Arabic Language in the Current of Modernity: Ideas and Transformations in the National Webinar of the Arabic Language Education Study Program, IAI Hamzanwadi NW East Lombok

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Abstract: This article explores the dynamics of the Arabic language as it encounters the challenges and demands of modernity, as discussed in the National Webinar held by the Islamic Education Study Program at IAI Hamzanwadi NW East Lombok. The webinar served as an academic platform to examine how Arabic, as both a classical and sacred language, navigates contemporary developments in education, technology, and global communication. The objective of the webinar was to identify critical ideas and transformations in the teaching and learning of Arabic in response to current shifts in educational paradigms. Using qualitative documentation and thematic analysis of the webinar's key sessions and speakers' insights, this study highlights the relevance of Arabic in modern Islamic education and the innovative methods proposed for its revitalization. Findings reveal a strong academic interest in integrating digital tools, interdisciplinary approaches, and contextual pedagogy to sustain Arabic as a living and dynamic language. The article concludes that embracing modernity does not necessarily undermine the sacred character of Arabic but instead opens opportunities for its broader influence in the modern world.

Keywords: Arabic Language, Modernity, Islamic Education, Webinar, Pedagogical Transformation

INTRODUCTION

Arabic is the language of revelation, the language of the Qur'an, and the primary language of classical Islamic scholarship. Historically, Arabic has played a central role in shaping a cosmopolitan and scholarly Islamic civilization. It served as the medium for transmitting knowledge, culture, and spirituality across generations (Ibrahim, 2011). Its strategic position in the Islamic world elevated Arabic not merely as a means of communication, but as a symbol of knowledge and civilizational identity (Nasirin et al., 2023; Nasri, 2024; Nasri & Rahmatullah, 2025). In the context of modernity, however, Arabic faces significant challenges. Globalization and the rapid advancement of information technology have reshaped the landscape of global communication, raising concerns about the marginalization of Arabic in favor of dominant world languages, particularly English (Albirini, 2016). Within Islamic education, this situation prompts a critical question: how can Arabic remain relevant and adaptable in the face of changing times?

Modernity is not only about technological advancement but also entails a paradigm shift in thinking and educational approaches. Islamic education must transform to meet the needs of a new generation immersed in digital culture and informational complexity (Zaharna, 2010). In this context, Arabic language education requires reform in terms of methodology, media, and curriculum (Hady et al., 2025; Hady & Nasri, 2023; Manan & Nasri, 2024). In response to these challenges, the Islamic Education Study Program of IAI Hamzanwadi NW East Lombok organized a National Webinar titled "Arabic Language in the Current of Modernity." This intellectual forum brought together scholars, Arabic language experts, and educators to discuss the dynamics, challenges, and solutions for Arabic teaching in the modern era. The discussions reflected a strong consensus: Arabic must evolve from a static language into one that is living, progressive, and relevant. One of the key issues raised was the integration of technology in Arabic language instruction. Educational technologies such as e-learning, learning apps, and even artificial intelligence are now essential tools. According to Warschauer & Kern (2000),

technology enables more contextual, flexible, and collaborative language learning. Therefore, digital transformation in Arabic education is not optional—it is necessary.

Additionally, interdisciplinary approaches were highlighted as vital strategies for Arabic revitalization. Language learning cannot be separated from the learners' social, cultural, and psychological contexts. Approaches such as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Task-Based Learning are seen as effective in creating active and meaningful learning experiences (Richards, 2006). Modernizing Arabic does not mean stripping it of its sacred values. Instead, it means expanding its relevance and functionality as a bridge of knowledge, culture, and religion in a globalized world. In this way, Arabic remains a dynamic and living heritage language (Suleiman, 2003). It is therefore essential to document and analyze the ideas that emerge in academic forums such as this webinar. This article aims to examine the reflections and insights of the webinar speakers as a contribution to the reform of Arabic language education in the modern age.

METHODS

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach aimed at deeply examining the ideas and transformations surrounding the teaching of Arabic, as discussed in the National Webinar organized by the Islamic Education Study Program at the Institut Agama Islam Hamzanwadi NW Lombok Timur. The webinar served as an intellectual platform that captured the collective thoughts of academics, practitioners, and Arabic language scholars in responding to the challenges posed by modernity (K. Yin, 2018; Patton, 2002; W. Creswell, 2012). The primary data for this study were derived from the documentation of the webinar activities, which included video and audio recordings, presentation materials delivered by the speakers, as well as notes from moderators and the organizing committee. All of these materials were obtained through direct access to the organizing team and the digital platforms used for broadcasting the webinar, such as Zoom Meeting and YouTube. In addition to this, the study also utilized secondary data comprising academic books, journal articles, and other relevant literature that support the thematic framework of modernity and Arabic language instruction (Gopalakrishnan et al., 2011; Prada-Ramallal et al., 2018; Winslow, 2009).

Data collection was conducted using a documentation method, which involved systematically gathering and reviewing materials that formed part of the webinar proceedings. This process aimed to develop a comprehensive understanding of the core ideas presented by the various speakers. The data collected were then analyzed using a thematic content analysis method. The researcher began by thoroughly familiarizing themselves with the entire content of the webinar through repeated viewing of the recordings and reviewing the available materials. A coding process was then carried out to identify and label important segments of the content that addressed key issues such as the integration of technology in Arabic language instruction, shifts in pedagogical approaches, challenges posed by globalization, and adaptive strategies proposed by the speakers (De Sordi, 2024; Phillips, 1999; Raja Sree & Mary Saira Bhanu, 2020).

The codes were subsequently grouped into major themes that represented the main patterns of thought emerging from the webinar discussions. These themes were then interpreted in light of existing academic literature to gain deeper and more contextual insights. As a result, the findings of this analysis not only reflect the views of the webinar speakers but also contribute to broader academic debates concerning the future of Arabic in a modern context. To ensure data validity, the study employed triangulation by comparing the content of the webinar with relevant academic references and audience feedback during the discussion sessions. This technique was intended to strengthen the interpretation, minimize potential bias, and reflect the diversity of perspectives in addressing the issue of Arabic language in the context of modernity. Through this descriptive qualitative approach, the study aspires to clearly and sharply portray how Arabic language renewal is being constructed by contemporary Muslim thinkers and educators in response to the rapidly shifting landscape of the modern world. It also serves as a documentary effort to preserve and highlight the significant intellectual contributions that emerged from this nationally organized academic forum (B. Miles, et al., 2014; B. Miles & Huberman, 1994; Nuttavuthisit, 2019).
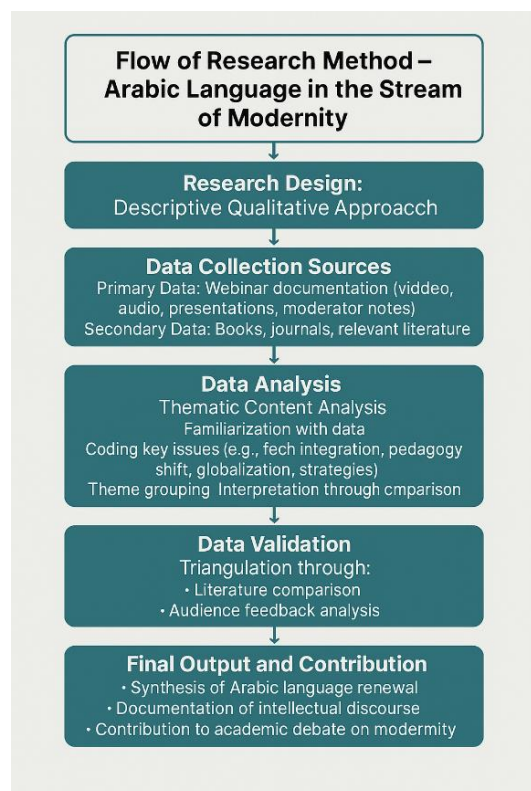
Figure 1. Flow of Research Method – Arabic Language in the Stream of Modernity

This figure illustrates the systematic stages of the research method, starting from the qualitative descriptive design, data collection through webinar documentation and literature, thematic content analysis, validation via triangulation, and concluding with the study's contribution to academic discourse on Arabic language renewal in the context of modernity.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The National Webinar on Arabic Language and Modernity, held by the Islamic Education Study Program at IAI Hamzanwadi NW Lombok Timur, presented a rich collection of academic insights and empirical reflections on how Arabic adapts to modern demands. Three major findings emerged from the documentation and analysis of this academic forum:

1. Integration of Technology in Arabic Language Teaching

Speakers consistently emphasized the critical role of digital technology in revitalizing Arabic learning. Innovations such as mobile applications, gamified platforms, AI-based tools (e.g., speech recognition and auto-diacritization), and virtual classrooms have redefined the engagement of students with Arabic texts. This integration addresses not only accessibility but also learner motivation and personalization of learning paths.

2. Pedagogical Shifts Toward Student-Centered Approaches

The traditional grammar-translation method, while still present, was critiqued for its limitations in fostering communicative competence. Discussions highlighted a pedagogical shift towards active learning models such as task-based language teaching (TBLT), flipped classrooms, and communicative language teaching (CLT). These methods focus on learner autonomy, meaningful interaction, and context-driven learning, aligning Arabic teaching with global linguistic education trends.

3. Ideological and Cultural Repositioning of Arabic in Modern Society

Several panelists drew attention to the tension between preserving Arabic's sacred identity (as the language of the Qur'an) and its instrumental role in contemporary fields such as diplomacy, media, and academia. There was a call to reinterpret Arabic not only as a liturgical language but also as a living, evolving medium of thought and innovation. This perspective broadens Arabic's relevance beyond religious spheres into global intellectual participation.
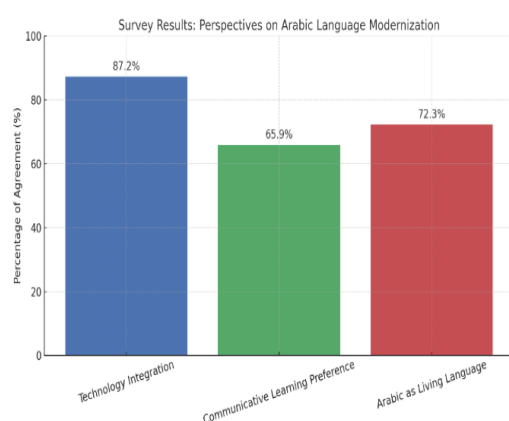

Figure 2. Survey Results: Perspectives on Arabic Language Modernization

- 87.2% mendukung integrasi teknologi dalam pembelajaran bahasa Arab.
- 65.9% memilih pendekatan pembelajaran komunikatif.

- 72.3% setuju bahwa bahasa Arab perlu diajarkan sebagai bahasa hidup, tidak hanya sebagai bahasa agama.

Discussion

The findings of this webinar resonate with global shifts in language education, particularly in contexts where traditional pedagogies intersect with the imperatives of modernization. The adoption of technology in Arabic instruction reflects what Warschauer and Healey call the "sociocognitive approach to computer-assisted language learning," where language acquisition is enhanced through digital interaction and cultural immersion (Atkinson, 2014; Ocando Finol, 2019; Schuller & McTear, 2021). The presence of AI tools and interactive apps aligns with what Godwin-Jones termed "ubiquitous learning environments," indicating a transition of Arabic education into hybrid, multimodal spaces (Idris, 2022; Niyomves et al., 2024; O'Byrne & Pytash, 2015a, 2015b; Perez, 2022).

The second finding regarding pedagogical transformation aligns with the constructivist theory of learning, especially as articulated by Vygotsky's notion of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Learners thrive when they are engaged in socially meaningful tasks that are scaffolded through interaction (Nasri, 2015, 2016b, 2016a, 2017, 2020c, 2020b, 2020a, 2022). In Arabic language classrooms, shifting toward TBLT or CLT means that instructors are not merely transferring linguistic rules but enabling learners to produce language in realistic contexts. This also echoes Al-Busaidi's observations about Omani Arabic learners, where communicative strategies proved more effective than rote memorization (Al Abri et al., 2017; Boggu, 2014).

The third finding introduces a more ideological dimension. Arabic is often seen through a binary lens: as a sacred language preserved in religious orthodoxy or as a utilitarian tool for secular communication. However, the webinar suggested a reconciliation of both roles, which supports Gade's thesis on the "ethical lifeworld of Arabic," where the language sustains both tradition and transformation. Repositioning Arabic as a dynamic cultural force, especially in digital arenas like podcasts, online journalism, and academic networks, affirms its relevance to younger generations and multilingual societies (Hammad, 2017; Uqba et al., 2024).

Furthermore, the conversation around Arabic's role in modernity must also be situated within the broader discourse of decolonization and epistemic pluralism. As Alatas argued, language education in the Muslim world must challenge the "intellectual captivity" that often places Western epistemologies at the center (Nasri et al., 2025). The renewal of Arabic education thus becomes a project of reclaiming indigenous knowledge systems and reshaping identity through linguistic empowerment (Olofsson et al., 2024; Ziajka Stanton, 2023). In essence, the National Webinar not only presented technical solutions but also initiated a broader epistemological discourse on how Arabic can thrive amid technological acceleration, global educational reforms, and identity negotiation. The themes discussed point toward an integrative model—where tradition informs innovation, and modern tools serve classical depth.

CONCLUSION

The National Webinar organized by the Arabic Language Education Study Program at the Institut Agama Islam Hamzanwadi NW Lombok Timur served as a significant academic platform to reflect on the evolving landscape of Arabic language education in the face of modernity. The discussions revealed that technological integration, pedagogical shifts, and a renewed vision of Arabic's role in the global context are at the heart of this transformation. First, the integration of digital technology—ranging from interactive platforms to language-learning applications—has become a necessity rather than an option. It enables a more flexible, engaging, and learner-centered experience, in line with the demands of today's digital generation. Secondly, there is a noticeable shift from traditional grammar-based instruction to communicative and contextual teaching methods, which emphasize practical usage and student participation in real-life contexts. Most importantly, Arabic is no longer viewed solely as a sacred or religious language, but is being redefined as a living, dynamic language relevant to science, diplomacy, and digital discourse. The webinar highlighted the need for a holistic and adaptive approach to Arabic education—one that honors tradition while embracing innovation. This collective reflection is a meaningful step toward building a forward-looking, inclusive, and transformative Arabic language pedagogy in Indonesia.

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