



## Pedagogy of Compassion: Implementing a Love-Based Arabic Curriculum in Islamic Elementary Schools

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### Abstract

Educational transformation requires curriculum to function not merely as an administrative framework but also as a pedagogical instrument for character formation. However, Arabic language learning in Islamic elementary schools remains predominantly teacher-centered, often creating psychological distance between students and the target language. This study aims to explore the implementation of a Love Based Curriculum as a humanistic pedagogical practice in Arabic language learning. Employing a qualitative approach with an intrinsic case study design, data were collected through observations, interviews, document analysis and analyzed using thematic analysis. The Love-Based Curriculum has evolved beyond normative character education into a humanistic pedagogical practice integrating academic, emotional, social, and spiritual dimensions. This was reflected in four interconnected dimensions: humanistic instructional planning through the integration of *Pancacinta* values, compassionate classroom practices fostering supportive teacher student relationships, humanistic assessment emphasizing students' participation and socio-emotional development, and the rehumanization of Arabic learning through emotionally safe and engaging classroom experiences. Nevertheless, implementation remained constrained by learner diversity, linguistic difficulties, teacher dependency, and limited systematic assessment of affective development.

**Keywords:** *Arabic language learning, humanistic pedagogy, love based curriculum, teaching Arabic with love*

### Introduction

The transformation of twenty-first-century education demands that the curriculum no longer be understood merely as an administrative instrument, but rather as a medium for fostering students' character and humanistic values (Franch, 2020). In the context of Arabic language education, this demand becomes particularly significant, as Arabic functions not only as a means of communication but also as a representation of Islamic spiritual, ethical, and civilizational values (Laming et al., 2025). Nevertheless, the practice of Arabic language instruction in many educational institutions remains predominantly oriented toward cognitive achievement and the mastery of linguistic rules

(Oraby & Azaz, 2023), causing the learning process to frequently lose its compassionate and humanistic dimensions. In this regard, the Love-Based Curriculum emerges as a pedagogical paradigm that places compassion, respect for human dignity, and meaningful learning experiences as the fundamental pillars of Arabic language education (Idris et al., 2026).

The reality of Arabic language instruction in Indonesian Islamic elementary schools (*madrasah ibtidaiyah*) indicates that the learning process continues to be dominated by conventional teacher-centered methods, grammatical memorization, and written test-based evaluation (Mazyuna & Mad'ali, 2025). Such conditions create a psychological distance between students and the Arabic language, leading the subject to be frequently perceived as difficult, monotonous, and even intimidating. (Franco & Ortega, 2024) identified students' low intrinsic motivation as a consequence of the limited affective dimension in language instruction. In a similar vein, (Irsad et al., 2024) emphasized that the failure of Arabic language learning at the elementary level is often caused not by linguistic complexity, but rather by the absence of meaningful emotional connections among teachers, students, and learning materials. Therefore, the implementation of the Love-Based Curriculum in Arabic language education is essential to examine as an effort to cultivate more humanistic learning experiences and to foster students' affection for the Arabic language from an early age.

Studies on humanistic approaches in Arabic language learning have demonstrated significant development in fostering more meaningful learning experiences that are oriented toward students' affective needs (Florkowski et al., 2022). Theoretically, this approach is rooted in Carl Rogers' concept of student-centered learning, which emphasizes empathy, supportive relationships, and the holistic development of learners' potential. In the context of Arabic language education, (Fatimah et al., 2022) emphasized the importance of a humanistic approach in integrating cognitive, affective, and religious dimensions within the learning process. Similarly, (Asfihani & Munidzar, 2025), as well as (Hamdun & Islam, 2023), found that humanistic approaches contribute positively to enhancing students' motivation, learning autonomy, and engagement in Arabic language instruction. Meanwhile, (Lestari et al., 2023), along with (Wahyuningsih et al., 2021), demonstrated that humanistic learning is capable of creating inclusive, interactive, and enjoyable learning environments. Nevertheless, empirical studies concerning a love-based curriculum as a manifestation of humanistic pedagogy in Arabic language learning at the *madrasah ibtidaiyah* level remain limited.

Although studies on humanistic approaches in Arabic language learning have shown considerable development, several academic gaps remain insufficiently addressed. First, most previous studies have predominantly focused on conceptual discussions, literature reviews, or partial implementations at the secondary and higher education levels, while empirical exploration within the context of *madrasah ibtidaiyah* remains relatively limited. Second, earlier studies have generally emphasized specific aspects, such as learning motivation, speaking skills, or interactive learning, without integrating dimensions of instructional planning, pedagogical practices, and humanistic

assessment into a comprehensive curricular framework. Third, the concept of *teaching Arabic with love* as a manifestation of humanistic pedagogy grounded in affective and spiritual values within Arabic language learning in Indonesian madrasahs has not yet received sufficient scholarly attention. Therefore, these gaps provide a relevant avenue for further research to explore the implementation of a Love-Based Curriculum as a more humanistic, meaningful, and contextual model of Arabic language learning.

In response to these gaps, this study proposes an analytical framework centered on the practice of a humanistic curriculum in Arabic language learning, with a particular focus on *teaching with love* as an operational and measurable pedagogical principle. Distinct from previous studies, which predominantly focus on isolated aspects of humanistic learning such as student motivation, classroom interaction, affective engagement, or specific language skills, this study adopts a more comprehensive perspective by simultaneously examining three interconnected dimensions of humanistic pedagogy: instructional planning, classroom practices, and assessment within a unified curricular framework. Moreover, while prior scholarship has largely remained conceptual or concentrated on secondary and higher education contexts, this study provides an empirical case situated in a *madrasah ibtidaiyah*, positioning *teaching Arabic with love* as its primary analytical lens, a perspective that remains largely absent in existing Arabic language education literature. This framework integrates three principal dimensions: instructional planning responsive to students' emotional needs, classroom practices fostering authentic affective relationships, and assessment systems recognizing learners' linguistic and personal growth. MIN 2 Palembang was selected as the research site because the institution has demonstrated sustained initiatives in embedding humanistic values within its Arabic language curriculum. By foregrounding these field-based practices, this study seeks to offer a pedagogical model that can be adapted and contextualized across Islamic elementary education settings in Indonesia and comparable Muslim educational contexts.

This study is grounded in the belief that the quality of Arabic language learning is determined not merely by teachers' linguistic competence, but also by the depth of humanistic values embodied in every pedagogical interaction. The primary motivation of this research is to document, analyze, and construct an understanding of how love as a pedagogical principle is concretely manifested within the Arabic language curriculum. Specifically, this study aims to: (1) describe humanistic planning practices in Arabic language instruction; (2) explore the manifestation of *teaching Arabic with love* in classroom learning practices; (3) analyze humanistic assessment approaches in Arabic language learning; and (4) formulate the pedagogical implications of a love-based curriculum for the development of more meaningful, impactful, and equitable Arabic language education practices at the *madrasah ibtidaiyah* level.

This study offers substantial theoretical and practical contributions to the development of Arabic language education studies. Theoretically, the findings of this research enrich the discourse on humanistic curricula by providing empirical evidence from the context of *madrasah ibtidaiyah* in Southeast Asia, a setting that has thus far been underrepresented in international scholarship. Practically, this study proposes a love-

based pedagogical model that may serve as a reference for curriculum developers, school principals, and Arabic language teachers in designing learning experiences that are more responsive to students' emotional and spiritual dimensions. Furthermore, this research contributes to national educational policy efforts aimed at transforming the paradigm of Arabic language instruction from a mechanistic approach toward a more humanistic and holistic orientation. On a broader level, this study affirms that love is not merely an ethical value, but also a transformative pedagogical force in shaping a generation of Muslim learners who appreciate knowledge and cherish the language of their religion.

## Method

This study employed a qualitative approach with an intrinsic case study design to explore in depth the implementation of the Love-Based Curriculum in Arabic language learning at MIN 2 Palembang (Janis, 2022). This design was selected because the research focuses on understanding a phenomenon that is contextual, unique, and confined within a particular social system (*bounded system*), namely the practice of humanistic pedagogy within the *madrasah* environment. The study was naturalistic and observational in nature; therefore, data were collected under natural conditions without any manipulation or intervention in the learning process. The analytical perspective employed in this research was grounded in humanistic pedagogy, with particular attention to how the value of love is manifested in instructional planning, classroom practices, and the assessment of Arabic language learning (Salsabila et al., 2025).

Research participants were selected using purposive sampling based on the principle of information-rich participants (Samuel & Merkebu, 2026). The research subjects consisted of Arabic language teachers, the vice principal for curriculum affairs, the head of the *madrasah*, and students who were directly involved in the implementation of the Love-Based Curriculum. The inclusion criteria encompassed participants who possessed direct experience in both the planning and implementation of love-based Arabic language instruction, whereas individuals who were not directly involved were excluded from the primary informants. The selection of the *madrasah ibtidaiyah* level as the research context was based on the consideration that the characteristics of elementary-aged learners are particularly relevant for examining the implementation of affective and humanistic values within the language learning process.

Data were collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis, including instructional modules, assessment instruments, and *madrasah* curriculum documents, in order to enhance the reproducibility of the study and the credibility of the findings. Observation was employed to gain a direct understanding of pedagogical practices, while interviews were conducted to explore the experiences and perspectives of the participants. Documentation analysis, meanwhile, served to validate curriculum implementation at both the planning and assessment levels. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis through stages of coding, theme categorization, pattern interpretation, and inductive meaning-making. To ensure data validity, the study applied source and method

triangulation, as well as member checking with key informants to confirm the consistency of the interpretation of the research findings.

## **Result and Discussion**

### *Humanistic Planning in Arabic Teaching*

Instructional planning constitutes a fundamental foundation for the successful implementation of a curriculum, particularly in creating learning experiences that are not solely oriented toward academic achievement, but also attentive to students' emotional (Li, 2025), social, and spiritual development. In the context of implementing the Love-Based Curriculum at MIN 2 Palembang, Arabic language instructional planning is understood not merely as an administrative process involving the preparation of teaching materials and learning instruments, but also as a conscious effort to establish a humanistic, supportive, and meaningful learning environment for students.

The findings of the study indicate that Arabic language teachers at MIN 2 Palembang carried out instructional planning through the development of teaching modules encompassing learning objectives, materials, strategies, media, instructional procedures, and assessment methods. Nevertheless, the primary characteristic distinguishing this planning process from conventional instructional practices lies in the integration of the values of *Panca Cinta* into every component of learning. These values include love for Allah, the Prophet, parents, teachers, fellow human beings, and the environment, all of which are internalized through learning objectives, classroom activities, and pedagogical interactions between teachers and students.

From the perspective of humanistic education, instructional planning is not solely directed toward the attainment of cognitive competencies, but also toward the holistic development of human potential (*whole person education*) (Satarkar, 2026). This orientation is reflected in teachers' efforts to design Arabic language learning in ways that do not position students merely as passive recipients of information, but rather as individuals with emotional needs, a need for psychological safety, and learning experiences that deserve recognition and appreciation. Teachers consider not only "what students should learn," but also "how students feel when learning Arabic." Consequently, the planning process demonstrates a learner-centered orientation that extends beyond the mere fulfillment of curricular targets.

Based on interviews with the sixth-grade Arabic language teacher, it was found that prior to the implementation of the learning process, the teacher first adjusted the Arabic learning materials to strategies that enabled students to learn actively, enjoyably, and with minimal pressure. The teacher considered the use of methods such as role-playing, group discussions, simple conversations (*mubādatsah*), and other collaborative activities as integral components of the instructional design. These strategies were

selected not merely to enhance students' linguistic competence, but also to foster their self-confidence in using Arabic within the classroom context.

These findings indicate a tendency toward a more humanistic model of Arabic language learning, in which teachers strive to create an emotionally supportive learning environment. In the context of foreign language instruction, a psychologically safe learning atmosphere constitutes an essential factor, as it can reduce fear of making mistakes, language anxiety, and low levels of student participation (Dias & Nidhom, 2025). Therefore, the integration of love-based values at the instructional planning stage functions not only as a means of character reinforcement, but also as a pedagogical strategy for fostering greater student engagement in the learning process.

Furthermore, the observation findings revealed that humanistic elements were also reflected in the teacher's efforts to incorporate religious habituation activities, such as prayers before learning, the recitation of *shalawat*, and brief reflective sessions, as integral parts of the instructional design. These activities were not intended merely as formal *madrabah* routines, but rather as means of fostering students' emotional and spiritual readiness before engaging in Arabic language learning. Accordingly, learning was understood not solely as a process of language transfer, but also as a process of constructing meaning and relationships among knowledge, values, and students' lived experiences.

Pedagogically, these findings indicate that the love-based Arabic language instructional planning implemented at MIN 2 Palembang has evolved toward a model of *humanistic planning*, namely a planning approach that integrates academic objectives with students' affective development. Teachers not only prepare instruction to ensure that students comprehend vocabulary, language structures, and language skills, but also design learning experiences capable of fostering comfort, self-confidence, appreciation, and intrinsic motivation toward the Arabic language. In this context, the value of love functions not merely as a moral component, but also as a pedagogical approach that strengthens the quality of students' learning experiences.

#### *Teaching Arabic with love in Classroom Practices*

The implementation of learning serves as the primary arena for examining how the values of the Love-Based Curriculum are translated into concrete pedagogical practices. The findings of this study indicate that the implementation of Arabic language learning at MIN 2 Palembang is not solely directed toward the attainment of linguistic competencies, but also toward the creation of a pleasant, supportive, and affectively enriched learning atmosphere. Teachers initiated the learning process through greetings, collective prayers, the recitation of *shalawat*, and simple ice-breaking activities as efforts to foster students' readiness to learn. This practice demonstrates that Arabic language learning is understood not merely as an activity of transferring instructional content, but rather as a process that begins with strengthening students' emotional and spiritual

dimensions. Within the context of the Love-Based Curriculum, these opening activities simultaneously function as a medium for internalizing the value of love for Allah SWT, in which learning is positioned as part of a religious habituation process integrated with academic activities.

Based on classroom observations, interpersonal relationships between teachers and students were fostered through warm communication, personal greetings, and the habituation of mutual respect throughout the learning process. Teachers actively encouraged students to collaborate, appreciate their peers' opinions, and maintain polite attitudes during discussions and group activities. These practices were reflected in the use of group discussions, cooperative learning, and pair-based learning activities, which were intended not only to enhance students' language skills but also to develop their social character. From the perspective of humanistic pedagogy, these conditions indicate teachers' efforts to establish a more inclusive and psychologically safe learning environment, particularly for elementary-level students who are still in stages of social and emotional development. Accordingly, Arabic language learning was directed not merely toward the mastery of vocabulary and grammatical structures, but also toward the cultivation of positive social relationships as part of the value of love for fellow human beings.

During the core learning activities, teachers employed various instructional methods and learning models, such as role-playing, group discussions, Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL), Problem-Based Learning (PBL), cooperative learning, and repetitive practice (*drill*) in the use of Arabic. Based on observational findings, teachers habituated students to reading, translating texts, reciting memorized materials, and using simple expressions in everyday communication. The use of these varied methods reflects an effort to make learning more closely connected to students' lived experiences and to reduce the perception that Arabic is a difficult subject. This finding was further reinforced by students' acknowledgment that the learning process felt more enjoyable because it incorporated games, interactive questioning, and ice-breaking activities. Critically, these findings demonstrate that the value of love in learning is not manifested in an abstract form, but rather through concrete pedagogical actions, including the provision of motivation, positive reinforcement, and enjoyable learning experiences. In this regard, teachers do not merely teach Arabic as an academic subject, but also cultivate students' love for knowledge through learning processes that are more dialogical, contextual, and appreciative of students' learning journeys.

On the other hand, the practice of providing appreciation through praise, motivation, and rewards for students' positive behavior reflects an approach that emphasizes reinforcement rather than punishment. Teachers sought to cultivate a classroom atmosphere that was conducive, orderly, and comfortable, enabling students to feel more accepted within the learning process. Interestingly, although Arabic was still perceived by some students as a challenging subject, the teachers' warm and

communicative approach proved effective in increasing students' enthusiasm throughout the learning activities. These findings indicate that the implementation of the Love-Based Curriculum at MIN 2 Palembang has shifted Arabic language learning from a pattern solely oriented toward academic achievement to a more humanistic model of education, in which learning experiences, emotional engagement, and character formation become inseparable components of the instructional process itself.

#### *Humanistic Assessment in Arabic Learning*

Assessment constitutes an essential component in determining how learning success is understood and measured (Hidayah et al., 2024). In the implementation of the Love-Based Curriculum at MIN 2 Palembang, the assessment of Arabic language learning is not solely oriented toward students' linguistic achievement, but is also directed toward strengthening affective, spiritual, and social dimensions as integral aspects of the learning process. The findings of this study indicate that assessment practices were conducted through various forms of evaluation, including oral tests, written tests, assignments, behavioral observation, memorization activities, and students' participation throughout the learning process. These findings were obtained from interviews with the sixth-grade Arabic language teacher, who explained that assessment was not limited to students' mastery of *mufradât*, reading, and translating Arabic texts, but also encompassed students' attitudes during learning activities, such as discipline, cooperation, politeness, and responsibility. Classroom observations further revealed that teachers actively provided direct feedback on students' learning performance, whether in the form of corrections, motivation, or verbal reinforcement throughout the instructional process.

From the perspective of humanistic pedagogy, such assessment practices indicate a shift from an assessment paradigm solely oriented toward outcomes (*assessment of learning*) to one that also functions as an integral part of the learning process itself (*assessment for learning*). Assessment is not positioned merely as an instrument for measuring the correctness or incorrectness of students' responses, but rather as a means of understanding students' learning development in a more comprehensive manner. In the context of Arabic language learning, this approach is particularly important, considering that many students frequently experience linguistic anxiety when dealing with a foreign language. Therefore, assessments conducted in a supportive, dialogical, and low-pressure manner have the potential to create a more emotionally safe learning environment, enabling students to become more confident in trying, making mistakes, and improving themselves without fear of embarrassment.

The findings of this study also reveal that assessment practices at MIN 2 Palembang possess a humanistic dimension, as reflected in the use of positive reinforcement rather than punitive approaches (Mahendra et al., 2024). Teachers more frequently provided praise, motivation, and appreciation for students' efforts instead of

merely emphasizing their academic shortcomings. In several learning situations, students' mistakes in reading or pronouncing Arabic were not immediately positioned as indicators of failure; rather, they were treated as learning opportunities through gradual guidance and communicative correction. Critically, this approach demonstrates that assessment is understood as a process of developmental support (*developmental assessment*), rather than as a mechanism of selection that places students under pressure. These findings indicate a strong alignment with the fundamental principles of humanistic education, which view learners as individuals in the process of growth who require emotional support throughout their learning journey.

Nevertheless, this study also found that the implementation of love-based assessment at MIN 2 Palembang continues to face certain methodological challenges, particularly in measuring students' affective and character-related dimensions. Assessment of aspects such as cooperation, politeness, responsibility, and the internalization of love-based values still relies heavily on teachers' observations, thereby creating the potential for subjectivity in the interpretation of assessment outcomes. From the perspective of educational evaluation, this condition indicates the need for the development of more systematic assessment instruments, such as behavioral observation rubrics, students' reflective journals, or portfolio-based authentic assessment, in order to document students' character development in a more measurable and reliable manner. Accordingly, humanistic assessment would not only function as a reinforcement of moral values, but also produce more accountable data regarding students' learning development.

Pedagogically, these findings demonstrate that the implementation of the Love-Based Curriculum at MIN 2 Palembang has expanded the meaning of assessment in Arabic language learning from merely measuring academic achievement toward facilitating students' holistic development. Assessment is directed not only toward language mastery as a cognitive competence, but also toward the development of attitudes, learning comfort, willingness to participate, and students' social relationships throughout the learning process. In this context, *teaching Arabic with love* finds its concrete manifestation through forms of assessment that are non-threatening, appreciative of the learning process, and capable of providing students with opportunities to grow both academically and emotionally (Zubaidah et al., 2025).

#### *Rehumanizing Arabic Language Learning through Teaching with Love*

The findings of this study indicate that the implementation of the Love-Based Curriculum in Arabic language learning at MIN 2 Palembang extends beyond technical instructional procedures and contributes to transforming students' learning experiences into a more humanistic and emotionally supportive process. Based on classroom observations and interviews with the Arabic language teacher, learning activities characterized by warm communication, religious habituation, participatory methods,

and supportive teacher–student interactions contributed to a classroom atmosphere that was perceived as more engaging and less intimidating for students. As explained by the Arabic teacher, students tended to respond more positively when learning was delivered through enjoyable activities such as *role play*, collaborative discussion, and educational games, as “children enjoy learning more when it feels like playing and they are not overly pressured while learning Arabic.” Classroom observations further revealed that students demonstrated greater willingness to answer questions, participate in group activities, and attempt to read or pronounce Arabic vocabulary, even when inaccuracies were still evident.

From a pedagogical perspective, these findings suggest an ongoing process of *rehumanizing Arabic language learning*, in which Arabic instruction shifts from a predominantly content-transmission model toward a learning experience that is more responsive to students’ emotional and developmental needs. Observation data showed that teachers did not immediately frame students’ mistakes in reading or translating Arabic texts as academic failure; instead, corrections were provided gradually and accompanied by encouragement to sustain students’ confidence. Such practices indicate that errors were treated as an integral part of language learning rather than as deficiencies to be penalized. In foreign language education, this approach becomes particularly significant, as fear of making mistakes frequently constitutes a major barrier to learners’ participation and language use (Özdemir & Seçkin, 2025).

Furthermore, the process of rehumanization was reflected in teachers’ efforts to reduce students’ psychological distance from Arabic through meaningful and emotionally supportive learning experiences. Interview data from students suggested that Arabic learning became “more enjoyable” because teachers frequently offered encouragement, appreciation, and opportunities for collaborative learning. These findings were reinforced by classroom observations demonstrating relatively open and dialogical classroom interactions, in which students were encouraged to ask questions, exchange ideas, and experiment with Arabic expressions without excessive pressure. Critically, these findings suggest that the Love-Based Curriculum may contribute to reducing the psychological barriers often associated with Arabic language learning at the elementary level, where Arabic is frequently perceived as difficult, formal, and intimidating (Muhsyanur, 2024).

Nevertheless, this study also found that the process of *rehumanizing Arabic language learning* remains uneven across students. In several classroom situations, some learners continued to display passive participation and required more intensive pedagogical support to engage actively in Arabic learning. This finding indicates that *teaching Arabic with love* should not be understood merely as an emotionally appealing approach, but rather as a sustained pedagogical commitment requiring instructional consistency, differentiated strategies, and teacher sensitivity toward students’ diverse learning characteristics. Thus, *teaching Arabic with love* may serve as a meaningful

pedagogical pathway for rehumanizing Arabic language education through safer, more engaging, and development-oriented learning experiences.

### *Pedagogical Implications of Love Based Curriculum*

The implementation of the Love-Based Curriculum in Arabic language learning at MIN 2 Palembang has not only generated changes in the technical aspects of instruction, but has also brought broader pedagogical implications regarding how language learning is understood and implemented within the *madrasah* environment. Based on observations and interviews with Arabic language teachers, learning practices developed through the integration of love-based values, religious habituation, supportive interactions, and enjoyable instructional approaches contributed to increased student engagement throughout the learning process. Students demonstrated a greater tendency to ask questions actively, showed increased confidence in reading and pronouncing Arabic vocabulary, and participated more actively in group activities. These conditions indicate that Arabic language learning grounded in a humanistic approach possesses significant potential to reduce students' resistance toward a subject that has long been perceived as difficult and intimidating (Wong & Liem, 2022).

Pedagogically, these findings demonstrate that the effectiveness of Arabic language learning is determined not only by the quality of instructional materials, teaching methods, or teachers' linguistic competence, but also by the quality of interpersonal relationships established between teachers and students. In the instructional practices implemented at MIN 2 Palembang, teachers function not merely as transmitters of knowledge, but also as emotional facilitators who cultivate a safe learning atmosphere, regard mistakes as part of the learning process, and provide positive reinforcement for students' development. This perspective carries important implications, suggesting that Arabic language learning in *madrasahs* should move beyond patterns that are excessively oriented toward the mastery of grammatical rules and instead adopt approaches that are more relational and meaningful. Arabic should not be taught solely as a grammatical system (*grammar-oriented learning*), but also positioned as a learning experience capable of fostering students' comfort, motivation, and self-confidence (Patrick & Nordin, 2025).

Another significant implication relates to curriculum planning and assessment practices. The findings of this study indicate that the integration of love-based values cannot remain merely at the level of institutional slogans, but must instead be translated into concrete instructional designs, classroom strategies, and evaluation practices. Accordingly, the development of Arabic language curricula in *madrasahs* should ideally not focus solely on academic achievement targets, but also provide space for students' socio-emotional development through collaborative, reflective, and experience-based learning activities. In this context, the value of love may be understood as an operational pedagogical approach rather than merely a normative concept, as it is manifested

through practices such as religious habituation, empathetic communication, positive reinforcement, and participatory learning (Supriyanto et al., 2026).

Nevertheless, this study also demonstrates that the implementation of love-based pedagogy still requires systemic reinforcement in order to be applied more consistently and sustainably. One of the challenges identified is the absence of standardized affective assessment instruments for measuring the internalization of love-based values in Arabic language learning. In addition, the success of this approach remains highly dependent on teachers' personal capacities to establish positive interpersonal relationships with students. Therefore, *madrasahs* need to strengthen teacher training, develop more humanistic instructional tools, and design more contextual assessment models so that the implementation of *teaching Arabic with love* does not rely solely on individual initiatives, but instead becomes an integrated pedagogical culture within the Arabic language learning system in *madrasahs*.

Conceptually, this study contributes to the development of Arabic language pedagogy by demonstrating that the Love-Based Curriculum can serve as an alternative pedagogical framework for creating learning experiences that are more humanistic, inclusive, and meaningful. Within the context of Islamic education, this approach illustrates that the reinforcement of spiritual, affective, and academic values can proceed simultaneously without diminishing the quality of learning achievement (Gidman, 2025). Accordingly, the concept of *Teaching Arabic with Love* is not only relevant as a local practice at MIN 2 Palembang, but also possesses the potential to be developed into a broader pedagogical model for Arabic language learning in Indonesian *madrasahs*.

#### *Challenges in Implementing Teaching Arabic with Love*

Despite the promising contributions of the Love Based Curriculum to creating a more humanistic Arabic learning environment, this study found that the implementation of *teaching Arabic with love* remains accompanied by several pedagogical and practical challenges. Classroom observations and interview data indicate that the realization of humanistic learning principles was not always equally experienced by all students. Although many students demonstrated enthusiasm and active participation during collaborative activities, several learners remained passive, hesitant to participate, or required repeated encouragement from teachers to engage in classroom interaction. As acknowledged by the Arabic language teacher, differences in students' personalities, confidence levels, and learning readiness frequently influenced the effectiveness of classroom participation, particularly during speaking and memorization activities. These findings suggest that while a love-based approach may create a more supportive learning environment, student engagement remains shaped by individual learner characteristics that cannot be addressed through a single pedagogical strategy alone.

A second challenge concerns the linguistic complexity of Arabic itself, particularly at the elementary education level. Findings from classroom observations

revealed that several students continued to experience difficulties in reading Arabic texts, memorizing vocabulary (*mufradāt*), and pronouncing unfamiliar phonological forms. Interview data with students further indicated that although classroom activities were perceived as more enjoyable, Arabic was still viewed by some learners as a demanding subject. This finding demonstrates that emotionally supportive pedagogy alone does not automatically eliminate cognitive and linguistic barriers in foreign language acquisition (Asadova & Maleyka, 2025). Rather, the implementation of *teaching Arabic with love* requires sustained instructional scaffolding capable of balancing emotional support with structured linguistic reinforcement. In this context, the challenge lies not in reducing academic rigor, but in maintaining emotional engagement while simultaneously strengthening language competence.

The study also found that the effectiveness of love-based Arabic instruction remained highly dependent on teachers' interpersonal competence and pedagogical consistency. Observation data demonstrated that the success of classroom interaction largely relied on the teacher's ability to create warm communication, provide encouragement, and maintain emotionally supportive classroom dynamics. However, this dependence raises an important pedagogical concern: the sustainability of *teaching Arabic with love* may become vulnerable when its implementation relies predominantly on individual teacher disposition rather than institutionally standardized pedagogical practices. In other words, while compassionate teaching practices appeared effective in the observed setting, their continuity may be difficult to sustain if comparable relational competence is not equally possessed by other teachers within similar educational contexts.

Another challenge emerged in relation to the assessment of affective and character development within Arabic language learning. Although teachers attempted to evaluate students' discipline, participation, responsibility, and collaborative attitudes during classroom activities, findings suggest that these evaluations were still largely based on informal teacher observations without systematically developed assessment instruments. As a result, measuring the internalization of love-based values and students' socio-emotional development remains methodologically challenging. From an educational assessment perspective, the absence of clear rubrics or authentic assessment tools risks generating subjective interpretations of student progress, thereby limiting the reliability of humanistic evaluation practices (Yansyah et al., 2026).

Critically, these findings indicate that the implementation of *teaching Arabic with love* should not be romanticized as an immediately transformative pedagogical solution. Rather, it should be understood as an evolving and context-dependent educational practice that requires continuous pedagogical negotiation, institutional support, and reflective adaptation. The challenges identified in this study demonstrate that creating a more humanistic Arabic learning environment involves not only emotional warmth and relational closeness but also systematic curriculum support, differentiated instruction,

and sustainable teacher professional development. Consequently, the future success of love-based Arabic pedagogy depends on its ability to move beyond individual classroom initiatives toward becoming an institutionalized pedagogical culture within madrasah education.

## Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the implementation of the Love-Based Curriculum in Arabic language learning at MIN 2 Palembang has evolved beyond its normative function of character education into a humanistic pedagogical practice that integrates academic, emotional, social, and spiritual dimensions within the learning process. The findings reveal that humanistic values are operationalized through interconnected dimensions of instructional planning, compassionate classroom practices, and humanistic assessment. At the planning level, *Panca Cinta* values were embedded within learning objectives, strategies, and classroom experiences. At the instructional level, *teaching Arabic with love* was manifested through warm teacher–student interactions, participatory learning activities, religious habituation, and emotionally supportive classroom environments that fostered students’ engagement and confidence in learning Arabic. Furthermore, assessment practices extended beyond linguistic achievement by incorporating students’ participation, responsibility, and socio-emotional development, thereby contributing to a more holistic understanding of Arabic language learning in madrasah settings.

Nevertheless, this study also indicates that the implementation of *teaching Arabic with love* remains pedagogically complex and context-dependent. The process of rehumanizing Arabic language learning was not equally experienced by all students, as variations in learner readiness, persistent linguistic difficulties, and passive classroom participation continued to shape learning experiences. Moreover, the sustainability of love-based pedagogy remained highly dependent on teachers’ interpersonal competence and lacked systematically developed instruments for assessing affective and character growth. These findings suggest that love-based Arabic pedagogy should not be understood as an instantly transformative approach, but rather as a reflective and evolving pedagogical commitment requiring institutional support, differentiated instructional practices, and more systematic humanistic assessment frameworks. Ultimately, this study argues that *teaching Arabic with love* offers a promising pathway for rehumanizing Arabic language education while simultaneously highlighting the pedagogical negotiations necessary for its sustainable implementation.

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