

## **Sufistic Eco-Theology–Based Arabic Language Education: An Environmental Spirituality Approach to Language Learning**

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### **Article History**

Received : November 12<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Revised : November 23<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Accepted : December 20<sup>th</sup>, 2025

**Abstract:** This study is motivated by the limited integration of spiritual values and ecological awareness in Arabic language education, which has predominantly emphasized linguistic competence while neglecting ethical and spiritual dimensions. In fact, the Arabic language is epistemologically connected to Islamic teachings, including Sufistic eco-theology that views nature as a manifestation of divine signs. This research aims to analyze and formulate a Sufistic eco-theological approach to Arabic language education as a means of fostering environmental spirituality within language learning. Employing a qualitative approach, this study applies library research and conceptual analysis of Sufistic literature, Islamic eco-theology, and language education theories. The research stages include examining the core concepts of Sufistic eco-theology, analyzing their relevance to Arabic language learning, and developing an integrative instructional framework. The findings reveal that integrating Sufistic eco-theological values into Arabic language education enriches instructional materials, strengthens students' spiritual-affective dimensions, and cultivates ecological awareness grounded in Islamic values. The study concludes that a Sufistic eco-theological approach offers a viable alternative paradigm for developing holistic and transformative Arabic language education.

**Keywords:** Arabic Language Education, Sufistic Eco-Theology, Environmental Spirituality, Language Learning

### **INTRODUCTION**

Global environmental degradation has become one of the most urgent challenges confronting humanity in recent decades. Climate change, biodiversity loss, and escalating ecological crises have encouraged scholars across disciplines to reexamine the ethical and spiritual foundations of human–nature relationships. Within this broader discourse, religion is increasingly acknowledged as a vital source of ecological ethics, providing moral guidance and spiritual motivation for environmental responsibility. Islam, in particular, offers a rich theological and ethical framework that emphasizes harmony between human beings and the natural world, understanding nature as a manifestation of divine signs (*āyāt kauniyyah*) that call for reflection, gratitude, and moral accountability (Murad, 2010; Quddus, 2017; Susanti, 2025).

One emerging discourse within Islamic environmental thought is eco-theology, which integrates theological principles with ecological concerns. Eco-theology in Islam underscores

concepts such as *khalīfah* (stewardship), *amānah* (trust), *mīzān* (balance), and *iṣlāḥ* (sustainable improvement), positioning humans as responsible guardians of the earth rather than exploitative masters. Within this broader framework, Sufism contributes a distinctive spiritual dimension by emphasizing inner purification, love of God, and a profound sense of interconnectedness between all forms of existence. Sufistic eco-theology views nature not merely as a resource but as a living reflection of divine presence, fostering an ethic of compassion, humility, and reverence toward the environment (Setiawan et al., 2022; Taisir et al., 2024; Taufikin & YUSDANI, 2025a).

Despite the growing relevance of eco-theological perspectives, their integration into educational practices—particularly language education—remains limited. Arabic language education, which occupies a central position in Islamic education, has traditionally focused on linguistic competencies such as grammar,

vocabulary, and reading comprehension. While these aspects are essential, an exclusive emphasis on technical language skills often overlooks the broader cultural, ethical, and spiritual dimensions embedded within the Arabic language itself (Nasri et al., 2025; Thohri et al., 2025). As the language of the Qur'an and classical Islamic scholarship, Arabic inherently carries theological meanings, spiritual symbolism, and moral values that can serve as powerful educational resources (Nasri, 2024; Thohri & Nasri, 2024).

Previous studies have begun exploring intersections between language learning, eco-theology, and environmental awareness. Nurcholis, Zaen, and Danis (2025) emphasize the concept of *Learning Ecology*, advocating for connectedness as a dimension of contemporary Arabic language pedagogy. Their work highlights the importance of relational understanding in language education, yet it does not explicitly integrate eco-theological or spiritual environmental dimensions into instructional frameworks. Meanwhile, research on Islamic religious education suggests that eco-theology can foster environmental consciousness. A study published in *Laksono* (2022) found that Islamic eco-theology-based religious education significantly contributes to environmental awareness among learners, but it focused broadly on religion rather than language pedagogy. Similarly, Karman, Anwar, and Hakim (2023a) examined Qur'anic learning grounded in Islamic eco-theology at pesantren, demonstrating how scriptural engagement can cultivate ecological responsibility. Although their research highlights pedagogical applications of eco-theology, it remains situated within religious education rather than language instruction. Prakoso (2025) extends eco-theological frameworks into Indonesian high school education, integrating Qur'anic perspectives into broader curricula, but without specific focus on second language acquisition or Arabic language education.

These studies collectively indicate growing scholarly interest in eco-theology and education, yet they reveal a notable gap: a coherent model that integrates Sufistic eco-theological values into Arabic language learning remains underdeveloped (Hajras & Nasri, 2025; Rahmatullah et al., 2025). This gap presents an opportunity to conceptualize an approach that not only teaches language skills, but also instills environmental spirituality grounded in Islamic thought.

This study addresses this gap by proposing a Sufistic eco-theology-based approach to Arabic language education that emphasizes environmental

spirituality as an integral component of language learning. Rather than treating ecological themes as peripheral or supplementary content, this approach positions them at the core of instructional objectives, materials, and pedagogical strategies. Through this perspective, Arabic language learning becomes not only a cognitive and communicative activity but also a transformative process that shapes students' ethical awareness and spiritual sensitivity toward the environment.

The significance of this research lies in its interdisciplinary contribution, bridging Arabic language education, Islamic eco-theology, and Sufistic spirituality. By conceptualizing an integrative framework that builds on and extends prior studies, this research seeks to enrich contemporary approaches to Arabic language teaching and respond to the moral and ecological challenges of the modern world. Ultimately, embedding Sufistic eco-theological values within Arabic language education can foster holistic learning that balances linguistic competence with spiritual depth and ecological responsibility. Such an approach enhances the relevance of Arabic language education in contemporary contexts and contributes to forming environmentally conscious individuals grounded in Islamic spiritual ethics.

## METHODS

This study employed a qualitative research design with a conceptual and library-based approach to explore the integration of Sufistic eco-theology into Arabic language education (Creswell & Creswell, 2014; Wiesner, 2022). The qualitative method was selected because the research focuses on meaning-making, conceptual analysis, and theoretical synthesis rather than numerical measurement (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; Seixas et al., 2017). This approach enables an in-depth examination of philosophical, theological, and pedagogical concepts relevant to environmental spirituality and language learning.

### Research Design

The research adopted a qualitative descriptive-analytical design. It aimed to

analyze existing theories, texts, and scholarly works related to Arabic language education, Islamic eco-theology, and Sufistic spirituality, and to synthesize them into an integrative educational framework. The study did not involve field experimentation; instead, it emphasized conceptual construction and interpretative analysis as its primary methodological orientation (Hodgkinson, 2005b; Tariq, 2025).

### Data Sources

The data sources consisted of primary and secondary literature. Primary sources included classical and contemporary Sufistic texts, Qur'anic verses related to nature and ecology, and key works on Islamic eco-theology. Secondary sources comprised peer-reviewed journal articles, academic books, and conference papers focusing on Arabic language pedagogy, environmental education, eco-theology, and Islamic education. Particular attention was given to recent empirical and conceptual studies relevant to eco-theology-based education to ensure contextual relevance and scholarly rigor (Banerjee (Chatterjee), 2019; Stelezuk & Wolanin, 2023).

### Data Collection Procedures

Data were collected through systematic literature review techniques. Relevant publications were identified using academic databases such as Google Scholar and reputable journal repositories. Keywords used in the search process included "Arabic language education," "Islamic eco-theology," "Sufism and ecology," and "environmental spirituality." The selected literature was screened based on relevance, credibility, and contribution to the research focus. Only sources that directly addressed the intersections of education, theology, spirituality, and ecology were included (De Sordi, 2024; Kholifah & Sofwan, 2024; Peter et al., 2024; Salmia, 2023).

### Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using thematic and conceptual analysis. First, the collected literature was carefully read and categorized according to major themes, such as ecological ethics in Islam, Sufistic views of nature, and pedagogical principles in Arabic language education. Second, these themes were analyzed to identify points of convergence and conceptual compatibility. Third, an integrative framework was formulated by aligning Sufistic eco-theological values with key components of Arabic language learning, including learning objectives, instructional materials, and pedagogical strategies. This analytical process allowed the

researcher to construct a coherent model grounded in both theological insight and educational theory (Greene, 1989; Komor & Grzyb, 2023; Mihas, 2023).

### Research Validity

To ensure validity and credibility, data triangulation was applied through the use of diverse and authoritative sources across disciplines. Conceptual consistency was maintained by cross-referencing interpretations with established Islamic theological and educational frameworks. Additionally, the analytical process emphasized transparency and logical coherence to enhance the trustworthiness of the findings (Arslan, 2022; Brink, 1993; Roberts et al., 2006).

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings section presents the core results of the study derived from a systematic conceptual and literature-based analysis of Sufistic eco-theology and Arabic language education. It outlines the main thematic outcomes of the research, including conceptual alignment, curricular integration, pedagogical strategies, and the transformative potential of eco-theological values in language learning. This section is presented independently to clearly describe what the study reveals before interpretative analysis is undertaken. The discussion section that follows builds upon these findings by critically engaging them with relevant theories and scholarly works, ensuring analytical coherence. Together, the Findings and Discussion sections form the central and most substantial part of the manuscript, providing a comprehensive account of the study's academic contributions.

### Findings

#### Conceptual Alignment between Sufistic Eco-Theology and Arabic Language Education

The findings indicate a strong conceptual alignment between Sufistic eco-theology and the philosophical foundations of Arabic language education. Sufistic teachings emphasize *tawhīd* (unity of existence), *tafaqquh fī al-kawn* (contemplation of the universe), and spiritual purification through

awareness of divine signs in nature. These principles resonate with the epistemological role of the Arabic language as a medium for understanding Qur'anic meanings and Islamic intellectual traditions. The analysis shows that Arabic language learning can serve not only as a linguistic endeavor but also as a reflective practice that nurtures spiritual and ecological consciousness (Asmanto, 2015; Karman et al., 2023b).

### **Integration of Eco-Theological Values into Learning Objectives and Materials**

Another key finding is that Sufistic eco-theological values can be systematically integrated into Arabic language learning objectives and instructional materials. Ecological themes derived from Qur'anic verses, prophetic traditions, and Sufi texts—such as balance, stewardship, and harmony with nature—can be embedded within reading passages, vocabulary selection, and grammar exercises. This integration allows learners to acquire language skills while simultaneously engaging with ethical and spiritual messages related to environmental responsibility (Khalid, 1992; Kula, 2001).

### **Pedagogical Strategies Supporting Environmental Spirituality**

The study further reveals that learner-centered and reflective pedagogical strategies are particularly suitable for implementing a Sufistic eco-theological approach. Methods such as contextual reading, reflective discussion, contemplative writing, and experiential learning foster deeper engagement with both language content and ecological values. Through these strategies, students are encouraged to connect linguistic expressions with personal reflection on environmental ethics and spiritual awareness (Afsaruddin, 2022; Izzi Dien, 2000).

### **Transformative Potential of Sufistic Eco-Theology-Based Learning**

The findings highlight the transformative potential of integrating Sufistic eco-theology into Arabic language education. This approach contributes to the development of students' affective and spiritual dimensions, promoting empathy toward nature and a sense of moral responsibility. Language learning thus becomes a holistic process that integrates cognitive, ethical, and spiritual growth, aligning educational practices with broader Islamic

values (Mubarok et al., 2024; Taufikin & Yusdani, 2025b).

### **Implications for Arabic Language Teaching**

The findings suggest several important implications for Arabic language teaching. First, curriculum designers are encouraged to incorporate eco-theological and Sufistic themes into Arabic language syllabi to enhance the relevance and depth of learning (Hamed et al., 2024; Wahba et al., 2014; Yerima & Madjid, 2025). Second, teachers should be equipped with pedagogical competencies that enable them to integrate spiritual and ecological values without compromising linguistic rigor. Third, Arabic language education can play a strategic role in addressing contemporary environmental challenges by fostering environmentally conscious learners grounded in Islamic spirituality. This approach repositions Arabic language teaching as a transformative educational practice rather than a purely technical endeavor (Mulyani & Sholeh, 2023).

### **Limitations and Future Research Directions**

This study is limited by its conceptual and literature-based design, which does not include empirical classroom observation or experimental implementation. As a result, the proposed framework has not yet been tested in real teaching contexts. Future research should explore empirical validation through classroom-based studies, action research, or quasi-experimental designs to examine the effectiveness of Sufistic eco-theology-based Arabic language instruction. Additionally, further studies may focus on specific language skills (*mahārah al-qirā'ah*, *al-kitābah*, *al-kalām*, and *al-istimā'*) or investigate learners' attitudes and behavioral changes toward environmental responsibility. Comparative studies across educational levels and cultural contexts would also contribute to strengthening and refining this integrative approach (Taha-Thomure, 2008).

**Table 1.** Summary of Research Findings on Sufistic Eco-Theology–Based Arabic Language Education

No.	Findings Category	Description of Findings
A	Conceptual Alignment	Sufistic eco-theology is conceptually aligned with Arabic language education, as both emphasize <i>tawhīd</i> , contemplation of nature, and the interpretation of divine signs ( <i>āyāt kauniyyah</i> ), positioning language learning as a reflective and spiritual practice.
B	Integration into Learning Objectives and Materials	Eco-theological values such as stewardship, balance, and harmony with nature can be systematically embedded into Arabic language learning objectives, instructional texts, vocabulary selection, and grammatical exercises drawn from Qur’anic and Sufistic sources.
C	Pedagogical Strategies	Reflective, learner-centered, and contextual pedagogical strategies—such as contemplative reading, discussion, and writing—support the internalization of environmental spirituality within Arabic language learning processes.
D	Transformative Educational Potential	The integration of Sufistic eco-theology transforms Arabic language education into a holistic learning process that fosters linguistic competence, spiritual awareness, and ecological responsibility among learners.

Table 1 summarizes the main findings of the study, highlighting the conceptual alignment between Sufistic eco-theology and Arabic language education, including its philosophical foundations, the integration of eco-theological values into learning objectives and instructional materials, supportive pedagogical strategies for environmental spirituality, and the transformative potential of Arabic language learning in fostering learners’ ecological and spiritual awareness.

## Discussion

The integration of Sufistic eco-theology into Arabic language education reflects a broader paradigm shift in educational thought that emphasizes holistic, value-based learning. Contemporary educational theorists argue that effective education must address not only cognitive development but also ethical awareness and spiritual meaning (Sterling, 2010). In this context, Arabic language education grounded in Sufistic eco-theology aligns with the notion of transformative learning, where language functions as a medium for shaping worldview, values, and moral responsibility.

From an Islamic intellectual perspective, Sufistic eco-theology offers a profound ontological foundation for environmental ethics. Seyyed Hossein Nasr (1996) emphasizes that modern ecological crises stem from a desacralized view of nature, which reduces the natural world to a mere object of exploitation. Sufism, by contrast, re-sacralizes nature by recognizing it as a manifestation of divine reality. When such a worldview is embedded in Arabic language education, learners are encouraged to approach linguistic texts not only as communicative tools but also as symbols laden with spiritual and ecological meaning. This reinforces the finding that Arabic language learning can function as a reflective and spiritually formative practice.

The integration of eco-theological values into instructional materials further supports the argument that language education is inherently ideological and

ethical. Language texts are never neutral; they transmit cultural assumptions, moral values, and worldviews (Kramersch, 1998). By incorporating Qur’anic and Sufistic texts that emphasize balance (*mīzān*), stewardship (*khalīfah*), and harmony with nature, Arabic language education becomes a site for ethical meaning-making. This approach resonates with Foltz’s (2003) assertion that Islamic environmental ethics must be cultivated through educational narratives that reconnect humans with the sacred dimensions of the natural world.

Pedagogically, the reflective and contemplative strategies identified in this study are consistent with spiritually oriented educational models. Palmer (2007) argues that education grounded in spirituality encourages learners to engage with knowledge at a deeper, existential level. In Arabic language learning, reflective reading and contemplative writing based on eco-theological texts allow students to internalize language structures while simultaneously engaging in ethical self-reflection. This dual engagement strengthens both linguistic competence and spiritual awareness, supporting the holistic aims of Islamic education.

Moreover, the transformative potential of Sufistic eco-theology–based Arabic language education aligns with critical

perspectives on environmental education. Orr (2004) contends that environmental crises are fundamentally educational failures, resulting from systems that separate knowledge from values. By embedding environmental spirituality within Arabic language pedagogy, this approach bridges that gap, fostering learners who are not only linguistically proficient but also morally responsive to ecological issues. The Sufistic emphasis on inner transformation (*tazkiyah al-nafs*) further deepens this process, positioning environmental responsibility as an expression of spiritual maturity rather than external obligation.

In terms of scholarly contribution, this study extends existing discussions on eco-theology and education by situating Arabic language learning within a sacred ecological framework. While eco-theology has often been discussed in theological or ethical terms, its application to language pedagogy remains underexplored. This study demonstrates that Arabic language education can serve as a strategic platform for cultivating environmental spirituality, thereby expanding the scope of both Arabic pedagogy and Islamic eco-theological discourse.

Overall, this discussion highlights that Sufistic eco-theology-based Arabic language education represents a meaningful response to contemporary educational and ecological challenges. By integrating linguistic learning with spiritual ecology, this approach contributes to the formation of learners who embody intellectual competence, spiritual depth, and ecological responsibility. Such an educational orientation not only revitalizes Arabic language teaching but also affirms the transformative role of education in shaping a more ethical and sustainable human-nature relationship.

## CONCLUSION

This study synthesizes Islamic eco-theological thought, Sufistic spirituality, and Arabic language education into an integrative conceptual framework that responds to contemporary environmental and educational challenges. The findings demonstrate that Sufistic eco-theology provides a coherent philosophical and pedagogical foundation for reorienting Arabic language education beyond technical linguistic mastery toward holistic learning that encompasses spiritual awareness and ecological responsibility. By positioning nature as a manifestation of divine signs, this approach enables Arabic language learning to

function as a reflective and transformative educational practice.

The study further concludes that the integration of Sufistic eco-theological values into learning objectives, instructional materials, and pedagogical strategies enhances the relevance and ethical depth of Arabic language education. Language learning becomes a medium for cultivating environmental spirituality, where linguistic competence is developed alongside moral sensitivity and spiritual consciousness. This synthesis aligns with the broader aims of Islamic education, which emphasize the formation of balanced individuals who embody intellectual, ethical, and spiritual integrity.

In terms of contribution, this research advances the discourse on Arabic language pedagogy by introducing an eco-theological-spiritual paradigm that has been largely absent from existing models. The proposed framework offers prospects for curriculum innovation, teacher professional development, and value-oriented instructional design in Arabic language education. Future applications may include the development of eco-theological teaching modules, contextual learning materials, and integrative assessment models that measure both linguistic outcomes and affective-spiritual growth. Further empirical research is recommended to test and refine this framework across educational levels and learning contexts, thereby strengthening its applicability and impact in real classroom settings.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to all parties who contributed to the completion of this study. Appreciation is extended to academic colleagues and scholars whose insights and constructive feedback enriched the conceptual development of this research. The authors also acknowledge the institutions and libraries that provided access to essential academic resources and references. Finally, heartfelt thanks are conveyed to all individuals who offered intellectual support and encouragement throughout the research and writing process.

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