The Contributions of the Arabic Language to Islamic Studies

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Abstract: *This article examines the contribution of Arabic to Islamic studies by positioning Arabic not merely as a medium of communication, but as a theological, epistemological, and methodological foundation for understanding Islam. Using a descriptive qualitative design and library research, this study analyzes primary academic literature on Arabic, Qur'anic studies, hadith studies, fiqh, and uṣūl al-fiqh. The research findings demonstrate that Arabic is indispensable for accessing the primary sources of Islam—the Qur'an and the Sunnah—because core meanings are embedded in its grammatical, morphological, and rhetorical structures. Mastery of naḥw, ṣarf, and balāghah is crucial to avoid semantic reduction and interpretive distortion, especially in distinguishing ʿām–khāṣṣ, ḥaqīqah–majāz, and amr–nahy, as well as in appreciating the iʿjāz lughawī of the Qurʾan. This study also shows that Arabic functions as an epistemic framework that shapes Islamic concepts such as ʿilm, ʿaql, ḥikmah, and fiqh, thus influencing the standards of authority and validity of knowledge.*

Abstrak : *Artikel ini mengkaji kontribusi bahasa Arab dalam studi Islam dengan menempatkan bahasa Arab tidak semata-mata sebagai medium komunikasi, melainkan sebagai fondasi teologis, epistemologis, dan metodologis dalam memahami Islam. Dengan menggunakan desain kualitatif deskriptif dan penelitian kepustakaan, kajian ini menganalisis literatur akademik utama tentang bahasa Arab, studi Al-Qurʾan, ilmu hadis, fiqh, dan uṣūl al-fiqh. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa bahasa Arab bersifat indispensabel untuk mengakses sumber-sumber primer Islam—al-Qurʾan dan al-Sunnah—karena makna-makna inti tertanam dalam struktur gramatikal, morfologis, dan retoris bahasa Arab. Penguasaan naḥw, ṣarf, dan balāghah sangat krusial untuk menghindari reduksi semantik dan distorsi interpretatif, khususnya dalam membedakan ʿām–khāṣṣ, ḥaqīqah–majāz, dan amr–nahy, serta dalam mengapresiasi iʿjāz lughawī Al-Qurʾan. Penelitian ini juga menunjukkan bahwa bahasa Arab berfungsi sebagai epistemic framework yang membentuk konsep-konsep Islam seperti ʿilm, ʿaql, ḥikmah, dan fiqh, sehingga mempengaruhi standar otoritas dan validitas keilmuan.*

Keywords: Arabic Language; Islamic Studies;, Qurʾanic Exegesis (Tafsīr); Ḥadīth Studies, Islamic Epistemology,Translation; Uṣūl Al-Fiqh.

INTRODUCTION

Language plays a fundamental role in shaping and transmitting the knowledge of a civilization. In the Islamic tradition, Arabic occupies a highly central position because it serves as the primary medium of revelation, Prophetic tradition, and the intellectual heritage of both classical and contemporary Islamic scholarship. Arabic is not merely a tool of communication; it functions as an epistemological vehicle that substantially determines comprehensive understanding of Islamic teachings (Al-Faruqi, 2020).

The Qur'an, as the principal source of Islamic doctrine, was revealed in Arabic (*Qur'ān 'Arabiyy*), as affirmed in several verses (Q.S. Yūsuf [12]: 2; Q.S. Az-Zukhruf [43]: 3). The selection of Arabic as the language of revelation is not incidental; rather, it reflects complex linguistic, theological, and socio-cultural dimensions. Arabic possesses rich morphological and syntactic structures, a precise semantic system, and a high expressive capacity, enabling it to convey divine messages in profound and nuanced ways (Versteegh, 2021).

Nevertheless, contemporary Islamic studies face serious issues related to Arabic proficiency. Many Islamic analyses are conducted without sufficient linguistic competence, which may generate interpretive errors, semantic reduction, and even distortion of Islamic teachings (Abdel Haleem, 2022). This tendency is further exacerbated by the increasing reliance on translations as primary references without critical engagement with the original texts.

Previous studies indicate that weak Arabic mastery directly correlates with a lower quality of understanding of the Qur'an, *ḥadīth*, *fiqh*, *uṣūl al-fiqh*, and other Islamic disciplines (Rahman et al., 2021; Hidayat & Fauzi, 2023). Conversely, strong competence in Arabic demonstrably improves interpretive accuracy and broadens scholarly perspectives (Al-Jabiri, 2020).

Although numerous studies have addressed the importance of Arabic in Islam, most remain partial, focusing primarily on pedagogical or purely linguistic aspects. This study is significant because it seeks to provide a comprehensive analysis of Arabic contributions to Islamic studies, encompassing theological, epistemological, historical, and methodological dimensions.

The primary distinction between this study and previous works lies in its integrative approach, which views Arabic not merely as an instrument but as a foundational pillar of Islamic scholarship. This study also proposes a conceptual solution: strengthening Arabic literacy in Islamic studies through interdisciplinary and contextual approaches.

Accordingly, the objectives of this study are to: analyze the contributions of Arabic to the development of Islamic studies; identify the role of Arabic in safeguarding the authenticity of Islamic teachings; and formulate strategic implications of Arabic proficiency for the advancement of contemporary Islamic studies.

METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative method with a library research design. This approach is appropriate for examining concepts, theories, and scholarly arguments developed in academic literature concerning Arabic and Islamic studies. The study applies historical–philosophical and linguistic approaches, aiming to trace the contributions of Arabic in the history of Islamic scholarship and its epistemological role in shaping Islamic sciences. The population of the study

includes the entirety of scholarly literature addressing Arabic and Islamic studies. The sample is selected purposively and consists of: reputable international and national journal articles (published within the last five years), classical and contemporary academic books, and official documents and scholarly digital sources. The primary instrument is a document analysis framework. Data are collected through identification of relevant literature, thematic classification, and *content analysis*. The data analysis proceeds through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and inductive and deductive inference drawing.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Arabic as the Theological Foundation of Islamic Studies

Arabic occupies a foundational position within Islamic theology because the primary sources of Islam—the Qur'an and the Sunnah—were revealed and transmitted in this language. The selection of Arabic as the medium of revelation is not merely a historical coincidence; it embodies deep theological, linguistic, and epistemological dimensions. The Qur'an explicitly affirms its linguistic identity as *Qur'ān 'Arabiyy mubīn* (Q.S. Yūsuf [12]: 2), indicating that understanding Islamic teachings cannot be separated from understanding Arabic itself (Abdel Haleem, 2022).

From the perspective of Islamic theology, Arabic is not only a communicative medium but also part of the divine system of meaning. Every lexical choice, syntactic structure, and stylistic device in the Qur'an is believed to carry wisdom and purpose. Consequently, understanding the revealed text requires rigorous mastery of the Arabic linguistic sciences, such as *naḥw* (syntax), *ṣarf* (morphology), and *balāghah* (rhetoric) (Al-Suyuti, 2021). These disciplines function as essential analytical instruments for uncovering both literal meaning (*ḥaqīqī*) and implicit meaning (*dalālah khafiyyah*) in religious texts. The discipline of *naḥw* determines grammatical function within a sentence, such as subject (*fā'il*), object (*maf'ūl*), and predicate (*khabar*). Errors in *naḥw* analysis can lead to substantial shifts in meaning with potential theological implications. For instance, the distinction between *jumlah ismiyyah* (nominal sentence) and *jumlah fi'liyyah* (verbal sentence) can influence interpretations concerning permanence or continuity of commands or divine attributes (Versteegh, 2021).

Meanwhile, *ṣarf* focuses on word formation and semantic derivation. In Arabic, a single root can generate multiple meanings through changes in morphological patterns (*awzān*). Differences among forms such as *fa'ala*, *tafā'ala*, and *istaf'ala*, for example, carry distinct semantic nuances that affect legal and theological interpretation (Kamali, 2022). Without *ṣarf* mastery, interpreters may inadvertently simplify Qur'anic meanings in disproportionate ways.

Balāghah serves to elucidate rhetorical beauty and semantic depth of revelation, covering *ma'ānī*, *bayān*, and *badī'*. Through *balāghah*, scholars can analyze figurative language (*majāz*),

metaphor (*istiʿārah*), and emphatic structures (*taʾkīd*) in the Qur'an. This is especially crucial in theology because many verses addressing divine attributes employ symbolic or metaphorical expressions (Al-Suyuti, 2021).

One of the most significant contributions of Arabic to Islamic theological foundations is its capacity to distinguish between general (*ʿām*) and specific (*khāṣṣ*) meanings. In *uṣūl al-fiqh*, this distinction determines the scope of legal application. A Qur'anic verse or *ḥadīth* that is *ʿām* may include all individuals within a category unless evidence specifies restriction (*takhṣīṣ*) (Kamali, 2022). Without accurate linguistic analysis, interpretation may fall into erroneous overgeneralization.

Likewise, the distinction between *ḥaqīqah* (literal meaning) and *majāz* (metaphorical meaning) has major theological implications, particularly in discussions of divine attributes (*ṣifāt Allāh*). Classical debates among theological schools such as *Ahl al-Sunnah*, *Muʿtazilah*, and *Salafiyyah* often revolve around whether "attribute verses" should be understood literally or metaphorically. Deep Arabic competence is essential for navigating these debates in a scholarly and balanced manner (Al-Attas, 2020).

Furthermore, the concepts of *amr* (command) and *nahy* (prohibition) in Arabic involve complex gradations of meaning. In *uṣūl al-fiqh*, not every *amr* necessarily indicates obligation (*wujūb*), and not every *nahy* implies prohibition (*taḥrīm*). Determining the intended legal force depends on linguistic and pragmatic context (Kamali, 2022). Therefore, Arabic directly shapes the formulation of Islamic law and its theological underpinnings.

Arabic also shapes the theological worldview of Muslims through key concepts that cannot be perfectly translated into other languages. Terms such as *īmān*, *kufr*, *taqwā*, *ʿadl*, and *ẓulm* carry broad, interconnected semantic ranges. Translating these concepts often captures only partial meanings, potentially narrowing theological understanding (Hassan, 2023). In this regard, Al-Attas (2020) argues that Arabic functions as a conceptual vehicle for the Islamic worldview: language not only transmits meaning but also structures cognition and interpretive frameworks. Consequently, weakening Arabic in Islamic studies risks reducing Islam's theological foundations.

Arabic further plays a vital role in preserving the authenticity of Islamic transmission. The memorization tradition (*ḥifẓ*) of the Qur'an and *ḥadīth* depends heavily on the stability of Arabic wording. Although Qur'anic translations exist in many languages, Muslims theologically agree that the Qur'an is the Arabic text itself, not its translations (Abdel Haleem, 2022). This indicates Arabic's sacred status in Islamic theology, even though not every form of Arabic usage is automatically sacred.

In contemporary Islamic studies, challenges to Arabic's theological role have become increasingly complex. Globalization and the dominance of foreign languages in academia often marginalize Arabic within Islamic scholarship. As a result, Islamic studies sometimes become

secondary-text oriented, dependent on translations and third-party interpretations (Salama, 2021). This condition may weaken theological authority and open spaces for semantic distortion.

Therefore, strengthening Arabic as the theological foundation of Islamic studies is an urgent necessity. This effort is not merely pedagogical; it concerns theological integrity and continuity of the Islamic scholarly tradition. Integrating Arabic linguistic sciences with theology, Qur'anic exegesis, and *uṣūl al-fiqh* should be developed systematically and contextually so that Islamic studies remain relevant without losing authenticity (Hidayat & Fauzi, 2023).

In sum, Arabic is an inseparable theological foundation of Islamic studies. It serves as the key to understanding revelation, determining interpretive validity, and preserving doctrinal purity. Without adequate Arabic competence, Islamic studies risk losing theological depth and semantic precision—both of which are hallmarks of Islamic intellectual tradition.

The Contribution of Arabic to the Development of Tafsīr and Ḥadīth Studies

Arabic has a highly significant role in the development of *tafsīr* and *ḥadīth* studies as two core disciplines in Islamic scholarship. These fields serve as primary bridges for understanding the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Since both sources were conveyed in Arabic, mastery of Arabic constitutes an epistemological and methodological prerequisite for developing *tafsīr* and *ḥadīth* studies in a rigorous and responsible manner.

In *tafsīr*, Arabic functions as the principal instrument for comprehending both textual meaning (*dalālah lafẓiyyah*) and contextual meaning (*dalālah siyāqiyyah*) of Qur'anic verses. The Qur'an was revealed within the social, cultural, and linguistic context of seventh-century Arab society; therefore, understanding classical Arabic structures is essential for accessing the message of revelation comprehensively (Mustaqim, 2020). Without adequate linguistic competence, Qur'anic interpretation risks becoming narrowly literal or engaging in unfounded semantic speculation.

A key component of *tafsīr* that heavily depends on Arabic is the study of *asbāb al-nuzūl* (occasions of revelation). Understanding *asbāb al-nuzūl* reports requires not only historical knowledge but also Arabic competence to interpret report wording and its correlation with Qur'anic text. Many *asbāb al-nuzūl* narratives employ idiomatic expressions and stylistic features characteristic of classical Arabic that cannot be accurately grasped without linguistic proficiency (Abdel Haleem, 2022).

Arabic is also essential for *munāsabah al-āyāt*, i.e., thematic and structural relations among verses or chapters. *Munāsabah* aims to uncover logical and rhetorical coherence across Qur'anic passages that may appear textually discontinuous. Such analysis depends on understanding syntactic structure, lexical selection, and repetition patterns (*tikrār*) in Arabic (Mustaqim, 2020). Without mastery of these aspects, the Qur'an may be read fragmentarily, weakening its semantic coherence.

Arabic's contribution to *tafsīr* is further evident in the study of *i'jāz lughawī*—the Qur'an's linguistic and rhetorical inimitability. This includes aesthetic sentence structure, phonetic balance, semantic density, and precision of lexical selection. *I'jāz lughawī* is not merely aesthetic; it is theological, since linguistic inimitability is viewed as evidence of divine origin (Al-Suyuti, 2021). Without proficiency in *balāghah*—including *'ilm al-ma'ānī*, *'ilm al-bayān*, and *'ilm al-badī'*—the *i'jāz* dimension cannot be comprehensively appreciated. Many verses employ figurative language (*majāz*), parable (*tamthīl*), and emphasis (*ta'kīd*) that require deep linguistic analysis to avoid theological misunderstanding (Versteegh, 2021).

Arabic also plays a key role in distinguishing literal (*ḥaqīqah*) from figurative (*majāz*) meanings within Qur'anic discourse. This distinction is crucial in interpreting verses related to divine attributes, law, and ethics. Misjudging whether a term is literal or metaphorical can yield significant theological divergences, as reflected in classical debates among Islamic theological schools (Al-Attas, 2020).

In *ḥadīth* studies, Arabic is equally indispensable. Prophetic traditions were delivered in spoken Arabic (*al-'Arabiyyah al-shafawiyyah*) with specific dialectal and stylistic features. Understanding *ḥadīth* wording requires knowledge of classical Arabic dialects (*lahajāt al-'Arab*) and variations in usage between Quraysh and other tribes (Brown, 2021). A central phenomenon in *ḥadīth* studies that depends heavily on Arabic is *riwāyah bi al-ma'nā*, i.e., transmitting *ḥadīth* by meaning rather than identical wording. This practice is accepted in *ḥadīth* tradition on the condition that transmitters possess strong Arabic competence to preserve substantive meaning (Brown, 2021). Without adequate Arabic mastery, *riwāyah bi al-ma'nā* may distort meaning and weaken the validity of a tradition.

Variation in wording (*ikhtilāf al-alfāẓ*) poses additional challenges. The same *ḥadīth* transmitted through different chains may show lexical variation while maintaining similar meaning. To evaluate authenticity and interpret meaning accurately, a *muḥaddith* must analyze the semantic nuances of each variant (Alhusaiyan, 2023). Such analysis cannot be performed without advanced Arabic linguistic competence.

Arabic also supports *naqd al-matn* (textual criticism of the *ḥadīth* content). Beyond chain criticism (*isnād*), authenticity is examined through consistency of the text with Arabic linguistic norms, Qur'anic principles, and reason. A report containing awkward structure or violating classical Arabic conventions may raise questions about its authenticity (Brown, 2021). This demonstrates that Arabic functions as an instrument of scholarly critique within *ḥadīth* studies.

Furthermore, understanding technical *ḥadīth* terminology—such as *ṣaḥīḥ*, *ḥasan*, *ḍa'īf*, *gharīb*, and *munkar*—requires semantic sensitivity to Arabic. These are not merely categorical labels but conceptually rich terms developed through *ḥadīth* scholarship. Translating them into other languages often fails to capture their full complexity (Hassan, 2023).

In contemporary Islamic studies, challenges surrounding Arabic competence in *tafsīr* and *ḥadīth* have intensified alongside interdisciplinary and contextual approaches. Many modern studies examine the Qur'an and *ḥadīth* through social, anthropological, or modern hermeneutical frameworks. Such approaches can enrich interpretation but still require strong Arabic foundations so as not to detach scholarship from the original textual meanings (Mustaqim, 2020). Excessive dependence on translations risks semantic simplification and interpretive error. Translations are, in essence, forms of interpretation rather than replacements for the original text. Therefore, *tafsīr* and *ḥadīth* scholarship that neglects Arabic risks losing both scholarly and theological legitimacy (Salama, 2021).

In sum, Arabic's contribution to the development of *tafsīr* and *ḥadīth* studies is fundamental and irreplaceable. Arabic enables deep understanding of revelatory context, semantic structure, and Qur'anic rhetorical beauty, while also functioning as a critical tool in *ḥadīth* analysis and verification. Strengthening Arabic competence is therefore essential for preserving authenticity, accuracy, and scholarly depth in Qur'anic and *ḥadīth* studies.

Arabic and the Epistemology of Islamic Scholarship

Arabic plays a role that far exceeds communicative function within Islamic intellectual tradition. It is not only the medium of revelation and knowledge transmission but also actively shapes modes of reasoning, conceptual structures, and epistemological systems among Muslim scholars. In this sense, Arabic functions as an *epistemic framework* that influences how knowledge is produced, validated, and transmitted within Islamic studies (Al-Attas, 2020).

Islamic epistemology—the theory of knowledge in Islam—cannot be separated from Arabic because core concepts forming the epistemological architecture of Islam emerged and evolved within Arabic linguistic structures. Terms such as *'ilm* (knowledge), *'aql* (intellect), *ḥikmah* (wisdom), *fiqh* (deep understanding), and *ma'rifah* (intuitive knowledge) carry distinctive, layered, and interconnected philosophical meanings. These meanings cannot always be translated accurately into other languages without conceptual loss (Al-Attas, 2020; Hassan, 2023).

For example, *'ilm* in Islamic tradition does not merely denote the accumulation of information or empirical knowledge, as often framed within modern Western epistemology. Rather, *'ilm* encompasses knowledge derived from revelation (*naqlī*), intellect (*'aqlī*), and inner experience (*dhawqī*). The root of *'ilm* also conveys meanings of order, clarity, and sign (*'alāmah*), suggesting that knowledge in Islam reveals reality in a structured and meaningful way (Al-Jabiri, 2020).

Through its morphology and semantics, Arabic enables holistic development of the concept of *'ilm*. The distinctions among *'ilm*, *ma'rifah*, and *ḥikmah* are not merely lexical variations but reflect different levels and types of knowledge. *Ma'rifah* is often associated with personal and intuitive cognition, while

ḥikmah refers to the ability to apply knowledge appropriately and ethically. Such semantic nuances are difficult to capture outside the original Arabic conceptual field (Hassan, 2023).

Similarly, *'aql* in Islamic epistemology is not identical to instrumental rationality in modern philosophy. Etymologically, *'aql* means "to bind" or "to restrain," indicating the intellect's role in controlling desire and maintaining moral equilibrium. Thus, *'aql* in Islam has cognitive, ethical, and spiritual dimensions (Al-Attas, 2020). This understanding is embedded in Arabic linguistic structure and shapes how Muslim scholars conceptualize the relationship between intellect, revelation, and morality.

Arabic also shapes Islamic epistemology through the concept of *fiqh*. Etymologically, *fiqh* signifies "deep understanding." In Islamic tradition, it is not limited to law in a narrow sense but reflects analytical, contextual, and normative reasoning. A *faqīh* does not merely know a text but grasps its purposes (*maqāṣid*). Arabic enables the development of *istinbāṭ* (juridical derivation) through precise linguistic analysis—such as the study of *'ām–khāṣṣ*, *muṭlaq–muqayyad*, and *manṭūq–mafhum* (Kamali, 2022). Consequently, Arabic functions as an epistemic structure guiding Islamic reasoning. Methods such as *qiyās*, *ijmā'*, and *istidlāl* rely on linguistic analysis of authoritative texts, demonstrating that Islamic epistemology is a form of text-based epistemology deeply rooted in Arabic (Hallaq, 2020).

Arabic further shapes concepts of validity and authority in Islamic scholarship. In classical Islamic tradition, scholarly authority was not determined solely by rational or empirical skill but also by Arabic mastery. A *mufassir*, *muḥaddith*, or *faqīh* is recognized as authoritative because of the ability to understand Arabic texts accurately and deeply. This is reflected in classical scholarly prerequisites that position Arabic as essential "instrumental sciences" (*'ulūm al-ālah*) prior to entering specialized Islamic disciplines (Al-Suyuti, 2021).

Arabic also influences the Islamic categorization of knowledge. The division between *'ulūm naqliyyah* and *'ulūm 'aqliyyah* evolved within Arabic linguistic structures that allow integration of revelation and reason. Unlike modern dichotomies between religious and secular knowledge, Islamic epistemology treats knowledge as a unity oriented toward truth and public benefit (*maṣlaḥah*). Arabic provides the conceptual vocabulary to sustain this holistic view (Al-Faruqi, 2020).

Within Islamic philosophy, Arabic played a crucial role in adapting and transforming Greek philosophy. During the Abbasid period, translating Greek works into Arabic was not merely linguistic transfer but epistemological reconstruction. Concepts such as *ousia*, *logos*, and *nous* were rendered and reinterpreted within Arabic frameworks, producing a distinctly Islamic philosophical synthesis (Al-Jabiri, 2020). This illustrates Arabic's flexibility as a medium for dialogical and dynamic epistemology.

However, Arabic's epistemological strengths face serious challenges in the modern era. The dominance of foreign languages—particularly English—in global academia often marginalizes Arabic in Islamic studies. Consequently, contemporary scholarship may rely more heavily on translations and

Western epistemological frameworks, potentially generating epistemological tension and loss of original context (Salama, 2021). Dependence on translation affects not only semantic accuracy but also modes of thought. Translating Islamic epistemological concepts without preserving their Arabic contexts leads to conceptual reduction and paradigm shifts. For instance, translating *'ilm* as "science" or *'aql* as "reason" often neglects spiritual and ethical dimensions integral to these concepts (Hassan, 2023).

Therefore, revitalizing Arabic in Islamic studies is an urgent epistemological need. Strengthening Arabic is not merely about enhancing linguistic skills but about safeguarding epistemological integrity. Integrating Arabic with Islamic philosophy, scientific methodology, and interdisciplinary studies is essential so that Islamic studies can engage modern knowledge critically without losing epistemological identity (Al-Attas, 2020; Hallaq, 2020).

In conclusion, Arabic is the epistemological foundation of Islamic scholarship. It shapes concepts of knowledge, reasoning methods, criteria of validity, and scholarly authority in Islamic tradition. Arabic does not only convey knowledge; it frames how Muslim scholars understand reality, truth, and the purposes of knowledge. Without adequate Arabic mastery, Islamic studies risk losing epistemological depth and becoming detached from their intellectual roots.

Contemporary Implications and Global Challenges

Globalization in the twenty-first century has profoundly affected many disciplines, including Islamic studies. Global flows of information, the dominance of global languages, and the rise of interdisciplinary approaches—often grounded in Western paradigms—have created serious challenges for Islamic studies. These include semantic fragmentation, decontextualization of texts, and epistemological shifts resulting from the weakening of Arabic as the primary medium of Islamic scholarship (Hassan, 2023).

One of the most prominent challenges is the dominance of translation in contemporary Islamic studies. Qur'anic translations, *ḥadīth* translations, and renderings of classical Islamic works are widely available in many languages, facilitating access for non-Arab Muslims. Yet this convenience entails epistemological consequences. Translation is inherently interpretive rather than a full representation of the original. Every translation involves choices of meaning, context, and conceptual framing that may not align with the original Arabic text (Salama, 2021).

The dominance of translation can produce semantic fragmentation because readers often encounter Islamic texts in partial forms detached from their Arabic linguistic contexts. Key Islamic concepts such as *'ilm*, *taqwā*, *īmān*, *fiqh*, and *jihād* are frequently reduced to narrow equivalents in other languages, losing semantic depth and normative dimensions (Hassan, 2023). Consequently, Islamic studies may develop within conceptual frameworks separated from their linguistic and epistemological roots.

Global challenges also arise from the increasing influence of non-linguistic approaches in Islamic studies. These include sociological, anthropological, political, and modern hermeneutical analyses that often treat Islamic texts primarily as cultural artifacts. While such approaches can broaden scholarly perspectives, applying them without strong Arabic foundations risks obscuring textual meanings and weakening the normative authority of Islamic sources (Mustaqim, 2020).

Non-linguistic approaches that neglect Arabic may generate ahistorical or anachronistic interpretations. Qur'anic and *ḥadīth* texts are read using modern conceptual categories that may not correspond to the linguistic and cultural contexts in which they emerged. This can create a gap between original meaning and contemporary speculative readings (Hallaq, 2020).

Moreover, English and other global languages dominate academic knowledge production. Many scholarly publications on Islam are written in non-Arabic languages for global audiences. This expands the reach of Islamic studies but also places Arabic in a subordinate position. Arabic is often treated merely as a data source rather than as an epistemological framework shaping theory and method (Al-Attas, 2020).

These challenges are further complicated by digital technology and social media. Islamic information circulates widely in digital formats, often as summaries, translated quotations, or popular narratives with limited linguistic verification. This environment can facilitate shallow, simplistic, or even extremist understandings that remain detached from comprehensive Arabic analysis (Hidayat & Fauzi, 2023).

At the same time, globalization offers strategic opportunities for revitalizing Arabic in Islamic studies. Digital technologies enable the development of interactive, contextual, and accessible Arabic learning resources. Digital corpora of the Qur'an, *ḥadīth*, and classical literature allow traditional linguistic approaches to integrate with modern tools, making Arabic competence more effectively attainable (Arifianto, 2021).

The primary implication of this study is the urgent need to revitalize Arabic proficiency as a strategic solution for safeguarding authenticity and relevance of Islamic studies in a global era. This revitalization involves not only technical linguistic skill but also strengthening epistemological awareness of Arabic's role in shaping scholarly reasoning and Islamic methodology (Hassan, 2023).

In Islamic higher education, integrating Arabic into Islamic studies curricula should be carried out comprehensively and contextually. Arabic should not be positioned as a peripheral supporting course separated from core disciplines; rather, it should function as an integrated foundation for *tafsīr*, *ḥadīth*, *fiqh*, and Islamic thought. Such an integrative approach enables students to grasp relationships between language, text, and context more holistically (Yasmadi et al., 2024).

A contextual approach to Arabic pedagogy is equally crucial. Arabic instruction detached from Islamic studies contexts may lose relevance and reduce student motivation. Conversely, linking Arabic learning directly to Qur'anic and *ḥadīth* text analysis can enhance linguistic competence and deepen Islamic understanding simultaneously (Fauziah & Syarofit, 2025).

Another important implication is the need to develop an Islamic studies paradigm that balances linguistic and non-linguistic approaches. Arabic must be established as the foundational competence before interdisciplinary methods are applied. In this way, sociological, anthropological, or historical analyses remain anchored in accurate and responsible textual understanding (Mustaqim, 2020).

In global contexts, Arabic proficiency also contributes to intercivilizational dialogue and global Islamic scholarship. Arabic allows direct access to diverse Islamic intellectual heritages and strengthens Islamic studies' position in international academic discourse. Without Arabic competence, Islamic studies risk becoming secondary scholarship dependent on external interpretations (Al-Faruqi, 2020).

Global challenges also require a redefinition of Islamic studies objectives. In the modern era, Islamic studies must not only preserve tradition but also address contemporary problems such as global ethics, social justice, and pluralism. Arabic plays a crucial role in this process because it enables creative, contextual interpretation of classical texts without severing normative roots (Hallaq, 2020).

Thus, the contemporary implications of this study confirm that Arabic is a strategic key for facing the global challenges of Islamic studies. Revitalizing Arabic is not a regressive move; rather, it is a progressive effort to ensure that Islamic studies remain authentic, relevant, and capable of critical dialogue with global knowledge developments. Without strengthening Arabic, Islamic studies risk losing epistemological identity and being reduced to fragmented normative discourse.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Arabic contributes fundamentally to Islamic studies not only as a communicative tool but also as a theological, epistemological, and methodological foundation. Arabic competence enables a more authentic understanding of Islamic primary sources and prevents semantic distortion.

Arabic also plays a decisive role in shaping Islamic intellectual tradition and maintaining scholarly continuity from the classical period to the contemporary era. Therefore, strengthening Arabic competence constitutes a strategic necessity for advancing Islamic studies in the modern world.
Future research is recommended to examine concrete implementations of Arabic strengthening within Islamic educational institutions and evaluate its impact on the quality of Islamic understanding.

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