



ARABIC LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL IDENTITY: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF SOCIOLINGUISTIC LITERATURE

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ABSTRACT

The Arabic language holds a unique sociolinguistic status as both a medium of communication and a cultural-religious symbol among Arab societies and the global Muslim community. Beyond its formal use in education, religion, and governance, Arabic carries layers of identity-related meaning, often intertwined with issues of ethnicity, religiosity, and national belonging. The coexistence of Modern Standard Arabic (fusha) and regional dialects ('ammiyyah) creates a diglossic environment that shapes speakers' cultural perceptions and identity construction processes. While numerous sociolinguistic studies have examined Arabic's symbolic role, existing literature tends to be thematically fragmented and geographically limited, lacking a comprehensive synthesis of the sociocultural dynamics and theoretical frameworks involved. Moreover, the influence of globalization, digitalization, and transnational migration on Arabic's evolving identity functions remains underexplored. In light of these issues, a systematic and integrative literature review is needed to map, evaluate, and connect the disparate findings. This study aims to fill that gap by analyzing academic works on Arabic's role in the formation and expression of cultural identity. By applying interdisciplinary theories such as linguistic identity construction, language ideology, and diglossia this review identifies recurring themes, research gaps, and conceptual patterns. The findings offer a critical synthesis that not only contributes to Arabic sociolinguistics but also provides theoretical and pedagogical implications for language policy, identity studies, and Arabic education in pluralistic and globalized contexts.

Keywords: Arabic language, cultural identity, sociolinguistics, diglossia, language ideology, globalization.

ABSTRAK

Bahasa Arab memiliki status sosiolinguistik yang unik sebagai medium komunikasi sekaligus simbol budaya-religius di antara masyarakat Arab dan komunitas Muslim global. Di luar penggunaan formalnya dalam pendidikan, agama, dan pemerintahan, bahasa Arab membawa lapisan-lapisan makna yang berkaitan dengan identitas, yang sering kali terjalin dengan isu-isu etnisitas, religiusitas, dan rasa kepemilikan nasional. Koeksistensi antara Bahasa Arab Standar Modern (fusha) dan dialek-dialek regional ('ammiyyah) menciptakan lingkungan diglossik yang membentuk persepsi budaya penutur dan proses konstruksi identitas. Meskipun berbagai studi sosiolinguistik telah mengkaji peran simbolik bahasa Arab, literatur yang ada cenderung terfragmentasi secara tematik dan terbatas secara geografis, serta kurang memiliki sintesis

komprehensif tentang dinamika sosiokultural dan kerangka teoretis yang terlibat. Selain itu, pengaruh globalisasi, digitalisasi, dan migrasi transnasional terhadap fungsi identitas bahasa Arab yang terus berkembang masih belum dieksplorasi secara mendalam. Mengingat isu-isu tersebut, diperlukan tinjauan literatur yang sistematis dan integratif untuk memetakan, mengevaluasi, dan menghubungkan temuan-temuan yang terpisah. Penelitian ini bertujuan mengisi kesenjangan tersebut dengan menganalisis karya-karya akademik tentang peran bahasa Arab dalam pembentukan dan ekspresi identitas budaya. Dengan menerapkan teori-teori interdisipliner seperti konstruksi identitas linguistik, ideologi bahasa, dan diglosia, tinjauan ini mengidentifikasi tema-tema yang berulang, kesenjangan penelitian, dan pola-pola konseptual. Temuan-temuan ini menawarkan sintesis kritis yang tidak hanya berkontribusi pada sosiolinguistik bahasa Arab tetapi juga memberikan implikasi teoretis dan pedagogis untuk kebijakan bahasa, studi identitas, dan pendidikan bahasa Arab dalam konteks pluralistik dan terglobalisasi.

Kata kunci: bahasa Arab, identitas budaya, sosiolinguistik, diglosia, ideologi bahasa, globalisasi.

INTRODUCTION

Language is a fundamental element in the structure of human culture (Putri et al., 2025). It functions not only as a communication tool but also as a medium for the formation, preservation, and transmission of cultural identity within a community (Samad, 2024). In sociolinguistic studies, language is viewed as having close connections with value systems, symbols, and collective identity of society (Ahmadi et al., 2024). Language does not merely reflect culture but also shapes social perception, intergroup relational structures, and worldviews (Syafina Maulani & Rina Devianty, 2024). This phenomenon becomes increasingly relevant for study in the globalization era, characterized by cultural exchange and identity shifts.

In this context, Arabic occupies a unique position. As one of the oldest living and widely used Semitic languages, Arabic has more than 400 million native speakers across various Arab countries and serves as a liturgical and symbolic language for Muslims worldwide (Al Yamin, 2023). Arabic contains complex and multidimensional identity (Khasanah, 2024) content due to its role in religion, education, governance, and literature (Sultani & Ismail, 2023). However, in practice, Arabic language forms experience striking variations, particularly in the form of diglossia between fusha (standard Arabic) and 'ammiyyah (local dialects), which creates distinctive dynamics in the cultural identity construction of its speakers (Erfiani, 2020).

Previous sociolinguistic research shows that Arabic plays an important role in the formation of ethnic, religious, and national identity (Khasanah, 2024). On one hand,

fusha is viewed as a symbol of Arab cultural unity and nationalism (Al Yamin, 2023). On the other hand, local dialects reflect subcultural diversity and serve as a means of expressing more contextual social identity (Miolo et al., 2025). Even in Arab diaspora communities and non-Arab Muslim societies, Arabic often becomes a symbolic marker that strengthens religious and cultural bonds. This complexity demonstrates the importance of systematic study of the relationship between Arabic language and cultural identity.

Several previous studies have underlined the complexity of the relationship between Arabic language and cultural identity in diverse social contexts. Khairanis and Aldi (2024) showed that differences in phoneme realization, duration, and intonation between urban and rural Arabic dialects reflect social dynamics such as urbanization and linguistic conservatism, though this research remains limited to phonetic comparisons without elaborating on identity aspects reflectively (Retisfa Khairanis & Muhammad Aldi, 2025). Hidayat et al. (2024) examined Arabic script writing on vehicles as a form of religious and social expression, demonstrating how visual language serves as an identity symbol in public spaces, although it lacks discussion of language policy dimensions and social change (Hidayat et al., 2025). Meanwhile, Kasenda (2024) highlighted the role of Papua Malay as a lingua franca that brings together ethnic diversity in Papua, emphasizing the importance of inclusive language policies an approach that inspires new readings of Arabic as a tool for cultural integration (Kasenda, 2024).

In the context of Arab descendant communities in Makassar, Khair (2022) identified a shift in Arabic language use that is increasingly weakening despite institutional support, indicating that language preservation is not always parallel with cultural identity preservation (Tabri, 2023). Furthermore, Rahmah et al. (2024) through a phonological study of Moroccan Arabic dialect found that the phenomenon of vowel deletion in Darija is not merely linguistic variation but also reflects the social identity of speakers and the influence of colonial history and multilingualism that shapes the unique character of that dialect (Rahmah et al., 2024). Overall, these five studies enrich understanding of how Arabic functions as a symbol and medium of identity, although

most remain partial and have not yet integrated cross-disciplinary theoretical approaches systematically.

Although this topic has been extensively discussed in sociolinguistic literature, significant gaps still exist (Tolinggi & Maksudin, 2021). Previous research tends to focus on specific local contexts (for example, Arabic language learners in the West, Egyptian dialect speakers, or Arab diaspora in Europe), thus not yet providing a comprehensive and cross-contextual conceptual mapping. Additionally, the theoretical approaches used are diverse and have not been critically synthesized, and insufficiently reflect contemporary social dynamics such as globalization, digitalization, and migration that also influence the position of Arabic as a symbol of identity (Rachma, 2020).

This research is rooted in linguistic identity construction theory (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005) (Nasir & Karim, 2022), language ideology (Woolard & Schieffelin, 1994) (Ghufron & Anwar, 2020), the concept of diglossia (Ferguson, 1959) (Ghufron & Anwar, 2020), and linguistic anthropology approaches (Duranti, 1997) (Razin & Nurhayati, 2024). With this interdisciplinary theoretical framework, this article offers a comprehensive understanding of how Arabic functions not only as a communication tool but also as a social symbol that shapes and reflects cultural identity in pluralistic and dynamic societies.

Overall, the main contribution of this study is to present an integrated literature map, build new conceptual foundations, and strengthen the relevance of Arabic language studies in the continuously developing global social-cultural context. This article also provides practical implications, for instance in designing Arabic language learning curricula that are more sensitive to identity dimensions, and in language preservation efforts that consider the cultural complexity of its speakers.

To fill this gap, this research aims to systematically and analytically review academic literature that discusses the role of Arabic in cultural identity formation, both in Arab communities and non-Arab Muslim communities. More specifically, this research endeavors to identify and summarize major findings from various studies that highlight cultural identity construction through Arabic language; analyze a number of sociolinguistic variables that influence the relationship between Arabic and identity,

including language variation, language ideology, and social contexts of its use; reveal various gaps and limitations in previous research as a basis for formulating recommendations for further study development; and establish an integrative conceptual foundation by connecting these findings to sociolinguistic and linguistic anthropology theories.

Specifically, the scope of this study is limited to the relationship between Arabic language whether in the form of fusha, local dialects, or liturgical Arabic and the cultural identity construction of its speakers. Variables analyzed include representation of ethnic, religious, and national identity through linguistic practices, as well as social perceptions toward Arabic language use in various continuously changing sociocultural contexts (Farijanti et al., 2024).

In terms of hypothesis, this research assumes that Arabic plays a significant and multidimensional role in cultural identity formation, mediated by social factors such as language use context, level of diglossia, and language ideologies developing in society. This hypothesis is tested through systematic and comparative literature analysis, not through primary empirical research.

Research Methodology

This research employs a qualitative approach with a systematic and analytical literature study design. Data are collected through document review techniques, encompassing identification, selection, and interpretation of relevant academic literature including reputable journal articles, scientific proceedings, and academic books that discuss the relationship between Arabic language and cultural identity from a sociolinguistic perspective.

Inclusion criteria comprise publications that focus on sociolinguistic variables (such as diglossia, dialects, language ideology, code-switching, and cultural competence) and their relationship to cultural identity formation or expression. Non-academic literature, thematically irrelevant materials, or non-scientifically indexed sources are excluded.

Data are analyzed using thematic analysis techniques, employed to identify patterns, differences in perspectives, and dominant theoretical tendencies in previous

studies. The analysis process is conducted reflectively to generate critical synthesis and construct a conceptual model that illustrates the role of Arabic language in multidimensional cultural identity construction.

Research Results and Discussion

This discussion aims to elaborate on the main findings from nineteen scientific articles that have been systematically reviewed, in order to evaluate the theoretical and practical contributions of previous research. The focus encompasses the development of issues, methodology, and theoretical frameworks used in this field. Each article is analyzed based on its compatibility with study variables, position within theory, and relevance to contemporary issues. This review builds a strong foundation for identifying research gaps, thematic patterns, and strengthening researchers' arguments in formulating relevant and logical conclusions. More than mere description, this section presents a critical synthesis as a foundation for deeper scientific development.

Komang Damayanti et al. (2024) studied code-mixing in Instagram posts by @LestiKejora using a sociolinguistic approach. Three types of code-mixing were found: inner mixing (e.g., the use of Javanese in Indonesian sentences), outer mixing (Indonesian-English), and mixed forms (Indonesian, English, Arabic). The research concluded that code-mixing is chosen as a form of informal expression that reflects language variation in digital communication. For example, phrases like "Aku bangga banget sama you semua, jazakumullah ya!" demonstrate expressive cross-linguistic integration (Damayanti et al., 2024).

Rohmah, Maulana, and Anam (2025) examined the impact of dialect and code-mixing on Arabic speaking proficiency among pesantren students at AIQ Nuris 2. Findings showed that internal factors (such as regional origin and organization) and external factors (environment and learning) influence the emergence of language variation. For instance, students from East Java tend to pronounce the letter "qaf" as "ka". Code-mixing practices also enhance confidence and vocabulary, but can disrupt formal Arabic language structure. This research emphasizes the importance of sociolinguistic approaches in second language learning contexts (Rohmah et al., 2025).

Irma Suryani, Siti Amisa, and Triana Putri (2024) studied the subject and object pronoun system in Arabic-Malay using a linguistic-pragmatic approach. Two main types of pronouns were found: *ḍamīr bārīz* (visible) and *ḍamīr mustatir* (hidden), which are used according to sentence structure and communicative context. For example, in the sentence "huwa yaktubu" (he is writing), the word "huwa" is *ḍamīr bārīz*. This system reflects Malay socio-cultural identity and is important in learning and preserving Arabic-Malay linguistic heritage (Suryani et al., 2024).

Raisa Fidela, Agus Syahrani, and Dedy Ari Asfar (2024) analyzed forms and factors of code-mixing in the *Bicara Cinta* podcast between Cinta Laura and Maudy Ayunda. Through qualitative descriptive approach and discourse analysis, four types of code-mixing were found: *intra-sentential*, *inter-sentential*, *tag-switching*, and *intra-word* across 36 quotations. Contributing factors include role, variety, interpretation, speaker character, and language limitations. Code-mixing here not only reflects the bilingualism of public figures, but also functions as an expressive communication style that builds audience intimacy and demonstrates cosmopolitan identity. For example, the use of phrases like "*this is so penting*" shows an attractive stylistic blend in digital conversation (Fidela et al., 2024).

Elda Firnanda Zulianingtyas and Surana (2023) revealed the use of code-switching and code-mixing in KH Anwar Zahid's preaching on the YouTube channel Anza Channel. Using a sociolinguistic approach, variations of Indonesian, Javanese, Arabic, and English languages were found. The code-switching used includes internal (Indonesian–Javanese) and external (Indonesian–Arabic, Javanese–Arabic), while code-mixing encompasses multi-language combinations within a single utterance. For example, in one quote he said, "Ojo lali solat, istiqamah, jangan give up" (Don't forget to pray, be consistent, don't give up), demonstrating an inclusive and communicative preaching strategy to reach audiences with diverse linguistic backgrounds (Zulianingtyas & Surana, 2023).

Maharani Ayu Pramesti et al. (2021) examined code-switching in the interactions of female students at Pondok Gontor Putri 4 Kendari using a sociolinguistic approach. In a multilingual environment (Indonesian, Arabic, English), three types of code-

switching were found: metaphorical, conversational, and situational. Code-switching occurred in learning, worship, and social contexts, influenced by factors such as mother tongue, age, motivation, and the pesantren environment. For instance, in classroom discussions, students might say, "Kita hafalin ini biar bisa jawab fi al-imtiḥān" (Let's memorize this so we can answer in the exam), reflecting language mixing in educational and religious situations (Pramesti et al., 2021).

Wahyu Hanafi's research (2020) studied the use of 'Āmiyyah at Pondok Pesantren Darul Falah Sukorejo, Ponorogo, which emerged from the mandatory Arabic language practice. This environment created 'al-bai'ah al-lughawiyah' (linguistic environment), but also gave birth to a distinctive local dialect based on Arabic-Indonesian code-mixing. For example, phrases like "anta pergi ke kantin" (you go to the canteen) show interlanguage interference. Concerns about the extinction of regional languages prompted the pesantren to launch preservation programs, such as cultural festivals and language weeks. This study emphasizes the importance of balance between foreign language learning and local language preservation in religious institutions (Putra, 2020).

Agil Husein Al Munawar, Mad Ali, and Yayan Nurbayan (2025) discussed the impact of globalization on Arabic language learning in Indonesia through a literature study. Globalization encourages the use of digital technology and online platforms in learning, making Arabic relevant for academic, economic, and diplomatic needs. However, challenges emerge such as foreign language dominance and low digital literacy among teachers. Researchers suggest method innovation, technology mastery, and curriculum adaptation. For example, the use of applications like Duolingo for Arabic vocabulary practice shows how technology supports modern learning (Munawar et al., 2025).

Adam Hafidz Al Fajar (2025) reviewed the evolution of Arabic and English language culture in modern pesantren through historical study. Three transformation phases were found: traditional, transitional, and modern. Arabic developed from passive use toward active communication, while English emerged as a response to educational globalization. Strategies such as creating bilingual environments, bilingual policies, and visionary leadership, as implemented at Pesantren Gontor, proved effective in forming

adaptive language culture. This confirms the pesantren's ability to harmonize Islamic values with global demands (Fajar, 2025).

Muhammad Yusuf (2020) emphasized the importance of integrating intercultural competence in Arabic language teaching at Madrasah Aliyah. Through literature study and content analysis, this competence includes understanding language as a cultural product, awareness of cultural differences, and empathetic attitudes. The learning process must be constructive, interactive, reflective, and responsive, with evaluation through oral tests, portfolios, and peer assessment. Teachers are required to understand Arab-Islamic culture and be able to compare it with local culture. For example, discussing differences in greeting customs between Arab and Indonesian cultures can enhance students' cultural sensitivity (Yusuf, 2020).

Kuliyatun's research (2022) examined the impact of Arabic language curriculum implementation (KBK, KTSP, K13) on Arabic language abilities of MAN 1 Metro City students. Through a phenomenological approach, it was found that the more appropriate the curriculum implementation, the higher the competence in the four maharah (istima', kalam, qira'ah, kitabah). However, obstacles such as lack of teacher readiness, irrelevant materials, and weak infrastructure weakened the results. For instance, teachers not trained in communicative approaches caused weak maharah kalam among students. This research emphasizes the need for continuous curriculum evaluation to remain adaptive and effective (Kuliyatun, n.d.).

Fauzan, Azkia Muharom Albantani, Fatkhul Arifin, & Kisno Umbar (2023) evaluated the BIPA book "Ramah Berbahasa Jilid 1" showing content feasibility of only 50%, categorized as low according to Nurgiyantoro's standards. Main problems lie in inconsistent material presentation, lack of cultural content, and inappropriateness of vocabulary and grammar for Arabic speakers. For example, the use of informal Indonesian expressions without Arabic cultural equivalents makes learners struggle to understand context. Researchers suggest adjusting linguistic and cultural structures to make this book effective for BIPA learning for Arabic speakers (Fauzan et al., 2023).

Kamilatun Nazilla (2025) studied ibdal rules in Arabic word derivation by combining classical and modern linguistic approaches. She concluded that

understanding ibdal requires synthesis between classical aesthetics and sanad (from al-Farahidi and Sibawaih) and modern phonological-morphological analysis. Ibdal is not merely a phonetic phenomenon, but also shows Arabic language flexibility toward temporal changes. For example, letter changes in the word سأل becoming شاء in certain dialects reflect local phonetic adaptation. These findings enrich Arabic linguistic curriculum and open space for interdisciplinary studies (Nazilla, 2025).

Riadussolihin, Roslan bin Ab Rahman, & Lenny Herlina (2024) discuss the decline of local Arabic scripts such as Aljamiado (Spain), Xiaojing (China), and Jawi (Nusantara) as signs of weakening Islamic influence. These scripts emerged from the acculturation of Islam and local cultures, but deteriorated due to colonialism and cultural assimilation. For example, Aljamiado was used by Morisco Muslims to maintain their identity when Islam was banned in Spain. This research emphasizes that the loss of these scripts is not merely a linguistic issue, but is closely related to politics, ideology, and the history of Islamic civilization (Rahman et al., 2024).

M. Taufiq Hidayat Pabbajah, Kaharuddin, & St. Fauziah (2024) examine the complexity of Arabic dialects through literature studies, showing geographical, social, and cultural influences. Dialects such as Maghribi, Egyptian, Levantine, Gulf, and Iraqi display phonetic and syntactic variations that reflect local identity. For instance, the Egyptian dialect is popular through media and music, while the Gulf dialect is influenced by Persian vocabulary. Local dialects such as Al-Istintha' and Al-Fahfahah demonstrate unique phonological characteristics specific to their regions. This study affirms the importance of sociolinguistic context in Arabic dialectology studies (Pabbajah & Ramli, 2024).

Muhammad Zairul Haq (2022) investigates difficulties in translating Arabic idioms into Indonesian. He identifies four main factors: the culture-based nature of idioms (sama'i), irregularity in prepositional meanings, the importance of social context, and the lack of idiomatic curriculum. For example, idioms like بلغ السيل الزبى cannot be translated literally, but rather as "sudah tak tertahankan" (already unbearable). This research demonstrates the importance of cultural sensitivity and context in translation, not merely grammatical approaches (Haq, 2022).

Research by Riadussolihin, Roslan, and Zakiyatun (2024) examines the shift from Jawi script to Roman script in the Malay-Nusantara region, which is viewed as an ideological conflict between Islamic culture and Western colonialism. This literature study shows that colonial educational policies and the role of local elites accelerated the marginalization of Jawi script. Jawi script is not merely a writing tool, but a symbol of Islamic-Malay identity. For example, the removal of Jawi from school textbooks caused younger generations to lose access to their cultural heritage. The authors encourage state and community support in efforts to revitalize Jawi script (Sajidin & Nufus, 2024).

Research by Nashihah, Hafidah, and Qosim (2023) found that Pondok Pesantren Ta'mirul Islam Surakarta develops Arabic language skills integratively across three domains of activities (intra, co, and extracurricular) through an integrative model that balances theory and practice. Activities such as daily muhadatsah, insyaul yaum, and listening 'arabi create a bi'ah lughawiyah that supports comprehensive skills. For instance, Arabic debate competitions among students encourage active thinking and speaking in real contexts. These results are relevant for developing Arabic language curricula in modern pesantren (Nashihaha et al., 2023).

Research by Septika Rudiamon et al. (2024) reviews the development of Arabic lexicology as the study of meaning, origins, and word structure from cultural and historical perspectives. From the as-sima' method to qiyas, lexicology developed as a systematic effort to preserve the purity of the Arabic language. Scholars like Abed Al-Jabiri view vocabulary codification as a form of protection against dialectal influences. A practical example is the compilation of the Lisan al-'Arab dictionary, which became a primary reference in classical linguistic studies. This study affirms the role of lexicology in language preservation and strengthening interdisciplinary studies such as philosophy, anthropology, and literature (Nashihaha et al., 2023).

1. Analysis of Cultural Identity Construction through Arabic Language

Arabic, as a language with high religious, historical, and sociocultural value, plays an important role in the formation of cultural identity, both individually and collectively. Various studies show that identity construction through Arabic does not occur in a sterile linguistic space, but rather in a dynamic multilingual landscape. A

study by Rohmah et al. (2025) demonstrates that the use of dialect and code-mixing in pesantren environments reflects how students build their linguistic identity amid diverse backgrounds and social activities.

Research by Hafidz Al Fajar (2025) and Pramesti et al. (2021) underscores the importance of pesantren environments as cultural language laboratories. In bilingual or even trilingual ecosystems, code-switching practices between Arabic, Indonesian, and English become a reflection of santri adaptation to global norms without losing Islamic essence. The use of Arabic in this context is not merely a communication tool, but also a symbol of religious authority and a bridge to the transnational collective identity of the Muslim community.

Furthermore, in educational contexts, Yusuf (2020) and Kuliyatun (2022) emphasize the importance of integrating intercultural competence in Arabic language teaching. Students' cultural identity is formed through exposure to Arab-Islamic values and their contrast with local culture. This process, when conducted reflectively and dialogically, creates individuals who are not only linguistically proficient but also culturally sensitive.

From lexical and phonological perspectives, research by Nazilla (2025) and Septika Rudiamon et al. (2024) reveals that the structure and evolution of Arabic, such as ibdal phenomena and lexicology, are inseparable from Arab cultural and historical dynamics. This shows that every linguistic element contains cultural meaning that enriches speakers' identity construction.

The pragmatic and social aspects of Arabic also emerge in studies on pronoun usage and idioms. Suryani et al. (2024) found that the pronominal system in Arab-Malay not only fulfills grammatical functions but also conveys sociocultural nuances of Malay society that adopts Arabic as a symbol of grandeur and politeness. Meanwhile, Zairul Haq (2022) shows that idioms in Arabic carry complex cultural burdens and cannot always be translated literally, reflecting the role of context in shaping meaning.

Cultural identity transformation can also be traced through historical studies. Riadussolihin et al. (2024) documented the decline of Arabic scripts such as Jawi, Aljamiado, and Xiaojing as a result of Western cultural hegemony. The replacement of

these scripts is not merely a linguistic shift but also symbolic of ideological dominance and changes in local Muslim community identity. In the Nusantara context, Jawi script once represented the visual representation of Islamization and now becomes a battleground between cultural conservation and modernization.

Code-mixing involving Arabic is also frequently found in digital media, as in research by Damayanti et al. (2024) and Fidela et al. (2024). The use of Arabic in social media posts and podcasts is not merely an expressive style but also a strategy for asserting cosmopolitan, religious, and intellectual identity. This shows how Arabic becomes a medium for negotiating identity in the digital era.

On the other hand, studies by Al Munawar et al. (2025) and Hanafi (2020) warn of globalization challenges that erode Arabic dominance among younger generations. Digital technology expands access but also intensifies foreign language influence. Therefore, institutions like pesantren must be able to balance global demands with Arabic language cultural preservation.

Finally, Arabic dialectology discussed by Pabbajah et al. (2024) shows that the diversity of Arabic dialects itself represents complex cultural identity in the Arab world. Dialectal variation is not merely a communication barrier but a mirror of community diversity and historical dynamics.

This comprehensive analysis of cultural identity construction through Arabic shows that language is not merely a static entity but a field of social praxis laden with ideological and symbolic meaning. Arabic, in multicultural and multilingual contexts like Indonesia, becomes both a cognitive and affective instrument in shaping self-understanding and individual social position as part of the global Muslim community. The utilization of Arabic in religious, educational, and digital spheres demonstrates a dialectic between identity conservatism and cultural expression modernization. This phenomenon confirms that identity is not formed linearly but through continuous negotiation between local, global, and spiritual values. Thus, Arabic not only reflects identity but also becomes an arena for symbolic power articulation, cultural resistance, and evolving transnational affiliation. This perspective opens space for more

interdisciplinary further studies to explore the interconnection between language ideology, learner agency, and identity politics within the framework of globalization.

2. Synthesis of Sociolinguistic Variables in Arabic Language and Identity Relations

Arabic language, in numerous social and cultural contexts, functions not merely as a communication tool, but also as a shaper of collective and personal identity. Sociolinguistic studies of Arabic language demonstrate that variables such as dialect, code-mixing, code-switching, intercultural competence, and communication media become meeting points between linguistic praxis and identity construction. In research by Rohmah et al. (2025) and Pramesti et al. (2021), code-mixing and code-switching practices in pesantren environments become vehicles for forming students' linguistic identity. They integrate Arabic, Indonesian, and English in daily communication, forming multilingual communication patterns that are adaptive and reflective of Islamic identity and modernity.

This phenomenon is also reflected in digital environments. Damayanti et al. (2024) and Fidela et al. (2024) demonstrate that the use of Arabic language in social media such as Instagram or podcasts becomes an expressive and symbolic medium for public figures to display cosmopolitan, religious, and contemporary identities. The use of Arabic-English-Indonesian code-mixing reflects identity flexibility in fluid online spaces filled with negotiation. This shows how digital sociolinguistics forms new patterns in the relationship between language and self-representation.

From a pedagogical perspective, Yusuf (2020) and Kuliyatun (2022) explain how Arabic language learning oriented toward intercultural competence encourages learners to understand language as cultural representation. They not only learn linguistic structures but also values and social norms embedded in Arab culture. This learning plays an important role in instilling religious and Islamic cultural identity in Indonesian students while simultaneously sharpening their ability to adapt in global contexts.

Arabic dialectology also reveals the social dimension of linguistic identity. Research by Pabbajah et al. (2024) highlights the diversity of Arabic lahjah (dialects) that reflect cultural and historical variations of Arab communities. Phonological,

morphological, and syntactic differences between dialects such as Egyptian, Maghrebi, Gulf, and Levantine serve as evidence that Arabic language is not a single monolith, but rather a spectrum of identities representing the socio-political dynamics of Arab regions.

On another side, the historical and ideological attachment of Arabic language to Islamic identity is recorded in studies by Riadussolihin et al. (2024) and Sajidin & Nufus (2024). The decline in the use of Arabic scripts such as Jawi in the Archipelago or Aljamiado in Spain represents ideological and power shifts. The shift from Arabic to Latin script reflects cultural identity transformation, from what was originally Islam-based toward modern secularism, due to the influence of colonialism and state policies.

Furthermore, pragmatic factors such as the use of pronouns and Arabic idioms also become indicators of the relationship between language and identity. Studies by Suryani et al. (2024) show that the pronominal system in Arabic-Malay preserves social structures that indicate hierarchy, politeness, and cultural affiliation. Similarly, Haq (2022) explains that Arabic idioms reflect cultural construction and cannot be translated literally without losing their cultural meaning. Both studies affirm that language carries the worldview of its community owners.

In the context of globalization and modernity, Al Munawar et al. (2025) remind us that Arabic language faces major challenges from foreign language dominance. However, through technological adaptation and learning method innovation, Arabic language can still become part of the global identity of the Muslim ummah. This is reinforced by research by Al Fajar (2025) which shows that modern pesantren like Gontor are able to create language environments that support the preservation of religious identity while simultaneously forming global identity through balanced use of Arabic and English.

Interesting findings also emerge in studies by Zulianingtyas & Surana (2023), which show that in KH Anwar Zahid's da'wah practice on YouTube media, language variation (Arabic, Javanese, Indonesian, English) is used strategically to build closeness with audiences from various backgrounds. The use of Arabic language in this context is not merely a symbol of religiosity, but also a rhetorical tool to strengthen the collective identity of Indonesian Muslims in the digital era.

Meanwhile, from a purely linguistic perspective, studies by Nazilla (2025) and Rudiamon et al. (2024) show that Arabic language phenomena such as ibdal rules and lexicological studies cannot be separated from cultural development. Arabic language demonstrates its vitality and flexibility through internal evolution influenced by communication needs, Islamic expansion, and historical dynamics. In this regard, language serves as a marker and guardian of Arab cultural identity.

Finally, Nashihah et al. (2023) through studies at Pondok Pesantren Ta'mirul Islam show a model of Arabic language development based on *bi'ah lughawiyah* (language environment) that not only supports the formation of linguistic skills but also character and student identity formation. Arabic language becomes an integral part of their daily life and personal identity as Muslims with global perspectives yet rooted in Islamic values.

The synthesis of these twenty scientific studies shows that the relationship between Arabic language and identity is not linear, but complex and multidimensional. Sociolinguistic variables such as code-mixing, code-switching, dialects, idioms, pronouns, as well as cultural and pedagogical competence form a mosaic of relationships that reflect how Arabic language is used to form, maintain, and negotiate identity in various contexts. In local contexts (pesantren, social media, education), Arabic language represents religious and Islamic cultural identity; while in global contexts, Arabic language interacts dynamically with modernity, technology, and other ideological forces.

Arabic language, with all its linguistic and cultural dimensions, remains a key instrument in the construction and reconstruction of Muslim community cultural identity. Therefore, sociolinguistic approaches to Arabic language are not only academically important but also strategic in maintaining the continuity of the ummah's identity amid the currents of changing times.

Through the sociolinguistic theoretical framework that emphasizes the relationship between language and social identity (Gumperz, 1982; Bucholtz & Hall, 2005), it can be affirmed that Arabic language not only reflects existing identity but also becomes an arena where identity is actively constructed and negotiated. The complexity

of this relationship shows that linguistic identity in the Arab context is not fixed, but always in the process of becoming, depending on the space, time, and social interactions that surround it. This aligns with the constructionist approach to identity, which views language as social praxis that creates meaning and social positions. Thus, studies of Arabic language and identity are not only relevant for understanding linguistic dynamics in Muslim communities but also for reading broader social phenomena, such as cultural resistance, global integration, and value transformation in the digital era. Therefore, studies of this kind open space for critical reflection on how Arabic language will continue to play a strategic role in the landscape of Muslim ummah identity, both at local and transnational levels, as well as how language and education policies can be directed to strengthen this role sustainably.

3. Critical Evaluation of Literature and Conceptual Model Development

The study of the relationship between Arabic language and cultural identity has attracted the attention of many researchers in the fields of sociolinguistics, pragmatics, education, and cultural studies. The analyzed literature demonstrates diverse approaches, ranging from ethnographic observation, literature review, to historical-critical studies. However, in constructing an integrative conceptual model, a theoretical synthesis that critically and systematically brings together various dimensions of sociolinguistic variables is needed. The evaluation of twenty scientific journals analyzed in this study provides a foundation for understanding, assessing, and formulating a conceptual framework for the relationship between Arabic language and cultural identity formation.

Generally, there is a consensus in the literature that Arabic language functions not only as a communication tool, but also as a symbol of religious, political, and social identity. In the educational context, Yusuf (2020) and Kuliayatun (2022) emphasize the importance of integrating intercultural competence in Arabic language learning in Indonesia. Arabic language is positioned here as a symbolic language that shapes students' Islamic identity through the internalization of Arab-Islamic cultural values. However, criticism emerges regarding the curriculum's limitations in accommodating

pragmatic and idiomatic aspects, which are actually important mediums in the construction of cultural meaning.

A more contextual approach is found in studies by Rohmah et al. (2025) and Pramesti et al. (2021) who explore the role of the social-pesantren environment in shaping students' linguistic practices. Arabic language is practiced in a multilingual space that allows for code-switching and dialectality, as a form of adaptive strategy toward complex identity. Here, the conceptual model that might be developed is linguistic-cultural negotiation, where identity is formed through the encounter between the Arabic language system and local cultural contexts.

Research by Pabbajah et al. (2024) and Nazilla (2025) enriches the literature by presenting internal variations within Arabic language itself. Their studies show that Arabic language is not monolithic, but consists of various dialects and phonological phenomena such as ibdal, which reflect the social dynamics and cultural history of Arabs. Critical evaluation of these findings highlights the need to construct a non-essentialist conceptual model, one that views Arabic language as a discursive space where identity is formed through variation and change, not through structural constancy.

In the realm of media and digital communication, Damayanti et al. (2024) and Fidela et al. (2024) examine the phenomenon of code-switching in social media content and podcasts. Arabic language, in this context, is used symbolically to build a religious, intellectual, and global self-image. Language becomes performative, creating and continuously modifying identity. This study provides a basis for developing a performative-linguistic identity model, which positions language as a social practice that forms identity situationally and contextually.

Meanwhile, Riadussolihin et al. (2024) and Sajidin & Nufus (2024) contribute important historical perspectives in examining the relationship between Arabic language and cultural identity through studies of Arabic script shifts such as Jawi, Aljamiado, and Xiaojing. The loss of these scripts is not merely linguistic degradation, but also a symbol of the elimination of Islamic identity in the local socio-cultural landscape due to colonization and Western cultural hegemonization. This study is

important in forming an ideological-linguistic resistance model, where language is seen as a field of resistance against ideological domination through the preservation or revitalization of linguistic forms that represent collective identity.

Several other studies, such as those conducted by Suryani et al. (2024) and Zairul Haq (2022), present the micro-dimension of the relationship between Arabic language and identity through analysis of pronouns and idioms. Their findings show that linguistic structures such as *ḍamīr* and idiomatic expressions contain distinctive social and cultural values. Identity here is formed not only through what is said, but also how something is said a reflection of the value system in Arab society. The relevant conceptual model is pragmatic-cultural embodiment, where micro-linguistic elements represent cultural meaning in linguistic actions.

Another criticism of the available literature is the lack of attention to the context of globalization and digital media in reframing Arabic language identity. Studies by Al Munawar et al. (2025) and Hanafi (2020) show that pedagogical and technological transformation greatly impacts the existence of Arabic language. Arabic language must now compete with other global languages, especially in digital spaces and educational institutions. However, there is an opportunity to create a glocalized linguistic identity model that bridges the demands of global modernity and the preservation of local and religious identity.

Finally, findings from Nashihah et al. (2023) and Al Fajar (2025) emphasize the importance of establishing *bi'ah lughawiyah* (language environment) in pesantren institutions. Arabic language is not learned merely as a science, but is brought to life in daily practice. Identity is formed through active involvement in language practices integrated with social life. This supports the formation of a situated linguistic immersion conceptual model, namely a model where cultural identity is formed through language learning based on direct experience in authentic social contexts.

This perspective opens space for understanding that linguistic identity formation is not only determined by curriculum structure or teaching material exposure, but is significantly influenced by the quality of social interactions that occur in the learning environment. Thus, *bi'ah lughawiyah* is not only a pedagogical tool, but also a symbolic

arena where the internalization of cultural and ideological values takes place. This aligns with Vygotsky's (1978) view on meaning construction through social interaction in the zone of proximal development. Therefore, identity formation through language in pesantren reflects a complex socio-cultural process, which should be considered in the development of integrative conceptual models in the future.

CONCLUSION

Based on a systematic review of various sociolinguistic literature examining the relationship between Arabic language and cultural identity, this article concludes that Arabic plays a highly significant role in the construction of collective identity among both Arab societies and non-Arab Muslim communities. This article successfully reveals that the function of Arabic is not limited merely to serving as a communication tool, but also functions as a complex religious, intellectual, and cultural symbol. Through a critical examination of previous research findings, this study demonstrates how the dynamics of diglossia, social perceptions toward fusha and 'amiyyah, and the symbolic use of Arabic in diaspora communities reflect the processes of cultural identity formation and negotiation. The primary objective of this article—to formulate a theoretical and critical mapping of the relationship between Arabic language and cultural identity—has been achieved through a systematic approach to relevant literature. Thus, this article not only addresses the research questions posed but also provides an important contribution in reinforcing the position of Arabic as a key element in contemporary sociolinguistic studies, while simultaneously opening opportunities for further empirical and contextual research.

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