material was easier to understand because it was related to their experiences.	Critical thinking developed through interpretation, analysis, evaluation, inference, explanation and self-regulation activities.
Learning	Documentation of the	The madrasah	The integrative

contributed to the development of Arabic language learning at MTsN Kota Batu. This contribution was evident not only in the improvement of students' learning activities and critical thinking skills but also in the strengthening of a humanistic learning atmosphere, the development of empathy and cooperation and the enhancement of learning innovation at the madrasah level.

Based on observation, interviews, documentation, students' reflective journals and the implementation of the teaching module, it can be concluded that the implementation of the Deep Learning Approach integrated with the Love-Based Curriculum made a broad contribution to the development of Arabic language learning at MTsN Kota Batu. This contribution was evident not only in the improvement of students' learning activities and critical thinking skills but also in the strengthening of a humanistic learning atmosphere, the development of empathy and cooperation and the enhancement of learning innovation at the madrasah level.

Pedagogically, this approach made Arabic language learning more active, meaningful, reflective, collaborative, contextual and student-centered. Sociologically, it fostered empathy, social care, cooperation, mutual respect, interpersonal communication and self-confidence. Institutionally, it produced instructional materials that could be used by teachers, strengthened an active learning culture and supported the development of the madrasah as an Islamic educational institution that is adaptive to the needs of the twenty-first century. Thus, Arabic language learning is no longer limited to the mastery of vocabulary and grammar but develops into a space for cultivating students' critical reasoning, religious character, social empathy and communication skills.

DISCUSSION

The Integration of Deep Learning in Arabic Language Learning

The findings indicate that the Deep Learning Approach integrated with the Love-Based Curriculum contributed to changes in Arabic language learning at MTsN Kota Batu. These changes were reflected in learning practices that became more active, contextual, reflective, humanistic and oriented toward the development of students' critical thinking skills. The research data show that this integration did not only appear in the form of lesson planning but was also enacted in classroom practices through experience-based apperception, the use of health-related vocabulary, dialogue, reading,

analysis of *fi'il madhi*, role play on visiting the sick, the creation of Recovery Prayer Cards, discussions on manners, presentations and reflection. Therefore, this discussion does not merely position the findings as a confirmation of theory but also examines how meaningful learning theory, constructivism, humanistic education, critical pedagogy and critical thinking operate within the specific context of Arabic language learning in madrasahs.

1. The Integration of Deep Learning: From Meaningful Learning to Contextual Language Pedagogy

The finding that students' participation increased through discussions, role play and reflection is consistent with the concept of meaningful learning, which emphasizes the importance of connecting new information with students' prior experiences (Ausubel, 1963). However, the present study extends this concept within the context of Arabic language learning. The theme *عِيَادَةُ الْمُرْضَى* served not only as a medium for understanding vocabulary and *fi'il madhi* but also as an entry point for constructing social experiences related to illness, empathy, prayer and care. Thus, meaningfulness in Arabic language learning was not merely cognitive but also affective and social. This indicates that language learning in madrasahs can become stronger when linguistic structures are learned through social situations that are closely related to students' lives.

This finding is also related to constructivism and social constructivism. Piaget emphasized that knowledge is constructed through experience and the adaptation of cognitive schemes (Barreiro & Castorina, 2026) while Vygotsky positioned social interaction as the foundation of the development of understanding (Lestari, Ndonga, & Gultom, 2024). In this study, students constructed understanding not solely through teacher explanation but through group interaction, conversational simulations and presentations. However, the findings also reveal an important limitation of constructivism within the madrasah context. Knowledge construction did not take place in a neutral space; rather, it was guided by Islamic values, manners and compassion. In other words, the learning process did not only ask "how students understand language," but also "what values are constructed through the use of language."

Compared with the study by (Ratnasari et al., 2025) which demonstrated the contribution of deep learning to students' critical thinking skills in mathematics, the

present study expands the application of the Deep Learning Approach into Arabic language learning. In mathematics, critical thinking tends to emerge through problem solving and symbolic reasoning. In Arabic language learning, however, critical thinking emerges through text comprehension, vocabulary interpretation, evaluation of characters' attitudes and the use of language in social situations. This distinction is important because it shows that the Deep Learning Approach cannot be applied uniformly across all subjects. In language learning, the success of the Deep Learning Approach depends strongly on communicative contexts, the relevance of themes and students' sense of safety in trying to use the language.

2. The Love-Based Curriculum: Value Internalization beyond Character Additions

The integration of the Love-Based Curriculum in this study shows that the values of *Hubbullah*, *Hubburrasul*, *Hubbunnafs*, *Hubbunnaas*, *Hubbul Bi'ah* and *Hubbul Wathan* were not positioned as moral inserts at the end of the lesson. Instead, these values were operationalized through concrete activities, such as prayers for sick people, Hadith on visiting the sick, discussions on manners, group work, reflection on gratitude, maintaining classroom cleanliness and singing the national anthem. This finding reinforces the idea of humanistic education, which emphasizes that learning should attend to students' emotional needs, social needs and dignity (Fitri Sania et al., 2026). However, this finding also refines humanistic theory because, in the madrasah context, humanism does not stand in a secular sense but is grounded in spiritual values and Islamic manners.

This finding is in line with the studies of (Ifendi, 2025), (Afryansyah & Sirozi, 2025) and (Hapsari, 2025) which emphasized the importance of the Love-Based Curriculum in developing humanistic learning in madrasahs. However, the present study offers an important additional insight: love-based values do not only affect the classroom atmosphere but also support students' confidence in using language and their critical thinking activities. Students who felt safe, appreciated and supported became more willing to ask questions, express opinions and perform Arabic role play. Thus, the affective aspect is not merely a complement to cognitive learning but a pedagogical prerequisite for the development of communicative courage and critical reasoning.

Nevertheless, the findings also indicate a limitation in the implementation of the Love-Based Curriculum. Love-based values may become normative if they are delivered only as advice. In this study, these values became meaningful because they

were embodied in learning practices that students could experience directly. Therefore, the theoretical contribution of this study lies in its assertion that the Love-Based Curriculum needs to be translated into the design of activities, classroom interactions, assessment and reflection. Without such pedagogical operationalization, love-based values may be difficult to distinguish from general character education.

3. The Development of Critical Thinking: Extending Facione's Indicators in the Context of Arabic Language Learning

The findings show that Facione's indicators of critical thinking, namely interpretation, analysis, evaluation, inference, explanation and self-regulation, can be naturally integrated into Arabic language learning (Facione, 2023). At the interpretation stage, students understood vocabulary, prayers and reading texts contextually. At the analysis stage, they examined *fi'il madhi*, *dhamir* and social values embedded in the text. At the evaluation stage, they assessed the manners of visiting the sick. At the inference stage, they drew conclusions about the wisdom of the lesson. At the explanation stage, they presented their opinions. At the self-regulation stage, they wrote reflections on their experiences and attitudes. These findings indicate that critical thinking does not need to be taught as a separate subject matter but can emerge through language activities that are meaningfully and reflectively designed.

Critically, this finding does not merely confirm Facione's framework but also extends its application to the context of Islamic education. Within Facione's framework, critical thinking is often understood as a rational cognitive process. In this study, however, the process interacted with moral and spiritual values. When students evaluated the behavior of visiting the sick, they did not rely solely on logical reasoning but also considered manners, empathy and Islamic values. This shows that critical thinking in madrasah education does not necessarily mean distancing oneself from values; rather, it involves using reasoning to understand, evaluate and internalize values consciously.

Compared with the study by (Widyaningrum, Hendiyani, & Imamah, 2025) which emphasized HOTS in Arabic language assessment innovation, this study shows that higher-order thinking skills need to be developed not only through assessment instruments but also through the learning process itself. Reading tasks, discussions, presentations, role play and reflection became spaces for practicing critical thinking before students were assessed. Thus, this study expands the orientation of HOTS in Arabic language learning from assessment alone toward a more comprehensive

pedagogical design. However, the generalization of these findings should be approached carefully because the critical thinking indicators that emerged were still situated within a theme closely related to students' experiences. Further research is needed to examine whether these skills can be sustained in other Arabic learning themes that are more abstract or complex.

4. Contribution to the Development of Arabic Language Learning in Madrasahs

The main contribution of this study lies in the development of an integrative approach that connects the pedagogical dimension of the Deep Learning Approach, the value dimension of the Love-Based Curriculum and the cognitive dimension of critical thinking. Pedagogically, this approach shifted Arabic language learning from teacher-centered learning toward student-centered learning through discussions, reading, dialogue, role play, presentations and reflection. Sociologically, this approach fostered cooperation, empathy, interpersonal communication and self-confidence (Sayer, 2025). Institutionally, this approach produced instructional materials that can support innovation in Arabic language learning in madrasahs.

These findings contribute to modern Arabic language pedagogy by showing that Arabic language learning does not need to place language mastery and character formation in opposition to one another. Both can be integrated through appropriate instructional design. Vocabulary, grammar, reading, writing and speaking remain essential components of learning but they are studied through social contexts that activate meaning and values. In this way, Arabic is not merely an object of memorization but becomes a medium of communication, reflection and personality formation.

These findings also provide a critical note on Western learning theories that are often used in educational discussions. (Ausubel, 1963), (Miettinen, 2000), (Kirschenbaum, 2015), (Flavell, 1979) and (Facione, 2023) offer useful frameworks for interpreting the findings but these theories need to be contextualized within the madrasah ecosystem. In this study, meaningful learning did not only mean connecting concepts with experience but also connecting concepts with Islamic values. Humanistic education did not only mean respecting students but also cultivating *adab* (Martin, 2026). Critical pedagogy did not only mean the courage to express opinions but also the ability to engage in polite and responsible dialogue (Aulia, Muid, Diana, Santoso, & Hasyim, 2025). Thus, this study does not simply repeat existing theories but offers a contextual reading of those theories within value-based Arabic language

learning.

Nevertheless, the contribution of this study should be understood within certain limits. The study was conducted in one madrasah, on one learning theme and within a student context closely related to the themes of health and social care. Therefore, the findings cannot be directly generalized to all Arabic language learning contexts. However, this limitation also indicates the direction for future research, namely to examine this integrative approach across different themes, educational levels and madrasahs. Accordingly, the findings of this study provide both a conceptual and practical foundation for developing Arabic language learning that is more meaningful, humanistic, reflective, communicative and oriented toward the strengthening of critical thinking in Islamic education.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the implementation of the Deep Learning Approach integrated with the Love-Based Curriculum made a positive contribution to the development of Arabic language learning at MTsN Kota Batu. This integration created a more active, meaningful, mindful, joyful, humanistic and value-based learning process. Students did not only learn vocabulary, grammar, reading, dialogue and writing but were also encouraged to think critically, collaborate, communicate confidently and develop empathy and social care. Conceptually, the Deep Learning Approach provides a pedagogical foundation through meaningful, mindful and joyful learning while the Love-Based Curriculum provides a value-based foundation through *Hubbullah*, *Hubburrosul*, *Hubbunnafs*, *Hubbunnaas*, *Hubbul Bi'ah* and *Hubbul Wathan*. Together these approaches shape Arabic language learning that integrates language competence, religious-humanistic character and students' critical thinking skills.

The theoretical implication of this study is that Arabic language learning in madrasahs can be understood as an integrative space for language mastery, Islamic value internalization and critical thinking development. The findings refine the understanding of the Deep Learning Approach by showing that meaningful learning involves not only cognitive understanding but also students' social experiences and spiritual values. They also position the Love-Based Curriculum as a pedagogical-value framework that supports communicative confidence, self-reflection, empathy and critical reasoning in Islamic education. This study is limited to one madrasah, one learning theme *عِبَادَةُ الْمَرْضَى* and a qualitative approach so it did not quantitatively test the effectiveness of the

approach. Future studies are therefore recommended to use mixed methods, quasi-experimental designs or multi-site studies to examine this integrative approach more broadly and rigorously in different Arabic language learning contexts.

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