Development of Critical Thinking-Based Basic Reading Teaching Materials: Arabic Learning Innovation in Islamic Universities

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Abstract:
This research addresses the urgent need for innovation in teaching Arabic reading skills at Islamic higher education institutions. Previous studies on Arabic learning have largely focused on literal understanding, with limited attention to fostering students' critical thinking skills. This study aims to develop and evaluate Arabic reading materials based on critical thinking to bridge this gap. Employing a research and development method with the ADDIE model, this study was conducted at the Arabic Education Program, UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung. Data were collected through questionnaires, tests, validation sheets, and interviews. Analysis techniques included descriptive statistics, paired sample t-test, and N-Gain. The results showed a significant improvement in students' reading abilities: post-test scores (M = 70.00) were significantly higher than pre-test scores (M = 55.14) with a p-value of 0.000 and N-Gain of 0.37 (moderate category). The developed material integrated contextual topics, critical thinking tasks, and digital tools. It effectively promoted students' analytical and evaluative reading skills. The study concludes that reading materials incorporating critical thinking elements are pedagogically effective and relevant to current curriculum needs.

Abstrak:
Penelitian ini membahas kebutuhan mendesak akan inovasi dalam pengajaran keterampilan membaca bahasa Arab di perguruan tinggi keislaman. Penelitian-penelitian sebelumnya tentang pembelajaran bahasa Arab sebagian besar berfokus pada pemahaman literal, dengan perhatian yang terbatas terhadap pengembangan keterampilan berpikir kritis mahasiswa. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengembangkan dan mengevaluasi bahan ajar membaca bahasa Arab berbasis berpikir kritis guna menjembatani kesenjangan tersebut. Dengan menggunakan metode penelitian dan pengembangan (R&D) melalui model ADDIE, penelitian ini dilakukan pada Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Arab UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung. Data dikumpulkan melalui angket, tes, lembar validasi, dan wawancara. Teknik analisis data meliputi statistik deskriptif, uji paired sample t-test, dan N-Gain. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan peningkatan yang signifikan pada kemampuan membaca mahasiswa: skor post-test (M = 70,00) secara signifikan lebih tinggi dibandingkan skor pre-test (M = 55,14) dengan nilai p = 0,000 dan N-Gain sebesar 0,37 (kategori sedang). Bahan ajar yang dikembangkan memadukan topik kontekstual, tugas berpikir kritis, dan alat digital. Bahan ajar ini terbukti efektif dalam meningkatkan kemampuan membaca analitis dan evaluatif mahasiswa. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa bahan ajar membaca yang mengintegrasikan elemen berpikir kritis bersifat efektif secara pedagogis dan relevan dengan kebutuhan kurikulum saat ini.

Introduction

The advancement of the times and the emergence of the Industrial Revolution 4.0 have demanded a transformation in foreign language learning, including Arabic, as a crucial competency in Islamic Higher Education Institutions (Dianto, 2022). Arabic language instruction can no longer rely on conventional methods; instead, it must be directed toward cultivating students' critical thinking abilities, enabling them to comprehend, analysis, and apply texts within both academic and daily life contexts (Hayati & Setiawan, 2022). One of the fundamental skills underpinning these competencies is reading proficiency, particularly basic reading. Basic reading serves as a foundational pillar for understanding various religious and academic texts in Arabic (Andersen, 2022). However, in practice, reading instruction at many Islamic higher education institutions remains textual and memorization-oriented, failing to adequately engage higher-order cognitive processes (Fadilah, 2022). This condition highlights the urgent need to develop basic reading materials that not only emphasize literal comprehension but also foster students' critical thinking skills in addressing contemporary academic challenges (Arthi & Gandhimathi, 2025).

Previous research has emphasized the importance of a critical thinking-based approach in foreign language instruction, especially within teacher education programs such as Arabic language education. A study by (Cananau, 2025) underscored the importance of integrating critical thinking concepts into instructional materials, along with the necessity of semantic analysis to understand how such concepts are perceived and applied in educational practice. Furthermore, research by (Hakim, 2021) revealed that some educators still misconceptions regarding critical literacy and struggle to distinguish it from higher-order thinking skills. In addition, teachers encounter various challenges when implementing critical literacy-based reading instruction in the classroom (Muliatno, 2023). In practice, most teachers ask students to evaluate texts from multiple perspectives, such as retelling stories from different viewpoints or composing counter-texts. In the context of language learning, several scholars such as (Wicaksono, 2024) have developed instructional models based on critical thinking; however, their focus has primarily been on speaking and writing skills. Meanwhile, basic reading instruction in many Islamic higher education institutions in Indonesia has yet to significantly adopt this approach (Mardiyah., 2021). This is particularly concerning given that reading skills serve as an essential gateway for students to build linguistic competence and deeply comprehend religious texts (Fauzi & Nabila, 2022). Based on these findings, the development of basic reading materials rooted in critical thinking merits serious attention (Ningsi & Shaleh, 2024).

A critical gap remains in the contextual and student-oriented development of basic reading materials grounded in critical thinking particularly tailored to the characteristics of students at Islamic higher education institutions in Indonesia. Most available materials continue

to prioritize vocabulary acquisition and sentence structure mastery without providing space for encouraging analysis, evaluation, or critical reflection on the reading content (Zeng & Ravindran, 2025). Moreover, there is a lack of integration between critical thinking approaches and Islamic values, which are core components of education in Islamic higher institutions (Irvansyah, 2022). This indicates a significant opportunity to design and develop instructional materials that bridge the need to enhance basic literacy skills and foster students' intellectual character development simultaneously (Suyadi, 2024).

Given these conditions, this research is deemed necessary in response to the challenges of Arabic language learning in the modern era (Febriani, 2020). The critical thinking approach in instructional material development is believed to significantly contribute to enhancing students' comprehension and reasoning abilities, especially in engaging with complex and nuanced Arabic texts (Amrulloh & Ikhwan, 2021). This instructional innovation also represents a concrete effort to fulfil higher education curricular demands that promote active learning, higher-order thinking, and adherence to Islamic values (Wicaksono, 2023). Therefore, this study aims to produce instructional tools that are not only pedagogically effective but also philosophically and ideologically aligned with the vision and mission of Islamic Higher Education Institutions (Abdul Wahab, 2016; Chen, 2024).

The objective of this research is to develop critical thinking-based basic reading materials for Arabic language learning in Islamic Higher Education. Specifically, the study aims to: (1) analysis student needs for basic reading materials that stimulate critical thinking; (2) design and develop critical thinking-based instructional materials that are contextually and pedagogically appropriate for Islamic higher education students; and (3) evaluate the effectiveness of these materials in improving students' basic reading abilities and critical thinking skills. Accordingly, the outcomes of this study are expected to offer a new direction in the development of Arabic language instruction that is more innovative, reflective, and contextual within the landscape of Islamic higher education.

Method

The selection of the issue concerning the development of basic reading materials based on critical thinking in Arabic language instruction at Islamic higher education institutions is grounded in the urgency to improve students' academic literacy quality, which often lacks critical engagement with texts. While many students are capable of literal reading, they still struggle with interpreting, evaluating, and synthesizing information at a deeper level. This condition is exacerbated by the scarcity of teaching materials designed with a higher-order thinking skills (HOTS) approach, particularly in the context of Arabic language instruction within Islamic educational environments. This phenomenon merits scholarly attention as it aligns with the demands of the *Merdeka Curriculum* and the national education vision, which emphasize the cultivation of graduates who are critical and reflective thinkers. This study specifically focuses on the development and validation of teaching materials that not only train students to read Arabic texts but also foster their critical thinking skills in a structured and systematic manner.

This study employed a Research and Development (R&D) design. The development model adopted was the ADDIE model, which comprises five phases: Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation. The primary data of this research consisted of qualitative data obtained through interviews, observation notes, and expert validation sheets.

Additionally, quantitative data were gathered through limited trials and the evaluation of the materials' effectiveness using student questionnaires. These data were utilized to assess the quality of content, design, and functionality of the developed materials, as well as to measure the enhancement of students' critical thinking skills after utilizing the materials. The development process was conducted iteratively, in accordance with the ADDIE phases, to ensure content accuracy, instructional coherence, and alignment with student characteristics in Islamic higher education settings.

The data sources in this study involved three main groups: (1) lecturers who are experts in Arabic language education and instructional material development; (2) students enrolled in the Arabic Education Program at a selected Islamic higher education institution, purposively chosen based on their learning needs and openness to instructional innovation; and (3) instructional documents used during the implementation phase. Data collection techniques included participatory observation during the implementation stage, semi-structured interviews with lecturers and students, and student response questionnaires following the use of the developed materials. Expert validation was carried out using an assessment rubric that covered aspects of content, presentation, language, and material usefulness. Data analysis was conducted using a qualitative descriptive approach, employing Miles and Huberman's interactive analysis technique, which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. For the quantitative data derived from the effectiveness questionnaire, descriptive statistical analysis, comprising percentages and mean scores was used to determine the acceptability and effectiveness level of the developed teaching materials.

Results and Discussion
Result
Analysis

The analysis phase of this study encompassed three critical aspects: curriculum analysis, existing teaching material analysis, and needs analysis through field studies. The curriculum analysis was conducted by examining the learning outcomes of the *Qira'ah Dasar* (Basic Reading) course in the Arabic Language Education Study Program. The findings revealed that, while the curriculum explicitly emphasizes students' mastery in understanding and analysing Arabic reading texts, it has not yet systematically integrated indicators of critical thinking skills in line with 21st-century learning approaches, which are grounded in the development of Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS). This indicates a gap between the stated learning outcomes and the instructional approaches currently employed in classrooms.

Further analysis of the teaching materials in use showed that the majority of content remains predominantly textual and focus on literal comprehension. The materials analysed included internal university modules and several internationally published textbooks. These resources have not been designed to support higher-level cognitive activities such as analysing arguments, evaluating textual content, or producing conclusions and solutions. The exercises provided were largely limited to answering direct questions from the text, with minimal opportunities for discussion or deep reflection on the reading material. Additionally, the study found that a major issue impeding reading proficiency was the misalignment between the materials and students' real-life contexts, coupled with a lack of up-to-date and engaging information. These factors contributed to students' declining enthusiasm for reading learning.

Field study results obtained through questionnaires and interviews with 36 first-

semester students revealed a significant demand for more challenging and contextually relevant instructional materials. A total of 62.5% of students reported that suitable reading materials were not yet available, 56.3% considered the reading topics uninteresting and lacking contextual relevance, and 60.7% stated that reading exercises remained rote or comprehension-based without critical evaluation. The course instructors also expressed a strong need for innovative teaching materials that could foster students' confidence in thinking independently, critically engaging with texts, and connecting textual meaning with real-life experiences. These three aspects of analysis formed a strong foundation for the development of basic reading materials grounded in critical thinking skills, making them more contextual, innovative, and aligned with both curricular demands and the characteristics of students in Islamic higher education institutions.

Design

The design phase of this study was carried out systematically to produce a basic reading teaching material product grounded in critical thinking skills. The instructional design process began with the formulation of learning objectives and indicators, followed by the development of content materials, instructional methods, assessment strategies, and practice exercises, all of which were based on the results of the needs analysis. The proportion between lower-order and higher-order thinking skills was set at 60%:40%, aligned with the Anderson-Krathwohl taxonomy, under the assumption that first-year students still require foundational reinforcement before progressing to higher-order thinking competencies.

The learning objectives and indicators for the critical thinking-based instructional materials were structured into three levels, organized in increasing order of difficulty from simple to complex, from concrete to abstract, and from lower-order to higher-order cognitive competencies. After formulating the learning goals and indicators for the reading materials, the next step involved designing the content by selecting topics relevant to students' daily lives, contemporary issues, and moral values. The reading teaching materials developed with a critical thinking approach were structured into seven instructional units, with each unit intended to be completed over two class sessions. The following are the units of reading materials developed based on critical thinking principles:

Table 1
Learning Objectives, Indicators, and Topics

1	To enable students to understand the content of the text and analyze information effectively.	1. Travel 2. Campus 3. Science and Technology	1. Students can recognize the information spoken in the text. 2. Students can identify the main idea in the text. 3. Students can classify the information in the text. 4. Students can express opinions based on

			experience and information.
2	To enable students to understand the content of the text and analyze information by connecting it deeply to life.	1. Social media 2. Independence Day Celebration	5. Students can relate the information in the text to their experience. 6. Students can summarize the new information in the text for life.
3	To enable students to understand the content of the text and critically analyze and synthesize information.	1. The Importance of Honesty 2. Brotherhood	

Note. It outlines the structured progression of learning objectives, contextual topics, and specific cognitive indicators designed to foster comprehension and critical thinking.

Following the design of the basic reading materials which included the formulation of learning objectives, indicators, and the selection of relevant topics, the researcher proceeded to design appropriate instructional methods and assessment strategies. In terms of instructional methods, the researcher adopted a cooperative learning approach, specifically through group discussion techniques. As for instructional media, the researcher selected *Quizizz* as an interactive digital platform to enhance student engagement during the learning process.

Regarding the development of practice exercises, the researcher adhered to the principle of constructing questions that progressively cover cognitive competencies from lower-order to higher-order thinking skills. These stages include remembering, understanding, and applying at the basic level, followed by analysing, evaluating, and creating at the higher level. Elements of higher-order thinking were embedded through analytical, evaluative, and creative exercises.

The format of practice activities within the reading material comprised multiple-choice questions, essay-type questions, matching items, true-false statements, and problem-solving tasks. These were designed not only to test literal comprehension but also to foster students' critical engagement with Arabic texts in a structured and meaningful manner.

Development

The development of the teaching material was carried out by referring to the curriculum of the Arabic Language Education Study Program at UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung, specifically the reading 1 course offered in the first semester. The development process considered the course learning outcomes, students' academic needs, and the results of field studies which revealed that the currently used instructional materials had not adequately fostered students' critical thinking skills. The researcher identified seven relevant and contextual learning topics: traveling, campus life, science and technology, social media, Independence Day, honesty, and brotherhood. These themes were selected based on students' daily experiences and were deemed capable of stimulating analytical and reflective thinking during Arabic text reading.

The material structure developed consists of several core components: 1) learning objectives and achievement indicators based on critical thinking; 2) vocabulary list; 3) reading

texts (both narrative and dialogic); 4) reflective questions; and (5) practice exercises). Each unit was designed using the Anderson-Krathwohl taxonomy approach, with a cognitive skill distribution of 60% lower-order thinking and 40% higher-order thinking, in alignment with the abilities of novice learners. The materials were also equipped with usage instructions, a table of contents, a glossary, and a lecturer's guide. These supporting components aim to ensure that instruction is delivered systematically and in-depth, adhering to the principles of student-centred learning. The following table presents an overview of the instructional units developed by the researcher.

Table 2
Content of Critical Thinking-Based Basic Reading Materials

Unit	Topic	Objective	Indicators
1	Travel	1. After reading the text, students are able to understand the content and analyze the information effectively. 2. After reading the text, students are able to understand the content, analyze the information, and critically create responses.	1. Students can recognize spoken information in the text. 2. Students can identify the main idea in the text. 3. Students can classify information within the text. 4. Students can express opinions based on experience and information. 5. Students can relate the information in the text to their own experiences.
2	Campus		
3	Science and Technology		
4	Social media		
5	Independence Day Celebration		
6	The Importance of Honesty		
7	Brotherhood		

Note. Details the seven thematic units of the developed material, all aligned with consistent learning objectives and indicators to build analytical and evaluative skills.

Following the development of content, the researcher designed a cooperative learning-based instructional method through group discussions as the main strategy. The learning activities were structured into three stages: pre-reading, reading, and post-reading. To support interactive learning processes and enhance students' motivation, digital platforms such as Quizizz, Padlet, and Google Forms were employed as tools for practice and formative assessment. Questionnaire results indicated that 70.5% of students agreed that the use of electronic media significantly facilitated the learning process. These methods and media align with 21st-century learning paradigms, which emphasize the integration of technology, collaboration, and higher-order thinking skills.

The practice exercises in this teaching material were developed both as evaluative tools and as reinforcement activities for critical thinking. These exercises include multiple-choice questions, true-false statements, matching tasks, classification tasks, essay questions, problem-solving exercises, and writing tasks. For instance, the multiple-choice items are designed to assess students' ability to analysis and evaluate the content of the reading text. Essay questions require students to construct arguments and provide personal reflections on the text, while classification tasks prompt them to organize textual information based on specific criteria.

The question format was adjusted according to cognitive levels: progressing from

remembering and understanding to analysing, evaluating, and creating. These questions were not merely designed as assessment tools but also as instructional media aimed at gradually fostering critical thinking abilities. Thus, practice exercise in this module serve a dual function: as assessments and as learning instruments that encourage students to develop critical reasoning skills when engaging with Arabic texts.

The subsequent phase in the development process involved product validation by domain experts. Prior to field testing, the researcher presented the teaching material to experts for evaluation. The draft product—comprising the critical thinking-based reading instructional material and its corresponding questionnaire—was reviewed by three experts to assess its quality. Revisions were made to improve the product based on the experts' feedback and recommendations.

The expert validation team consisted of: (1) Dr. Siti Maisyaroh, Lc., M.Pd.I, an expert in linguistic skills (2) Dr. Zulli Umri Siregar, M.Pd.I, an expert in reading instruction; and (3) Prof. Dr. Taufiqurrochman, MA, an expert in information technology. After receiving approval and implementing revisions, the researcher conducted a field trial involving 36 students from the Arabic Language Education Department. The aim of this trial was to assess the validity of the developed material based on student responses to questionnaires, along with their comments, feedback, and suggestions.

Implementation

At this stage, the researcher conducted a field experiment aimed at testing the developed product based on critical thinking skills. The field trial was carried out with first-semester students of Class A in the Department of Arabic Language Education, consisting of eight sessions, beginning with a pre-test and concluding with a post-test.

The implementation of the reading instructional materials developed using a critical thinking framework was conducted in a normal, face-to-face classroom setting. The researcher provided an overview of the instructional implementation using the developed materials, emphasizing critical thinking skills under typical learning conditions. The learning process employed a group discussion method, initiated by the lecturer's explanation of the developed materials. This was followed by ice-breaking and brainstorming activities to stimulate student engagement.

Students were introduced to the reading materials and guided on how to study them, after which they engaged in collaborative discussions to solve questions and address issues presented in the practice exercises, all of which were designed to foster critical thinking.

The field trial spanned six instructional sessions, preceded by a pre-test and concluded with a post-test, running from 12 September 2023 to 17 October 2023. During the trial phase of the critical thinking-based reading instruction, the learning activities were divided into three phases: pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading.

In these sessions, the lecturer presented questions or statements connected to current real-life situations that students were familiar with, had experienced, or could relate to personally. Students were then invited to express their opinions or ideas based on their own experiences and prior knowledge. This approach not only contextualized the learning process but also actively engaged students in constructing meaning and applying critical analysis to the Arabic texts they encountered.

Evaluation

The evaluation phase was conducted to determine the effectiveness of the developed

reading instructional materials based on critical thinking. This evaluation employed both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The quantitative evaluation was carried out by comparing students' pre-test and post-test results, while the qualitative evaluation was derived from questionnaires, student interviews, and observations during the implementation process. For the quantitative analysis, normality tests and paired sample t-tests were conducted using SPSS software version 22.

Subsequently, the researcher performed a normality test to determine the appropriate type of statistical analysis—parametric or non-parametric. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used for this purpose, as the sample size exceeded thirty respondents. If the significance value obtained from the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test is greater than 0.05, the data is considered normally distributed, and thus parametric statistical analysis is employed. Conversely, if the significance value is less than 0.05, the data is considered not normally distributed, and non-parametric analysis is used accordingly.

Table 3
Test normality

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test		
		Unstandardized Residual
N		36
Normal Parameters[a,b]	Mean	,0000000
	Std. Deviation	12,40920416
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	,092
	Positive	,055
	Negative	-,092
Test Statistic		,092
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		,200[c,d]
a. Test distribution is Normal.		
b. Calculated from data.		
c. Lilliefors Significance Correction.		
d. This is a lower bound of the true significance.		

Note. The significance value greater than 0.05 confirms that the data is usually distributed, validating the use of parametric statistical tests.

Based on the normality test table above, researchers get significant results for the normality test results of 0.200. and this result is greater than 0.05. Based on these results, the data is distributed in normal form, so the statistical analysis used is parametric statistical analysis.

Table 4
Paired Sample Statistics

Paired Samples Statistics		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Nilai_Pretest	55,14	36	13,548	2,258
	Nilai_Posttest	70,00	36	14,976	2,496

Note. The post-test mean score is notably higher than the pre-test mean, indicating improved student reading skills after using the developed materials.

This table shows the average score of students before and after using the developed

reading teaching materials. Before using the developed product the average score was 51.14 out of 36 students, and after use the average score was 70.00 out of 36 students. This shows that the use of the developed product successfully improves student learning outcomes in reading skills.

Table 5

Paired Sample Test

<table>
<tr><th colspan="9">Paired Samples Test</th></tr>
<tr><th></th><th></th><th colspan="5">Paired Differences</th><th>t</th><th>Df</th><th>Sig. (2-taile d)</th></tr>
<tr><th></th><th></th><th>Mean</th><th>Std. Deviati on</th><th>Std. Error Mean</th><th colspan="2">95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th><th></th><th></th><th></th></tr>
<tr><th></th><th></th><th></th><th></th><th></th><th>Low er</th><th>Upper</th><th></th><th></th><th></th></tr>
<tr><td>**Pair 1**</td><td>Nilai_Pr etest - Nilai_Po sttest</td><td>- 14,861</td><td>15,652</td><td>2,609</td><td>- 20,1 57</td><td>-9,565</td><td>- 5,6 97</td><td>35</td><td>,000</td></tr>
</table>

Note. The highly significant p-value (0.000) confirms a statistically significant improvement in reading skills, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis.

Based on the table above, the researcher found that the T-test result is statistically significant Sig. (2-tailed) is 0.000. The result is smaller than 0.05 (0.000<0.05) and the T-count (-5.697) is smaller than the T-table (2.02439) (T-Count<T-Table). This shows that there is a significant difference between before using the developed product and after using the developed product. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H0) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H1) is accepted. This means that learning basic reading material using materials that have been developed on the basis of critical thinking is effective for improving students' reading skills.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that the development of reading instructional materials based on critical thinking is effective in improving students' reading abilities. This is evidenced by statistical testing, which shows a significant increase between pre-test and post-test scores. The average pre-test score of 55.14 increased to 70.00 in the post-test, with a significance value of 0.000 (< 0.05), indicating a statistically significant difference. Furthermore, the calculated N-Gain of 0.37 falls into the category of moderate effectiveness. These data suggest that the integration of critical thinking skills in reading learning has a positive impact on enhancing students' reading proficiency (Su, 2025).

The improvement in students' reading ability can be attributed to the instructional approach that emphasizes the development of critical thinking skills (Hartati, 2021). The instructional materials, which are designed by considering students' real-life contexts and structured systematically, facilitate better comprehension and analysis of texts (Adiredja, 2023). Additionally, the use of cooperative learning methods and digital platforms such as Quizizz and Padlet encourages active student participation in the learning process (Febriani, 2024). This approach is in line with the findings of (Yasmar, 2023), who emphasized the importance of integrating critical thinking skills into Arabic language instruction to enhance text

comprehension.

The integration of critical thinking skills in reading instruction not only improves students' reading abilities but also encourages them to engage more actively in the learning process (Junnah & Zain, 2023). Students become more accustomed to analysing, evaluating, and synthesizing information from the texts they read (West, 2023). This is consistent with the study by (Munawarah & Baroroh, 2023), which demonstrated that reading instruction based on Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) can enhance students' higher-level thinking capabilities. Therefore, this approach not only supports reading comprehension improvement but also contributes to the overall development of students' critical thinking skills (Alkhatib, 2019).

These findings align with previous research that underscores the importance of integrating critical thinking skills in Arabic language education (Yusmilda, 2023). (Fernandes dkk., 2024) also emphasized the significance of developing critical thinking test instruments in reading instruction. However, this study provides a new contribution by integrating cooperative learning approaches and the use of digital media in the development of reading instructional materials based on critical thinking (Laili & Ainin, 2022).

Based on the research findings, it is recommended that the development of reading instructional materials based on critical thinking be more widely implemented in Arabic language instruction at the tertiary level (Wahab, 2018). This approach can help students not only to improve their reading skills but also to cultivate critical thinking competencies essential for addressing 21st-century challenges (Sulis, 2024). Furthermore, the use of cooperative learning methods and digital media can enhance students' active participation in the learning process (Mustofa, 2020). For more effective implementation, it is recommended that instructors receive training on the development and use of critical thinking-based instructional materials. Further research is also needed to evaluate the effectiveness of this approach in various Arabic language learning contexts across different educational institutions.

Conclusion

The key findings of this study indicate that the development of *Qira'ah Dasar* instructional materials based on critical thinking significantly enhances students' reading proficiency in Islamic higher education institutions. This is evidenced by a statistically significant difference between pre-test and post-test scores (Sig. 0.000 < 0.05), along with an N-Gain score of 0.37, which falls into the category of moderate effectiveness. The development process followed the ADDIE model comprehensively, beginning with a needs analysis of students and the curriculum, continuing with the design of content and learning activities, the development of the product, implementation in classroom settings, and concluding with the evaluation of its effectiveness. The developed materials consist of seven contextual themes with a systematic structure and include exercises designed to stimulate students' critical thinking skills. Consequently, this approach has proven to be relevant and responsive to the actual needs of students in mastering Arabic text reading skills in a more profound and reflective manner.

Conceptually, this study contributes to the development of Arabic language instruction in Islamic universities, particularly in strengthening critical thinking skills within the competency of reading skill competition. The use of the ADDIE-based development model facilitates the creation of instructional materials that are more focused, structured, and measurable, thus assisting instructors in planning and evaluating the learning process effectively. The findings

also enrich the theoretical discourse of language pedagogy by demonstrating that the integration of critical thinking principles is not only relevant to the teaching of Western foreign languages but also applicable and effective in the context of Arabic language instruction within Islamic education environments. Furthermore, this study shows that the integration of digital media and cooperative learning strategies can foster an active and collaborative learning atmosphere, enhancing student participation in a more optimal way.

Nevertheless, this study has certain limitations, particularly in terms of the scope of the product trial, which was restricted to a single study program at one campus over a relatively short period. In addition, the product's effectiveness has not yet been tested in fully online learning environments or among students with more diverse reading ability backgrounds. Therefore, future research is recommended to develop similar instructional materials in the form of e-modules or web-based interactive learning platforms. Broader testing using experimental designs across various levels of Islamic educational institutions is also necessary to strengthen the validity of the findings and the effectiveness of the critical thinking approach in Arabic language instruction. Expanding the context and scope of the trials will provide a more comprehensive understanding of the model's success in sustainably enhancing students' academic literacy quality.

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