Designing Communicative-Based Arabic Learning Materials to Enhance 21st Century Skills of Students in Thailand

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Abstract
This study aims to develop Arabic learning materials based on communicative approaches to enhance the 21st-century skills of students in Thailand. The research used the ADDIE model, which includes five steps: analyzing student needs, designing materials, developing content and media, implementing the materials in the classroom, and evaluating their effectiveness. Data were collected from students, teachers, and experts using questionnaires, interviews, and classroom observations. The results show that the materials significantly improved students' speaking confidence (78.4%) and listening comprehension (81.2%). Expert validation, teachers' and students' responses yielded a feasibility score of 84,3%, confirming the materials' content, language, and presentation quality. Additionally, the materials encouraged collaboration, critical thinking, and communication, essential components of modern education. This study offers practical contributions to Arabic language teaching by providing learning resources that are not only communicative but also aligned with 21st-century educational demands and student-centered learning principles.
Keywords: *Communicative-based learning; 21st-century skills; Arabic language learning; learning materials.*

ملخص البحث

يهدف هذا البحث إلى تطوير مواد تعليمية للغة العربية تعتمد على المدخل التواصلي لتعزيز مهارات القرن الحادي والعشرين لدى الطلاب في تايلاند. وقد استخدم البحث نموذج ADDIE الذي يتضمن خمس مراحل: تحليل احتياجات الطلاب، وتصميم المواد، وتطوير المحتوى والوسائط، وتطبيق المواد في الصف الدراسي، وتقييم فعاليتها. تم جمع البيانات من الطلاب والمعلمين والخبراء باستخدام الاستبيانات والمقابلات والملاحظات الصفية. وأظهرت النتائج أن المواد التعليمية حسّنت بشكل كبير من ثقة الطلاب في التحدث (٧٨,٤٪) وفهمهم السمعي (٨١,٢٪). كما أظهرت نتائج التحقق من قبل الخبراء واستجابات المعلمين والطلاب نسبة صلاحية بلغت ٨٤,٣٪، مما يؤكد جودة المواد من حيث المحتوى

واللغة والعرض. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، شجعت هذه المواد على التعاون، والتفكير النقدي، والتواصل، وهي عناصر أساسية في التعليم المعاصر. ويُقدم هذا البحث إسهامًا عمليًا في تعليم اللغة العربية من خلال توفير مصادر تعليمية تواصلية تتماشى مع متطلبات التعليم في القرن الحادي والعشرين ومبادئ التعلّم المرتكز على الطالب.

الكلمات الرئيسية: التعلم القائم على التواصل، مهارات القرن الحادي والعشرين، تعليم اللغة العربية، المواد التعليمية

Introduction

Thailand is well known as the land of white elephants and has a diverse religious population (Ekawati, 2020), with Islam as a minority comprising approximately 4.6% of the total population. However, learning and mastering Arabic language remain essential, especially in Southern Thailand, which has the largest Muslim population and numerous Islamic educational institutions (Aslan et al., 2020). Arabic in Southern Thailand is taught from the *prathom* level , which is equivalent to the *ibtida'i* level, then *mathayom* grades 1–3, which correspond to the *mutawassith* level (Ardae & Wan, 2020), and *mathayom* grades 4–6 or the same as the *tsanawi* level (Rahman & Muliati, 2020). However, the current teaching methods remain traditional and do not support the development of 21st-century skills such as communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity. Therefore, there is a need for communicative-based Arabic learning materials that are more interactive and relevant to students' needs.

In the learning process, three key elements play a crucial role: teachers, students, and teaching materials (Acar, 2024);(Al-Jarf & Mingazova, 2020). At Islamic Santitham Foundation School, the Arabic learning process still relies on "*Durusul Lughah Al Arabiyah Li Ghairin Naathiqiina Bihaa*" written by Dr. Abdur Rahman, a lecturer at the Islamic University of Madinah, which primarily focuses on grammar without emphasizing communicative language skills. Observations indicate that the *qawā'id wa tarjamah* method used by teachers leads to boredom and difficulties in acquiring Arabic proficiency. Additionally, a needs analysis revealed that 90.9% of students are unfamiliar with basic communication terms such as *At-Ta'āruf* (introductions), while 93.9% have never practiced listening skills (*fahm al-masmū'*), and 87.9% have never

engaged in speaking activities (*kalām*). These findings highlight the urgent need for learning materials that enhance students' ability to communicate effectively in Arabic.

The learning materials developed in this study are based on a communicative approach, which emphasizes the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Nurdin & Hafidzi, 2023). This approach aligns with the demands of 21st-century education, which prioritize communication and collaboration skills in a globalized world (Hamid & Fatimah, 2020);(Sihawong & Phusee-orn, 2023). By applying this approach, the newly developed materials not only help students understand Arabic conceptually but also train them to use the language actively in real-life situations. This is essential to for improving students' competence in both academic and social contexts, equipping them with the necessary skills to succeed in a multilingual and multicultural environment(Nuruddin et al., 2021).

Previous studies have explored Arabic language learning materials, such as a research by Bahy et al. (2024). This research developed a digital Arabic book to improve the linguistic competence. this digital book is effectively reducing students' boredom while learning Arabic. Meanwhile, Febriani et al. (2024) develop teaching materials through Instagram. The findings indicated there was a significant effect of using teaching materials on students' creativity and speaking skills. However, this study differs by focusing on communicative-based Arabic learning materials specifically designed to enhance 21st-century skills. Through this approach, students engage in language activities that emphasize real-world interaction and practical language use (Salmanova, 2025); (Poonputta & Nuangchalerm, 2024). Therefore, this research aims to develop learning materials that address the needs of students in Thailand, enabling them to acquire Arabic not merely as theoretical knowledge but as a practical communication tool for their daily lives.

As described earlier, the objectives to be achieved in this research and development are: (1) to develop the design of communicative-based Arabic learning materials for Arabic language learning in Thailand, (2) to evaluate the effectiveness of communicative-based Arabic learning materials for Arabic language learning in Thailand. This research and development was conducted as a solution to the gap in Arabic language instruction caused by the misalignment between existing Arabic textbooks and students' needs.

Three main arguments support this study. First, historically, the concept of communicative-based language learning has been studied extensively, demonstrating a well-established theoretical foundation (Sasstos, 2020). Second, from a philosophical perspective, the communicative approach aligns with fundamental principles in language education, supported by ontological, epistemological, and axiological theories in linguistics and pedagogy (Nggawu & Thao, 2023). Third, methodologically, communicative-based Arabic learning materials can be validated through rigorous research methods that ensure reliability and triangulation, confirming their effectiveness in improving students' Arabic communication skills (Alharbi, 2024). These aspects highlight the significance of this study in bridging the gap between traditional Arabic teaching methods and 21st-century educational needs.

Method

This study employs a research and development (R&D) model based on the ADDIE framework (Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation) as introduced by Reiser and Molenda (2015) (Molenda, 2015). This model is widely used in instructional design to systematically develop and evaluate learning materials. The research process consists of five stages: (1) Analysis, which includes field studies and literature reviews to identify learning needs; (2) Design, where the framework of communicative-based Arabic learning materials is structured, relevant references are gathered, and research instruments are developed; (3) Development, which involves designing the learning material layout, compiling content, recording audio for listening practice (*fahmul masmu'*), and selecting images relevant to vocabulary and themes, followed by expert validation; (4) Implementation, where the developed materials are tested on 4th grade *mathayom* students at the Islamic Santitham Foundation School using learner response questionnaires; and (5) Evaluation, in which feedback from validation results is analyzed to refine and improve the learning materials before finalizing them for classroom use.

Participants and Data Collection

The research subjects consist of 4th grade *mathayom* students, Arabic language teachers, content experts, and media experts. Grade 4 students were selected as they represent the target users of the materials, based on their curriculum level and Arabic proficiency, which aligns with the intermediate communicative themes designed in the

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materials. Expert validators selected based on their academic qualifications (minimum of a master's degree in Arabic education) and professional experience in instructional design and Arabic language pedagogy. Each expert was provided with a structured evaluation form addressing content, language, and presentation feasibility, contextual assessment, organization, visual display, and media Presentation. Follow-up interviews were conducted to clarify suggestions and prioritize revisions. Their feedback was incorporated in the final version of the materials.

A mixed-methods approach was employed to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data is obtained from expert evaluation sheets, teacher assessments, student needs analysis, and response questionnaires. Meanwhile, qualitative data is gathered through interviews, classroom observations, and open-ended feedback from validation questionnaires. The instruments used for data collection include interview guides, observation guidelines, and questionnaires, which are categorized into needs analysis, product validation, and student response questionnaires. This combination allowed the study to triangulate findings and produce more comprehensive insights. For example, while quantitative scores confirmed the feasibility of the materials, qualitative feedback provided deeper understanding of learner engagement and challenges during implementation.

Data Analysis

For data analysis, qualitative data are processed through descriptive analysis techniques, which consist of four steps: (1) data identification, (2) data classification, (3) data presentation and interpretation, and (4) drawing conclusions. Meanwhile, quantitative data is analyzed using a percentage-based approach to assess the feasibility of the learning materials. The percentage results from expert validation and field tests are interpreted based on the feasibility criteria. A minimum feasibility score of 56% is required for the learning materials to be considered valid and applicable for classroom use. This methodological approach ensures that the developed Arabic learning materials align with communicative-based principles, effectively support 21st-century skills, and meet the specific learning needs of students in Thailand.

Finding and Discussion
Result of Problems and Needs Analysis

Islamic Santitham Foundation School is one of the oldest Islamic schools in Southern Thailand, specifically located in Meuang, Nakhon Si Thammarat. It is a private

institution that offers both general and religious subjects. The school was founded by H. Ya'kub Sumalee in 1892 AD (santitham.ac.th). Arabic language for 4th-grade *mathayom* students at Islamic Santitham Foundation School is a compulsory subject. Learning activities take place from Monday to Friday, from 8 AM to 4 PM, except during the month of Ramadan, when classes end at 3 PM. Meanwhile, Arabic language learning is carried out twice a week with an allocation of 35-40 minutes for each meeting except in the month of Ramadan, which is 25-30 minutes. The researchers conducted interviews about Arabic language learning at Islamic Santitham Foundation School with several Arabic language teachers, including Yussara Sumalee, Sulaiman Niyomdecha, Ismail Sangka, and Firdaus Semsan. The researcher asked the interviewees several questions regarding Arabic language learning at the school. The following statement was made by Ismail Sangka:

> *"I start teaching Arabic in the classroom by reading the text presented in the textbook, then asking students to repeat my words using the correct makharijul letters. After that, I translate each Arabic passage into Thai. Once finished, students take turns reading both the Arabic text and its Thai translation".*

These interviews revealed that Arabic instruction relied heavily on the translation method, emphasizing translation over communicative competence. While this approach is useful for understanding grammar and vocabulary, it does not provide sufficient opportunities for students to practice their speaking and listening skills.

During the field study, researchers also conducted a literature review by analyzing the textbook used in Arabic language instruction. One of the key challenges identified was the mismatch between textbook content and students' needs. The existing textbook was originally designed for learners with a strong grammatical foundation, whereas students at Islamic Santitham Foundation School required a more communicative approach. Additionally, the textbook lacked visual appeal, as it was presented in black and white without illustrations, which reduced students' motivation to engage with the material (Muhammad Al Saadi et al., 2020). The exercises in the book primarily reinforced grammar rather than practical language use, making it difficult for students to develop communicative competence. Furthermore, classroom observations indicated that students struggled with comprehension due to the absence of structured listening activities and real-life conversational practice. This lack of engagement

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hindered their ability to apply Arabic in daily interactions, highlighting the need for a more communicative and student-centered learning approach.

Based on the need analysis of questionnarees, learning activities have been limited to reading and understanding Arabic texts, as reported by 93.33% of respondents. Additionally, 63.63% expressed the need for new learning materials that are easy to understand. They have never used audio resources, learned Arabic vocabulary through picture illustrations, or practiced conversations. Therefore, the development of communicative-based ArabicArabic learning materials is necessary to meet these learning needs.

Design of Communicative-based ArabicLearning Materials

The development of communicative-based Arabiclearning material aimed to address the challenges identified in existing Arabic textbooks by incorporating a communicative approach(Khalilah et al., 2024);(O. Alharbi, 2022). The design phase was divided into two stages: material design and product design. The output of this research and development is a communicative-based Arabiclearning material titled لغتنا العربية (*Lughatuna Al Arabiyyah*). The communicative-based Arabiclearning material for Grade 4 *Mathayom* were adapted from the book *Durusul Lughah Al Arabiyah Li Ghairin Naathiqiina Bihaa* Volume 2, which consists of 10 lessons. These were condensed into eight lessons to match the allocated time for teaching and to align with the exercises included in the developed textbook. The communicative-based Arabiclearning material consisted of eight thematic chapters covering essential topics such as *At-Ta'aruf* (Introduction), *Al-Madrasah* (School), *As-Sakan* (Housing), *Al-Hayah Al-Yaumiyyah* (Daily Life), *Al-Hiwayat* (Hobbies), *Al-Mihnah* (Professions), *Al-Islam* (Islam), and *As-Suq* (Market).

Each chapter is structured to include sections on vocabulary (*mufradat*), dialogue practice (*hiwar*), listening exercises (*fahmul masmu'*), speaking drills (*kalam*), reading comprehension (*qiro'ah*), and writing activities (*kitabah)* in accordance with the objectives of Arabic language learning. These materials were designed using Canva, integrating colorful illustrations and interactive exercises to enhance students' engagement (Kafi & Husna, 2022);(Mohd Firdaus et al., 2021). Additionally, sound recordings were included to improve listening skills, ensuring that students could hear proper pronunciation and intonation.

Figure 1. Cover of the communicative-based Arabic learning material

The final product of this research designed to train and the 21st-century skills of students in Thailand. Apart from content planning, the researcher also considered book components, including: (1) cover design (outer and inner covers), (2) book details, (3) preface, (4) usage instructions, (5) table of contents, (6) chapter dividers, (7) learning objectives, (8) content materials (vocabulary, dialogue, listening, speaking, reading, writing), (9) reference list, (10) collection of listening texts, and (11) author's biography. The textbook is also equipped with audio files for listening practice.

Experts Validation

The validation process for the communicative-based Arabic learning materials aimed to ensure the quality, accuracy, and effectiveness of the developed learning materials. It involved expert reviews from material and media specialists who assessed the textbook based on predefined criteria. The validation focused on the content feasibility, presentation, language accuracy, contextual relevance, media organization, visual appeal, and media presentation. The following table presents the results of expert validation by material and media experts:

Table 1. Result of Expert Validation

	No.	Aspect	Percentage	Category
	1.	Content Feasibility	*70*	*Valid*
Material Expert	2.	Presentation Feasibility	*65*	*Valid*
	3.	Language Feasibility	*70*	*Valid*
	4.	Contextual Assessment	*73,33*	*Valid*

		Average Percentage Score	69,6	Valid
Media Expert	1.	Organization	88	Highly Valid
	2.	Visual Display	84	Highly Valid
	3.	Media Presentation	84	Highly Valid
		Average Percentage Score	85,33	Highly Valid

To ensure the validity and reliability of the textbook, expert validation was conducted by Arabic language specialists. The material validation by Prof. Drs. Muhaiban encompassed aspects of content feasibility (70%), presentation feasibility (65%), language feasibility (70%), and contextual assessment (73.33%). According to the material expert, the overall average score of 69.6% falls within the "Valid" category, indicating that the textbook's content, presentation, language, and contextual aspects are appropriate and relevant for students. Meanwhile, media validation by Dr. Mohammad Ahsanuddin, M.Pd., yielded a highly valid rating of 85.33%, covering aspects of organization (88%), visual display (84%), and media presentation (84%). The use of visually appealing elements, illustrations, and interactive exercises contributed significantly to the high rating.

The feedback from experts prompted several revisions to enhance the quality of the textbook. These included refining command sentences in exercises, improving *the* accuracy of *harakat*, and resolving ambiguous vocabulary. Minor design adjustments were also made to enhance readability and engagement. The revisions became more effective and user-friendly textbook, supporting communicative language teaching and promoting active student participation (Nggawu & Thao, 2023). These findings confirm that the developed textbook meets the criteria for effective communicative-based Arabic learning materials, even though minor revisions were made to ensure greater clarity and usability. The feedback provided by the experts guided the refinement process, making it a practical and engaging resource for Arabic language instruction.

Result of Teachers and Students Response

The communicative-based Arabic learning material was tested on 15 fourth-grade Mathayom students to evaluate its effectiveness in enhancing Arabic language skills. The implementation process involved delivering lessons from one of the newly developed chapters, followed by assessments and feedback from both students and

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teachers. Questionnaires were distributed to students to gauge their responses to the new material, while Arabic teachers at the school evaluated the textbook's effectiveness compared to traditional methods.

The results revealed a significant improvement in student engagement, as the communicative activities were perceived to be more interactive and practical (Boonpetchkaew et al., 2024); (Basir, 2024). Many students reported increased confidence in speaking Arabic, and teachers observed higher participation in classroom discussions. Additionally, the inclusion of listening exercises helped students become more familiar with natural Arabic pronunciation, an element previously lacking in their learning experience.

A comparative analysis of pre- and post-implementation results demonstrated substantial progress in students' Arabic language skills. Before using the new textbook, only 9.1% of students were familiar with basic conversational phrases in *At-Ta'aruf*. However, after participating in communicative activities, 78.4% of students were able to confidently introduce themselves in Arabic. Similarly, listening comprehension improved from 6.1% to 81.2%, while speaking ability increased from 12.1% to 76.9%. These findings underscore the positive impact of incorporating real-life communication exercises into the curriculum. Students also reported higher levels of enjoyment when learning Arabic, attributing their enthusiasm to the interactive nature of the new materials.

Further validation from Arabic teachers at the Islamic Santitham Foundation School resulted in a 90.5% approval rating, while student responses indicated a 92.13% satisfaction level. These results confirm the effectiveness of the communicative-based Arabiclearning materials, demonstrating their potential for broader implementation in Arabic language education. The details of the teachers' and students' responses are summarized in Table 1.

Table 2. Result of Teachers and Students Response

	No.	Aspect	Percentage	Category
Teachers' response	1.	Media Display	*90*	*Highly Valid*
	2.	Media Benefits	*90*	*Highly Valid*
	3.	Material	*92*	*Highly Valid*

	4.	Students' Enthusiasm Toward the Media	*90*	*Highly Valid*
		Average Percentage Score	*90,5*	*Highly Valid*
Students' response	1.	Media Display	*91,5*	*Highly Valid*
	2.	Media Benefits	*92*	*Highly Valid*
	3.	Material	*93,33*	*Highly Valid*
	4.	Students' Enthusiasm Toward the Media	*90,7*	*Highly Valid*
		Average Percentage Score	*91,88*	*Highly Valid*

After completing the validation stages by material experts, media experts, Arabic language teachers, and students, it can be concluded that the communicative-based Arabiclearning material is valid and suitable for use. This conclusion is supported by an average evaluation score of 84.3% across all four validation stages, indicating that the developed media falls into the "Valid and Feasible" category. The average validation results are presented in Figure 2.
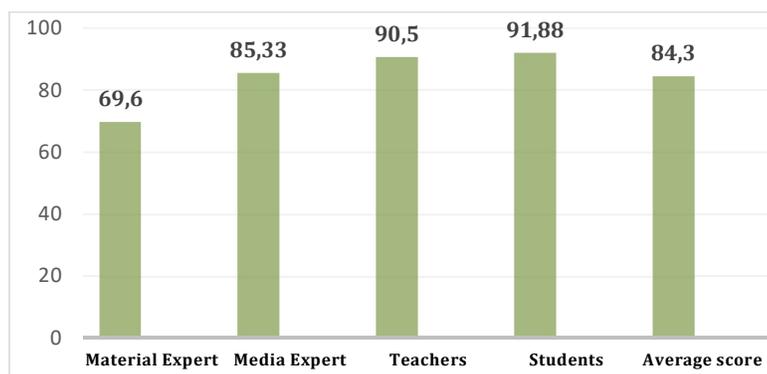
Figure 2. Results of the Implementation of Communicative-based Arabic Learning Materials

A key innovation of the communicative-based Arabic textbook was the integration of digital audio recordings to enhance listening comprehension. The recordings, produced by professional voice actors, exposed students to authentic Arabic pronunciation. This method significantly enhanced their ability to recognize and reproduce correct speech patterns. Additionally, the inclusion of multimedia resources aligned with 21st-century learning objectives, making the learning process more dynamic and engaging (Şen Yaman, 2022);(Bolat & Deneme Gençoğlu, 2024). Teachers appreciated these technological enhancements, as they facilitated a more immersive

learning experience. Moving forward, the integration of additional digital tools such as interactive applications and online learning platforms could further enhance student engagement and accessibility (Mahmoud Fallatah, 2021).

The newly developed textbook not only enhanced linguistic proficiency but also aligned with essential 21st-century skills. By incorporating problem-solving exercises, collaborative tasks, and digital literacy components, it encouraged students to develop critical thinking and teamwork abilities (Chamidah et al., 2024). The communicative approach emphasized real-life interactions, preparing students to use Arabic in practical contexts beyond the classroom. Additionally, the textbook promoted cultural awareness by integrating dialogues that reflected authentic social situations, thereby enhancing students' intercultural communication skills(Kirbas & Bulut, 2024). These elements ensured that the learning process was not only language-focused but also holistic, fostering the development of well-rounded individuals.

Based on the study's findings, several recommendations can be made for further improvement. First, expanding the textbook to include supplementary digital resources, such as interactive quizzes and online discussion forums, could further enhance student engagement. Second, implementing a teacher training program on communicative teaching strategies would ensure that educators can effectively utilize the new materials. Additionally, future research could explore the long-term impact of communicative-based Arabic learning on students' proficiency and retention. Collaboration with educational institutions in other regions of Thailand could also facilitate broader adoption and adaptation of the textbook to diverse learning environments.

The development of communicative-based Arabic learning materials effectively addressed the challenges faced by students at Islamic Santitham Foundation School. By integrating speaking, listening, reading, and writing exercises, the textbook provided a comprehensive approach to language learning. The implementation results demonstrated significant improvements in student engagement and proficiency, with high validation ratings from both educators and learners. Moreover, the alignment with 21st-century skills ensured that students acquired essential competencies for real-world communication(Srichaitung et al., 2024);(Mahmood & Saleem, 2024). Future efforts should focus on expanding digital integration and enhancing teacher training to maximize the textbook's effectiveness. Overall, this study highlights the importance of

adopting communicative methodologies in language education to foster meaningful and practical learning experiences.

Conclusion

This study effectively demonstrates the effectiveness of designing communicative-based Arabic learning materials to enhance the 21st-century skills of students in Thailand. By integrating communicative approach, the developed materials significantly contribute to improving students' language proficiency, critical thinking, collaboration, and problem-solving abilities. The findings confirm that communicative-based instruction aligns well with modern educational needs, bridging the gap between traditional language teaching and contemporary skill development. This research advances the current knowledge in language pedagogy by providing empirical evidence on the benefits of communicative learning materials. Unlike conventional methods that focus solely on grammar and vocabulary acquisition, this study highlights how meaningful interaction and real-life communication tasks foster deeper and more practical language learning experiences Furthermore, the findings emphasize the importance of incorporating digital tools and collaborative activities to enhance engagement and retention.

The implications of this research extend beyond the Thai context, as communicative-based Arabic learning materials can be adapted to other educational settings, particularly in regions where language instruction needs to be more interactive and skills-oriented. The study also provides a foundation for curriculum designers and educators to reconsider language teaching strategies that align with 21st-century learning demands. Future research should explore the long-term impact of communicative-based Arabic learning materials on students' academic performance and career readiness. Further investigations could also examine how these materials can be integrated with emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and virtual reality to create even more immersive learning experiences. Additionally, comparative studies across different cultural and linguistic contexts would provide deeper insights into the adaptability and effectiveness of communicative-based Arabiclearning across diverse educational systems.

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