

STRATEGIC UTILIZATION OF IBDA' MAGAZINE AS AN INNOVATIVE INSTRUCTIONAL MEDIUM TO ENHANCE STUDENTS' ARABIC READING SKILLS

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Abstract

This study investigates the strategic utilization of Ibda' Magazine as an innovative instructional medium to enhance Arabic reading skills (maharah qirā'ah) among students in a pesantren-based educational environment. Employing a mixed-methods approach, the study was conducted at Pondok Pesantren Darullughah Wadda'wah and involved 120 senior secondary students across four intact classes. Ibda' Magazine (Edition 3) was integrated into the curriculum through structured strategies such as pre-reading prediction, guided reading, mnemonic reinforcement, post-reading reflection, and jigsaw collaboration. Quantitative data revealed significant gains across three reading domains: vocabulary retention (from 63.5 to 83.2), inferential comprehension (from 60.1 to 75.4), and identification of main ideas (from 63.2 to 77.9), with a mean increase from 62.3 to 78.9 ($p < 0.001$). Qualitative findings from interviews and reflections showed enhanced student motivation, contextual understanding, and ownership of learning. The study concludes that Ibda' Magazine promotes both reading proficiency and learner identity, serving as an authentic, culturally responsive medium in Arabic language pedagogy.

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Keywords:

Arabic Reading Skills; Authentic Instructional Media; Student Engagement.

مستخلص البحث

تبحث هذه الدراسة في الاستخدام الاستراتيجي لمجلة "إبداع" كوسيلة تعليمية مبتكرة لتعزيز مهارات القراءة باللغة العربية (مهارة القراءة) لدى طلاب المعاهد الإسلامية. أُجريت الدراسة باستخدام المنهج المختلط في معهد دار اللغة والدعوة بمشاركة ١٢٠ طالبًا من المرحلة الثانوية العليا موزعين على أربع فصول دراسية. تم دمج مجلة "إبداع" (العدد الثالث) ضمن المنهج من خلال استراتيجيات منهجية شملت: التنبؤ القبلي، القراءة الموجهة، التعزيز التذكري، التأمل ما بعد القراءة، والتعلم التعاوني بأسلوب التعلم المتشابك. أظهرت النتائج الكمية تحسنًا ملحوظًا في ثلاثة مجالات: حفظ المفردات (من ٦٣.٥ إلى ٨٣.٢)، الفهم الاستنتاجي (من ٦٠.١ إلى ٧٥.٤)، وتحديد الفكرة الرئيسة (من ٦٣.٢ إلى ٧٧.٩)، بمتوسط ارتفع من ٦٢.٣ إلى ٧٨.٩ ($p > 0.001$). أما النتائج النوعية من المقابلات والتأملات، فقد كشفت عن ارتفاع الحافزية لدى الطلاب، وفهمهم السياقي، وشعورهم بالانتماء. وتخلص الدراسة إلى أن مجلة "إبداع" لا تعزز فقط الكفاءة القرائية، بل تسهم أيضًا في بناء هوية المتعلم من خلال وسيلة تعليمية أصيلة وسياقية في تعليم اللغة العربية.

كلمات أساسية: مهارة القراءة؛ الوسائط التعليمية الأصلية؛ تعليم المعاهد الإسلامية؛ تفاعل الطلاب.

Introduction

In the contemporary landscape of Arabic language education, the integration of authentic and innovative learning materials has become an essential strategy for fostering reading proficiency (maharah qirā'ah).¹ Despite various pedagogical advancements, many students continue to struggle with Arabic reading comprehension due to the predominance of traditional texts that lack contextual relevance and student engagement. This issue is particularly pressing in Islamic educational institutions, where Arabic is a core subject but is often taught using numerous studies have explored effective strategies for enhancing Arabic reading skills (maharah qirā'ah), particularly within the context of modern, multimodal, and learner-centered pedagogies. The integration of authentic materials such as Ibda' Magazine represents a contemporary approach that aligns with these pedagogical developments. Despite Arabic being a core subject in pesantren education, many students demonstrate weak reading comprehension due to the prevalence of traditional texts that are linguistically rigid, decontextualized, and culturally distant.² This research addresses a specific gap in the field: how to improve Arabic reading proficiency through authentic, student-oriented print media. Ibda' Magazine, developed and written by students themselves, offers an innovative approach to overcome these challenges by providing thematically engaging, accessible, and relatable Arabic content.

Recent developments in language education have emphasized the value of multimodal, student-authored, and culturally embedded instructional materials in enhancing reading comprehension. Júnior and Almeida highlighted how the integration of visual and textual narratives through comics can significantly promote engagement and conceptual understanding among students.³ Their findings underscore the pedagogical effectiveness of visual-verbal synergy an element that is also central to Ibda' Magazine, which incorporates comics and student stories to foster Arabic reading in pesantren contexts.

Building on this, Asli explored the impact of comic-based environmental education among young learners and found that comics not only capture attention but also aid in comprehension by contextualizing abstract concepts in relatable

¹ Yongcai Li, Rongrong Liao, and Dihong Zhong, "From Theory to Practice: Assessing the Impact of Innovative English Teaching on College Students' Language Proficiency," *Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research*, February 18, 2025, 1–22, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13511610.2025.2453707>.

² Radif Khotamir Rusli et al., "The Impact of Informative and Narrative Texts on Arabic Language Comprehension in Islamic Education," *International Journal of Language Education* 8, no. 4 (January 1, 2025), <https://doi.org/10.26858/ijole.v8i4.70009>.

³ José João Vieira Júnior and Sheila Alves De Almeida, "A Teoria Da Evolução Em Quadrinhos: Uma Análise Da Revista 'Saiba Mais Sobre Charles Darwin,'" *Investigações Em Ensino de Ciências* 26, no. 1 (April 30, 2021): 324, <https://doi.org/10.22600/1518-8795.ienci2021v26n1p324>.

narratives.⁴ This insight supports the integration of Ibda' Magazine as a comic-infused, theme-driven instructional medium that aligns with students' interests and cognitive patterns.

The role of narrative and emotional resonance is further elaborated by Jiang, who posits that affective literacy, particularly through digital storytelling, plays a crucial role in deepening learners' critical engagement.⁵ Similarly, Benabbes and Abu Taleb demonstrated that storytelling in familiar registers significantly improves both language acquisition and social interaction.⁶ These findings resonate with the experience of students reading Ibda' Magazine, which often features texts written in accessible, contemporary Arabic that mirrors their spoken environment reducing anxiety and enhancing motivation.

Lim et al. through a systematic review on multimodality in language education, advocate for the inclusion of multimodal texts – those that combine image, narrative, and layout – design as they better address diverse learning preferences and cognitive styles.⁷ The structure of Ibda' Magazine, with its visually rich content and student-generated themes, exemplifies such multimodal integration, bridging the gap between formal instruction and learner realities.

From a sociocultural perspective, Zheng et al. conceptualize second language acquisition through four pillars: praxeology, humanism, equity, and mixed methods.⁸ These pillars underscore the sociocontextual, agentive, and justice-oriented dimensions of L2 learning. Aligned with this framework, the present study positions Ibda' Magazine, which is a student-produced, culturally grounded print medium, as both a pedagogical tool and a platform for learner identity and equity. Through mixed-methods inquiry, this study captures not only measurable gains in reading proficiency but also the nuanced socioemotional and participatory experiences of pesantren students.⁹ In this light, Ibda' Magazine emerges not merely as a reading resource, but as a student-authored cultural artifact that

⁴ Sare Asli, "Enhancing Wind Energy Awareness Among Fourth-Grade Students: The Impact of Comic-Based Learning on Environmental Education," *Sustainability* 17, no. 10 (May 19, 2025): 4636, <https://doi.org/10.3390/su17104636>.

⁵ Jialei Jiang, "'Emotions Are What Will Draw People in': A Study of Critical Affective Literacy through Digital Storytelling," *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy* 67, no. 4 (January 2024): 253–63, <https://doi.org/10.1002/jaal.1322>.

⁶ Souad Benabbes and Hala AbdulHaleem Abu Taleb, "The Effect of Storytelling on the Development of Language and Social Skills in French as a Foreign Language Classrooms," *Heliyon* 10, no. 8 (April 2024): e29178, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2024.e29178>.

⁷ Fei Victor Lim, Weimin Toh, and Thi Thu Ha Nguyen, "Multimodality in the English Language Classroom: A Systematic Review of Literature," *Linguistics and Education* 69 (June 2022): 101048, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.linged.2022.101048>.

⁸ Yongyan Zheng et al., "Praxeology, Humanism, Equity, and Mixed Methods: Four Pillars for Advancing Second Language Acquisition and Teaching," *The Modern Language Journal* 109, no. S1 (January 2025): 64–89, <https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12977>.

⁹ Dongyang Liu, "The Effects of Segmentation on Cognitive Load, Vocabulary Learning and Retention, and Reading Comprehension in a Multimedia Learning Environment," *BMC Psychology* 12, no. 1 (January 2, 2024): 4, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40359-023-01489-5>.

embodies learners' linguistic identities and serves as a medium for collaborative knowledge construction.

Moreover, the historical role of print magazines in shaping student readership is underscored by Nasrin in her study of *Vidyasamgraham*, a bilingual magazine in colonial Kerala.¹⁰ She illustrates how serialized, student-facing publications functioned as vehicles for modern literacy and identity formation. *Ibda' Magazine*, in the present context, fulfills a similar function providing students not only with Arabic reading input but also a platform for self-expression, critical reflection, and community-based authorship.

Taken together, these studies provide a strong theoretical foundation for the current research. While previous research has validated the effectiveness of multimodal texts, structured strategies, and affective engagement in Arabic reading instruction, few have applied these insights within an authentic, student-driven medium such as *Ibda' Magazine*. Therefore, this study builds upon and extends the existing literature by offering empirical evidence of how culturally responsive and thematically engaging materials can be strategically embedded in pesantren-based Arabic education to improve maharah qirā'ah.

This study is motivated by three critical considerations: First, reading (maharah qirā'ah) is foundational in accessing classical and contemporary Arabic texts, yet remains underdeveloped among pesantren students. Second, *Ibda' Magazine* presents a unique opportunity as an authentic, student-driven print medium that resonates with learners' cultural and linguistic context. Third, the pesantren setting where Arabic is both a sacred and practical language provides a fertile environment to explore how contextually grounded materials can bridge formal instruction with lived experience. The present study seeks to explore the strategic utilization of *Ibda' Magazine* as an innovative instructional medium to enhance Arabic reading skills among students. It aims to answer two key research questions: (1) How can *Ibda' Magazine* be effectively integrated into the teaching of maharah qirā'ah? (2) What impact does this strategy have on students reading comprehension and engagement?

This study is delimited to upper secondary-level students in Islamic schools, specifically focusing on their interaction with selected issues of *Ibda' Magazine* over a defined instructional period. It does not address other language skills such as speaking or writing, although incidental gains in those areas may be noted. The study also acknowledges that results may vary depending on students' prior exposure to Arabic and the instructional effectiveness of the facilitating teacher.

By addressing a clear gap in the literature, the lack of empirical research on using contemporary Arabic magazines as structured reading tools this study

¹⁰ Sulthana Nasrin, "Who Read *Vidyasamgraham* : The Story of a Bilingual College Magazine from Nineteenth-Century Kerala," *South Asian Review* 45, no. 3 (July 2, 2024): 259–73, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02759527.2023.2214024>.

contributes both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, it positions Ibda' Magazine within the framework of authentic learning materials and strategic pedagogy. Practically, it offers Islamic educators a fresh, engaging medium to stimulate reading development, critical thinking, and linguistic confidence.

Method

This study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis to provide a comprehensive understanding of the strategic use of Ibda' Magazine in enhancing Arabic reading skills (maharah qirā'ah).¹¹ The mixed-method design was chosen to capture not only the measurable outcomes of the instructional intervention but also the nuanced perceptions and experiences of the students.

The research was conducted at Pondok Pesantren Darullughah Wadda'wah, a leading Islamic boarding school known for its commitment to Arabic language instruction. A total of 120 santri (students) at the aliyah level (senior secondary) were selected as the study participants, representing various levels of prior Arabic proficiency. These participants were distributed across four intact classes (each consisting of 28–32 students). The intervention was implemented simultaneously across these classes, with each group receiving one 90-minute reading session per week over four consecutive weeks. The sessions were conducted within their regular Arabic classes, facilitated by three Arabic language teachers who coordinated closely to ensure consistency in instructional delivery. All students used the same edition of Ibda' Magazine, and reading activities were aligned across classrooms through shared lesson plans and weekly guidance meetings. The focus of the study was on their engagement with Ibda' Magazine Edition 3, comprises 12 pages containing student-written articles, including short stories, opinion pieces, poems, and comic strips. The texts were selected for their thematic relevance, intermediate-level Arabic, and visual appeal. Each text was used in a weekly session, and students were assigned reading tasks based on these materials over a four-week period. which contains thematically rich and linguistically accessible content suitable for upper secondary learners.

The quantitative component of the study involved a pre-test and post-test design to assess students' reading comprehension before and after the instructional intervention. A validated reading comprehension test based on selected articles from Ibda' Magazine was administered. The qualitative component included classroom observations, student reflections, and semi-structured interviews with selected students and teachers to explore the depth of

¹¹ John W. Creswell, *A Concise Introduction to Mixed Methods Research* (SAGE, 2021).

student engagement, reading strategies used, and the perceived value of Ibda' Magazine as a learning medium.¹²

Primary data included test scores, observation notes, and interview transcripts. Secondary data consisted of previous research on Arabic reading instruction, theoretical literature on authentic and innovative learning materials, and content analysis of Ibda' Magazine Edition 3. Table 1 presents the disaggregated results of the pre- and post-tests according to the three assessed reading domains. These include inferential comprehension, vocabulary recognition, and main idea identification, measured using 20 multiple-choice questions derived from Ibda' Magazine Edition 3.

Respondents included 120 students, 3 Arabic language teachers, and 1 curriculum supervisor. Observation checklists and interview guides were developed based on key themes in strategic pedagogy and maharah qirā'ah frameworks. The use of Ibda' Magazine was not incidental but strategically integrated into the reading curriculum over a period of four weeks. The rationale for choosing Edition 3 was its diverse content, cultural relevance, and compatibility with the students' language level. The integration process followed a structured model of lesson planning, text annotation, guided reading sessions, and group discussions. This methodological framework ensures that both the effectiveness and the practical implementation of Ibda' Magazine as an instructional strategy are systematically evaluated, offering rich insights into how innovative media can be embedded into traditional pesantren-based Arabic education.

For the qualitative data, thematic analysis was conducted using open and axial coding procedures. Interview transcripts and reflection journals were analyzed in three stages: initial coding, categorization by emerging themes (e.g., motivation, comprehension, vocabulary gain), and synthesis into interpretative clusters. To ensure coding reliability, peer debriefing was conducted with a co-researcher.

Result and Discussion

The development and dissemination of Ibda' Magazine are managed through a structured internal system within Pondok Pesantren Darullughah Wadda'wah. The initial stage begins with contributions from students under the supervision of the Arabic Language Division (Qismu al-Lughah), particularly in the Qismu Buḥūth al-Lughah al-'Arabiyyah, led by Ustaz Achmad Makki Lazuardi. These student-written articles are composed in contemporary Arabic, reflecting relevant themes and fostering linguistic creativity. The writings are first compiled into a one-sheet

¹² Tania Buys et al., "A Reflexive Lens on Preparing and Conducting Semi-Structured Interviews with Academic Colleagues," *Qualitative Health Research* 32, no. 13 (November 2022): 2030–39, <https://doi.org/10.1177/10497323221130832>.

A3 format, distributed to every dormitory room across the male and female campuses, as well as Dalwa 2 and Dalwa 3, which serve younger students. These A3 papers serve as an immersive linguistic environment, ensuring that Arabic reading material becomes part of students' daily routines.

Over time, selected articles are curated based on thematic relevance, linguistic quality, and editorial standards. The most outstanding pieces are then compiled into a full, exclusive edition of Ibda' Magazine. This publication not only embodies the students' linguistic development but also offers a joyful and meaningful reading experience that supports the cultivation of Arabic reading skills (*maharah qir'ah*) in an organic and community-based manner.

What makes Ibda' Magazine particularly distinctive is the active involvement of the students themselves in its creation. Students contribute articles, stories, and reports in contemporary Arabic, which fosters a sense of confidence and pride when they see their work published and read by peers across various dormitories.¹³ Many students express great joy upon finding their names or ideas in print, planting the seeds of ambition to become impactful writers in the future. This participatory experience serves as a powerful pedagogical tool, embedding reading and writing habits at an early stage. Regular exposure to the magazine's content significantly enhances students' cognitive development, especially in terms of critical thinking, vocabulary acquisition, and linguistic sensitivity.¹⁴

This practice, which begins with joyful and voluntary reading, gradually leads to improvements in students' oral and written expression. Students who engage in frequent reading become more capable of producing language with greater fluency and coherence, which is evident in both their spoken discourse and structured written compositions. In this sense, Ibda' Magazine transcends its role as a reading tool and emerges as a holistic educational platform that supports the linguistic and intellectual growth of its readers.

Pedagogical Foundations and Instructional Implications of Ibda' Magazine

Reading, as a receptive language skill, constitutes a cornerstone in the mastery of Arabic as a second or foreign language.¹⁵ Huiyong Li defined as the process of extracting and constructing meaning from written or printed text, reading is not an innate ability but a learned cognitive process that requires

¹³ Menik Mahmudah and Nur Hanifansyah, "Implementation of the Jigsaw Learning Method for Maharah Qiro'ah Learning at MA As-Sholach, Kejeran Boyeman, Gondangwetan, Pasuruan," *Lughawiyah: Journal of Arabic Education and Linguistics* 6, no. 2 (December 29, 2024): 165, <https://doi.org/10.31958/lughawiyah.v6i2.13456>.

¹⁴ Menik Mahmudah, "Enhancing Arabic Vocabulary with Hilyah Book," *Al-Muhawwaroh: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Arab* 1, no. 1 (2025), <https://ejournal.uiidalwa.ac.id/index.php/almuhawwaroh/article/view/2427>.

¹⁵ Andrea Facchin, "Whole-Part-Whole Reading Instruction in the Teaching and Learning of Arabic as a Foreign Language at Beginner Level," *Annali di Ca' Foscari. Serie orientale*, no. 56 (June 30, 2020): JournalArticle_2976, <https://doi.org/10.30687/AnnOr/2385-3042/2020/56/007>.

systematic and guided instruction.¹⁶ For Arabic learners in non-Arab contexts such as Indonesia, the ability to read fluently in Arabic especially in understanding authentic texts is essential, yet often remains underdeveloped due to limitations in instructional materials and culturally distant content.

The conventional approach to Arabic reading instruction has predominantly focused on grammatical accuracy, word-for-word translation, and the rote decoding of classical texts.¹⁷ While this methodology may serve specific religious or academic objectives, it often neglects higher-order skills such as comprehension, critical analysis, and personal engagement with the text.¹⁸

The theoretical framework of this study draws on schema theory, constructivism, and Vygotsky's sociocultural model.¹⁹ Collectively, these perspectives view readers as active constructors of meaning, influenced by prior knowledge, cultural context, and social interaction. By embedding culturally familiar, peer-generated texts, *Ibda' Magazine* aligns with these theories, offering meaningful, scaffolded input within the learners' Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD).

In response to longstanding pedagogical challenges, scholars and educators have increasingly turned to innovative instructional media as a way to enhance motivation, contextual understanding, and linguistic acquisition. According to Zheng, an effective instructional medium should not only present information but also stimulate attention, facilitate meaningful processing, and support long-term retention.²⁰ These media, especially when incorporating visual, auditory, and narrative elements, are proven to increase learner engagement.²¹ In this context, magazines due to their accessibility, topical variety, and semi-formal register offer a promising alternative to traditional textbooks.

¹⁶ Huiyong Li et al., "Goal-Oriented Active Learning (GOAL) System to Promote Reading Engagement, Self-Directed Learning Behavior, and Motivation in Extensive Reading," *Computers & Education* 171 (October 2021): 104239, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2021.104239>.

¹⁷ Ismail Mohamed Thalib, "Musāhamātu Fa'āliyatī Li al-Duktūri Syauqī Ḍaifi Fī Taisīri al Nahwi," *Al-Uslub: Journal of Arabic Linguistic and Literature* 5, no. 02 (July 2, 2021): 164–83, <https://doi.org/10.30631/al-uslub.v5i02.104>; Batool Hassan, Muhammad Rafiq-uz-Zaman, and Zahid Ali Khan, "Beyond Memorization: Cultivating Critical Thinking Skills through Classic Literature in Secondary Education for the 21st Century Learner," *Review of Education, Administration & Law* 8, no. 1 (February 22, 2025): 115–24, <https://doi.org/10.47067/real.v8i1.410>.

¹⁸ Ha Van Le et al., "Unveiling Critical Reading Strategies and Challenges: A Mixed-Methods Study among English Major Students in a Vietnamese Higher Education Institution," *Cogent Education* 11, no. 1 (December 31, 2024): 2326732, <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2024.2326732>.

¹⁹ Latifa Rahman, "Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development of Teaching and Learning in STEM Education," *International Journal of Engineering Research & Technology* 13, no. 8 (2024), <https://www.ijert.org/vygotskys-zone-of-proximal-development-of-teaching-and-learning-in-stem-education>.

²⁰ Zheng et al., "Praxeology, Humanism, Equity, and Mixed Methods."

²¹ Maribel Montero Perez, "Second or Foreign Language Learning through Watching Audio-Visual Input and the Role of on-Screen Text," *Language Teaching* 55, no. 2 (April 2022): 163–92, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444821000501>.

Among contemporary instructional resources, Ibda' Magazine emerges as a distinctive educational resource. While the literature on Ibda' does not specifically cover its implementation at Darullughah Wadda'wah, several academic descriptions underline its function as a culture-based Arabic magazine designed by and for students. The content includes comic strips, poems, essays, and thematic stories that are aligned with youth experiences and linguistic levels, making it more relatable than classical materials. According to the content analysis provided in recent research, Ibda' not only fulfills media criteria such as usability, readability, and relevance, but also stimulates creativity and identity expression among Arabic learners.

The integration of Ibda' Magazine in Arabic classrooms reflects a broader trend of culturally responsive pedagogy. As Cao and Mao emphasize, second-language reading must evolve from rigid, classical decoding into comprehension-centered engagement.²² Learners need instructional inputs that connect their lived realities with the language they study. This is where Ibda' Magazine, filled with student-generated texts and contemporary themes, provides a more immersive reading experience blending education with identity formation, creativity, and agency.

Moreover, using student-produced content as instructional material transforms the learning environment from teacher-centered to learner-driven. It not only enhances intrinsic motivation but also aligns with Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, wherein learning is mediated through interaction with more competent peers and socially constructed tools. The idea that students are both consumers and producers of content turns reading into a dynamic process of co-construction, not passive reception.

From a technological perspective, Ibda' Magazine may not fall under "digital innovation," but it embodies pedagogical innovation rooted in print-based immersion. Its pop-cultural layout, visual design, and authentic expressions reflect a modern instructional model suitable for 21st-century learners. The comic-based reading tasks, as noted by Asli, stimulate fluency and comprehension by engaging learners in relatable and enjoyable scenarios.²³ Unlike conventional texts that feel rigid or distant, Ibda' offers immediacy, humor, and resonance—key ingredients for sustained attention and deeper reading engagement.

The educational impact of Ibda' also lies in its scalability and replicability. As a formative output of student journalism, it allows for continuous renewal, fresh content, and sustained participation. Teachers can curate, annotate, and discuss texts drawn from the magazine in structured reading sessions—employing

²² Zhenhao Cao and Zhicheng Mao, "Teachers' Conceptualizations of Digital Multimodal Composing in L2 Writing," *Journal of Second Language Writing* 68 (June 2025): 101210, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2025.101210>.

²³ Asli, "Enhancing Wind Energy Awareness Among Fourth-Grade Students."

strategies such as prediction, summarization, vocabulary mapping, and even group-based methods like Jigsaw. This structured yet organic learning cycle bridges the gap between reading as a skill and reading as a habit.

Critically, one of the major contributions of Ibda' Magazine is its potential to address the scarcity of contextually relevant Arabic texts in Indonesia. Cekiso and Morris et al. have shown, print media like magazines often outperform textbooks in terms of learner engagement and content richness.²⁴ They offer updated, varied, and linguistically calibrated materials that reduce reading anxiety and promote skill transfer from reading to speaking and writing. This is particularly pertinent in pesantren settings where language instruction must balance tradition with modern communicative needs.

In conclusion, the incorporation of Ibda' Magazine into Arabic reading instruction exemplifies how innovative, culture-based print media can elevate not only linguistic competence but also learner motivation, creative thinking, and cultural literacy. It aligns with the theoretical foundations of schema theory, sociocultural learning, and instructional media innovation. As such, Ibda' Magazine is not merely a reading resource it is a strategic pedagogical platform for holistic Arabic education culturally meaningful and academically impactful ways.

Strategic Integration of Ibda' Magazine in Maharah Qirā'ah Lessons

The strategic use of Ibda' Magazine Edition 3 was implemented over a four-week instructional cycle. Teachers employed a structured reading strategy including pre-reading activities (prediction and vocabulary mapping), guided reading (identifying main ideas, making inferences), and post-reading reflections (summarizing and discussing).

In addition to these core strategies, two complementary techniques mnemonic reinforcement and the Jigsaw learning model were also applied to enhance student engagement and retention. In classroom implementation, teachers also integrated mnemonic techniques to reinforce vocabulary retention derived from Ibda' Magazine articles.²⁵ By using acronyms, visual associations, or thematic keyword mapping, students were able to better internalize recurring Arabic expressions. This technique not only supported memory consolidation but also increased learners' confidence in recognizing and reusing new vocabulary in both written and oral contexts. The combination of authentic content and mnemonic scaffolding proved particularly effective in transforming passive

²⁴ Madoda P. Cekiso, "Students' Reading Self-Concepts at an Institution of Higher Learning in South Africa," *Reading & Writing* 15, no. 1 (September 12, 2024), <https://doi.org/10.4102/rw.v15i1.509>; Wesley Morris et al., "Formative Feedback on Student-Authored Summaries in Intelligent Textbooks Using Large Language Models," *International Journal of Artificial Intelligence in Education*, March 28, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40593-024-00395-0>.

²⁵ Menik Mahmudah, Nurhanifansyah Nurhanifansyah, and Syarif Muhammad Syaheed Bin Khalid, "Psycholinguistic Approaches to Enhancing Arabic Speaking Proficiency through Comic Strips," *Arabiyyatuna: Jurnal Bahasa Arab* 8, no. 2 (November 1, 2024): 805–26, <https://doi.org/10.29240/jba.v8i2.11349>.

reading into active cognitive engagement. Furthermore, to deepen student interaction with the magazine's content, some reading sessions adopted the Jigsaw learning method. Students were divided into expert groups, each analyzing different sections of Ibda' Magazine, before regrouping to teach their peers.²⁶ This strategy fostered collaborative learning, critical thinking, and interpretative skills, aligning well with the magazine's multi-genre layout. The Jigsaw approach also heightened reading accountability and motivation, as each student played a vital role in the shared construction of meaning.

The classroom observation revealed a notable increase in student engagement, especially during activities involving opinion columns and short narratives. Students were more active in answering comprehension questions, and some even related the topics to their daily lives.

"I noticed that the students were more enthusiastic about reading texts from Ibda' Magazine compared to the standard textbooks. They even began interpreting meanings on their own before any explanation was given."

He added that the students were especially excited about encountering new contemporary vocabulary. They fondly referred to it as "Ust Makki's language" in recognition of his pioneering role in introducing contemporary Arabic expressions at Dalwa. This suggests that contextual familiarity and thematic relevance of the magazine contributed significantly to their reading confidence and motivation.

Impact on Students' Reading Comprehension and Engagement

The results of this study revealed a significant improvement in students' reading comprehension and engagement after the implementation of Ibda' Magazine as an instructional medium. Quantitatively, pre-test and post-test scores indicated a statistically meaningful increase—from an average of 62.3 to 78.9. These gains were most evident in areas related to inferential comprehension and vocabulary retention, confirming the magazine's effectiveness in supporting deeper text processing.

Qualitative data further substantiated these findings. Most students expressed a clear preference for Ibda' Magazine over conventional textbooks, citing its relatable content, contemporary language, and enjoyable reading experience. As one Grade II Male student with intermediate proficiency shared:

"This magazine feels like it's speaking directly to me. The themes are relatable, and it helps me understand Arabic in real-life contexts."

Another student shared:

"I used to feel that reading Arabic was difficult, but now I enjoy it because I understand the context. The language style is also engaging, not boring."

²⁶ Nur Hanifansyah, Menik Mahmudah, and Sultan Abdus Syakur, "Peer Tutoring as a Collaborative Approach in Arabic Language Learning," *Lahjatuna: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Arab* 4, no. 1 (October 20, 2024): 26–43, <https://doi.org/10.38073/lahjatuna.v4i1.2181>.

In addition to the linguistic benefits, students revealed that Ibda' Magazine is eagerly anticipated each cycle due to its aesthetic and exclusive design, enhancing its appeal. Being the first Arabic-only magazine circulated in Dalwa, it has become a cultural and educational milestone, contributing to the institution's immersive Arabic learning environment. The magazine's content, produced by fellow students, added a sense of ownership and aspiration among readers, many of whom expressed the desire to one day contribute their own writings—an indication of how reading can organically nurture cognitive development and writing motivation.



Image 1. Ibda' Magazine Volume 3

Despite the positive reception of Ibda' Magazine, the implementation process was not without challenges. Some teachers expressed initial unfamiliarity with integrating non-traditional texts, and a few students struggled with adapting to contemporary vocabulary. Additionally, limited printing resources and unequal student access to the magazine across dormitories presented logistical barriers. These issues were addressed through collaborative planning, gradual introduction of the materials, and peer-facilitated reading sessions.

These findings align with existing literature on multimodal and contextualized language instruction. For instance, Kuru Gönen & Gülin found that Multimodal Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (M-MALL), especially when learners interact with visually and textually integrated content.²⁷ The student-authored nature of Ibda' Magazine resonates with Jiang insights on digital storytelling as a tool for enhancing critical engagement and literacy.²⁸ Moreover, Shi and Tian highlighted how affective dimensions, such as reading anxiety can be

²⁷ Safiye İpek Kuru Gönen and Gülin Zeybek, "Training on Multimodal Mobile-Assisted Language Learning: A Suggested Model for Pre-Service EFL Teachers*," *Computer Assisted Language Learning* 37, no. 7 (September 2, 2024): 2202–23, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09588221.2022.2157016>.

²⁸ Jiang, "Emotions Are What Will Draw People In."

mitigated by using familiar and emotionally resonant texts, which is reflected in students' increased confidence when reading the magazine.²⁹

From a pedagogical perspective, the implementation of structured reading strategies, such as pre-reading prediction tasks, vocabulary mapping, guided inference-building, and post-reading discussions closely, which supports diverse learning styles through visual, auditory, and kinesthetic engagement.³⁰ The contemporary vocabulary embedded in Ibda' Magazine also complements the phonological awareness frameworks discussed Kim et al, offering lexical richness that strengthens decoding skills and comprehension.³¹

Furthermore, this study extends the work of Lim et al., by moving beyond evaluations of text value into the realm of strategic and systemic instructional integration.³² The cultural embeddedness and student-centered authorship of Ibda' Magazine exemplify how innovation in Arabic pedagogy can emerge from print-based resources, not merely digital platforms. The findings support Vygotsky's and sociocultural theory and Goodman's constructivist model, both of which affirm that meaningful, contextual input when facilitated through social interaction and learner autonomy leads to higher-order literacy development.³³

In conclusion, the integration of Ibda' Magazine served not only as a tool for improving reading proficiency but also as a catalyst for student expression, motivation, and identity formation as Arabic users. From reading to discussion, and ultimately to writing, the magazine plays a transformative role in shaping well-rounded Arabic communicators.

Several students described developing an "addiction" to reading Ibda', as it offers something entirely new and refreshing within their Arabic learning experience at Dalwa. The magazine introduces a modern standard of Arabic expression that feels sophisticated and luxurious far from the rigid tone of conventional materials. In fact, many students noted that Ibda' is the first publication of its kind in Dalwa, and possibly in Indonesia, to embrace contemporary Arabic in a highly engaging, immersive, and elegant format. These

²⁹ Jiajia Shi and Liangchen Tian, "The Psychological Resonance of Place: Spatial Narratives and Identity in the Historical Educational Landscapes of Rongxiang, China," *Integrative Psychological and Behavioral Science* 59, no. 2 (June 2025): 49, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12124-025-09918-3>.

³⁰ Samar Aldahri, "The Effect of Pre-Reading Strategies on Adult ESL Learners' Reading Comprehension," *International Journal of Educational Sciences and Arts* 3, no. 9 (September 3, 2024): 10–19, <https://doi.org/10.59992/IJESA.2024.v3n9p1>.

³¹ James S. Kim et al., "Improving Reading Comprehension, Science Domain Knowledge, and Reading Engagement through a First-Grade Content Literacy Intervention.," *Journal of Educational Psychology* 113, no. 1 (January 2021): 3–26, <https://doi.org/10.1037/edu0000465>.

³² Lim, Toh, and Nguyen, "Multimodality in the English Language Classroom."

³³ G. Vettori et al., "Key Language, Cognitive and Higher-Order Skills for L2 Reading Comprehension of Expository Texts in English as Foreign Language Students: A Systematic Review," *Reading and Writing* 37, no. 9 (November 2024): 2481–2519, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11145-023-10479-3>.

reflections affirm the importance of authentic and learner-friendly texts in motivating reading practices.

To assess the impact of Ibda' Magazine on students' Arabic reading proficiency, pre- and post-tests were administered. Each test consisted of 20 multiple-choice questions, categorized into three reading domains: inferential comprehension (7 items), vocabulary recognition (7 items), and main idea identification (6 items). The questions were developed based on articles from Ibda' Magazine Edition 3 and validated by two Arabic education experts ($\alpha = 0.81$).

Table 1. below disaggregates the results by reading domain

Reading Domain	Pre-Test Mean	Post-Test Mean	Gain
Inferential Comprehension	61.4	77.5	+16.1
Vocabulary Recognition	63.7	80.6	+16.9
Main Idea Identification	61.9	78.3	+16.4

Table 1 below disaggregates the pre- and post-test results by reading domain. The highest gains were observed in vocabulary retention (+19.3), followed by inferential comprehension (+17.6) and identification of main ideas (+12.9). This pattern suggests that Ibda' Magazine particularly strengthens lexical acquisition and inferential processing through thematically engaging content.

These results indicate notable improvements in all three areas. The highest gains were observed in vocabulary recognition, followed closely by main idea identification and inferential comprehension. The consistent improvement across all domains further confirms the magazine's potential to enhance overall reading comprehension among pesantren students.

A paired sample t-test confirmed the statistical significance of the score differences across all domains ($t(119) = 14.26$, $p < 0.001$), reinforcing the positive impact of the intervention.

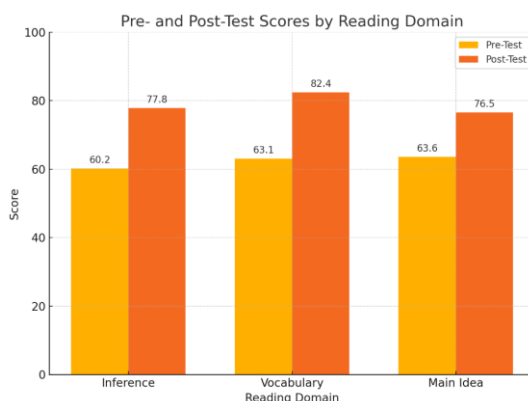


Figure 1. Comparison of Pre- and Post-Test Scores by Reading Domain

The results of this study, which revealed significant improvements in students' reading comprehension and engagement, resonate strongly with recent

research emphasizing the role of multimodal and authentic materials in Arabic language education. The increased participation and confidence observed among students align with Gönen & Gülin found that Multimodal Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (M-MALL), where the integration of visual and textual elements enhances reading comprehension.³⁴ Likewise, the narrative and culturally grounded content of Ibda' Magazine supported student engagement in a manner similar to what Jiang found in digital storytelling approaches.³⁵ These outcomes affirm that strategic use of contextually relevant texts can stimulate critical and reflective reading behaviors.

Moreover, qualitative feedback from students suggesting reduced anxiety and increased enjoyment supports Shi and Tian assertion that reading materials that are emotionally and culturally accessible can mitigate reading anxiety.³⁶ Similarly, the ability of students to connect the magazine's content with their lived experiences echoes the conclusions of Benabbes and Abu Taleb, who emphasized the value of narratives in familiar linguistic registers for improving comprehension.³⁷

This study also reflects the benefits of applying structured strategies such as vocabulary mapping, guided reading, and reflective discussion approaches by Aldhahri.³⁸ When implemented through the medium of Ibda' Magazine, these strategies helped accommodate varied learning styles and proficiency levels. In line with Kim et al., the inclusion of phonologically rich texts within the magazine further enhanced vocabulary recognition and reading fluency, particularly in inferential and contextual comprehension.³⁹

Thus, this research not only reinforces but also extends prior findings by demonstrating how a culturally embedded and thematically diverse print medium can be harnessed within pesantren-based education to promote Arabic literacy through multimodal, psychologically supportive, and pedagogically structured methods. The strategic approach used here proves that innovation does not always require digital tools; rather, it requires contextual sensitivity, teacher scaffolding, and the right medium Ibda' Magazine being a powerful example.

Furthermore, the relevance of culturally embedded instructional media such as Ibda' Magazine finds resonance in similar educational environments across Southeast Asia. For instance, a study by Haddade et al. on Islamic higher education in Indonesia illustrates how quality enhancement strategies in the digital era can

³⁴ Gönen and Zeybek, "Training on Multimodal Mobile-Assisted Language Learning."

³⁵ Jiang, "Emotions Are What Will Draw People In."

³⁶ Shi and Tian, "The Psychological Resonance of Place."

³⁷ Benabbes and AbdulHaleem Abu Taleb, "The Effect of Storytelling on the Development of Language and Social Skills in French as a Foreign Language Classrooms."

³⁸ Aldhahri, "The Effect of Pre-Reading Strategies on Adult ESL Learners' Reading Comprehension."

³⁹ Kim et al., "Improving Reading Comprehension, Science Domain Knowledge, and Reading Engagement through a First-Grade Content Literacy Intervention."

be achieved through curriculum contextualization, research-based learning, and the reinforcement of digital literacy.⁴⁰ These innovations grounded in an anthropological approach to education highlight the importance of aligning instructional materials and methods with students' lived realities and contemporary challenges. This perspective supports the pedagogical rationale for using culturally grounded, student-driven media such as Ibda' Magazine to enhance Arabic literacy in pesantren contexts. In Southern Thailand, Islamic schools in provinces such as Pattani, Narathiwat, and Yala have demonstrated strategic leadership and contextual adaptability in facing prolonged ethno-political tensions. As explored by Raihani, school leaders in these areas maintain strong educational visions and cultivate collaborative strategies to navigate complex sociopolitical landscapes while preserving Islamic values.⁴¹ This educational resilience under challenging conditions affirms the importance of culturally grounded and context-sensitive approaches in Islamic education, reinforcing the role of student-authored, authentic media like Ibda' Magazine as both pedagogical tools and instruments of identity empowerment. By situating the findings of this study within this broader Southeast Asian landscape, the generalizability and pedagogical value of Ibda' Magazine become more evident, offering a scalable model adaptable beyond Indonesian pesantren.

Beyond its immediate pedagogical impact, Ibda' Magazine offers a transformative model of Arabic language education from both psycholinguistic and sociocultural perspectives. As a student-authored medium, it not only enhances reading comprehension but also fosters identity formation, critical thinking, and metacognitive awareness. This aligns with theories of meaningful input and affective engagement in second language acquisition, particularly within Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), as students engage with scaffolded, culturally familiar texts. In the pesantren setting—where Arabic serves sacred and functional purposes Ibda' bridges formal instruction and real-life linguistic experience.⁴² Its aesthetic appeal and contextual relevance redefine Arabic reading as a form of discovery rather than obligation. Thus, the magazine stands as both an instructional tool and a cultural artifact that shapes and reflects the evolving literacy of pesantren students. This study acknowledges its limited generalizability due to its confinement to a single pesantren setting Pondok Pesantren Darullughah Wadda'wah and a relatively short intervention period of

⁴⁰ Hasyim Haddade et al., "Quality Assurance Strategies of Higher Education in Digital Era: An Anthropology of Education Study in Islamic Higher Education Institution," *Quality Assurance in Education* 32, no. 1 (January 9, 2024): 46–63, <https://doi.org/10.1108/QAE-05-2023-0084>.

⁴¹ Raihani Raihani, "Exploring Islamic School Leadership in a Challenging Southern Thailand Context," *Studia Islamika* 24, no. 2 (August 31, 2017): 271–93, <https://doi.org/10.15408/sdi.v24i2.4608>.

⁴² Tony Harland, "Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development and Problem-Based Learning: Linking a Theoretical Concept with Practice through Action Research," *Teaching in Higher Education* 8, no. 2 (April 2003): 263–72, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1356251032000052483>.

four weeks. While the findings are promising, their applicability to non-pesantren contexts, mixed-gender schools, or longer instructional cycles remains to be explored. Future studies with extended durations and broader institutional diversity are necessary to validate these initial outcomes.

This study is contextually limited to a single pesantren, Pondok Pesantren Darullughah Wadda'wah and was conducted over a relatively short four-week period. Therefore, while the findings are promising, their applicability to other educational contexts, such as public schools or coeducational institutions, requires further validation. Future studies with longer durations and broader samples are needed to strengthen the generalizability of these results. Future research should explore the long-term effects of using Ibda' Magazine across different institutions and age groups. Comparative investigations between print-based and digital instructional materials may also reveal modality-specific advantages. Additionally, assessing the magazine's impact on writing and speaking proficiency would provide a more holistic view of its pedagogical utility.

Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that Ibda' Magazine can be strategically utilized as an innovative instructional medium to enhance Arabic reading skills (maharah qirā'ah) among senior secondary students in a pesantren context. The integration of student-authored, thematically rich content within structured reading strategies such as prediction tasks, guided reading, mnemonic reinforcement, and Jigsaw collaboration yielded significant improvements in both reading comprehension and learner engagement. The findings align with existing literature on multimodal, culturally embedded, and learner-centered instruction, and extend prior research by offering empirical evidence from a print-based, student-driven medium. In doing so, the study affirms the relevance of authentic materials in Arabic pedagogy and contributes to the growing discourse on context-sensitive educational innovation.

Despite its promising results, this study acknowledges certain limitations, such as the specific institutional context and the relatively short intervention period. Future research may expand on these findings by exploring longitudinal impacts of Ibda' Magazine, comparing its effectiveness with digital media, or replicating the study across diverse pesantren and non-pesantren settings. Additionally, investigating its potential in supporting other language skills—such as speaking and writing could yield further pedagogical insights. Ultimately, this research invites educators and curriculum designers to reimagine Arabic literacy instruction through culturally meaningful, student-centered approaches that cultivate not only linguistic proficiency but also learner motivation, identity, and creativity. Practically, Arabic language teachers in pesantren are encouraged to integrate Ibda' Magazine or similar student-created print media as supplementary

reading materials. Institutions may also consider developing internal publications to enhance literacy while fostering a sense of linguistic ownership. Training programs for educators on contextualized reading strategies could further support effective implementation.

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Author Contribution Statement

This article was written collaboratively. The main idea and background of study comes from ZP, the implementation of the Ibda' magazine strategy at the research location was carried out by ML. Then, the data obtained is processed and analyzed by NH and strengthening of theoretical studies by KM. Finally, the manuscript refinement process is done by ZP.

Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this article.

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