

## Investing in the Arabic Language: From Existential Role to Cultural Influence: A Concise Literature Review"

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### Abstract

This paper explores the strategic investments in the Arabic language, emphasizing its transition from a fundamental existential role to a broader cultural and economic influence. It investigates the dual benefits of language investment: economic returns through the burgeoning 'purple economy' and the preservation of cultural identity which the Arabic language robustly represents. By examining historical contexts and modern initiatives, the study highlights the pivotal roles that linguistic investments play in enhancing employability, economic vitality, and the maintenance of cultural heritage. The review methodically addresses the various dimensions of linguistic investment—its historical trajectory, current initiatives, and the tangible benefits it offers to both individual speakers and broader societies. Notable international conferences and case studies provide insights into successful strategies and the challenges encountered in promoting the Arabic language globally. The paper concludes that strategic investment in the Arabic language not only boosts economic development and reduces unemployment but also ensures the survival and thriving of Arabic culture in a globalized world

**Keywords:** Investment in Language, Linguistic Economics, Teaching Arabic to Non-Native Speakers, Computational Linguistics.

### Introduction

Investing in language education is an extremely important matter due to the existential importance necessitated by the literary duty towards this or that mother tongue, and for the great returns expected from it as well, which will inevitably lead to the cultural radiance of

the language, and some governments and official or unofficial bodies are not late in achieving this aspiration. So, the capabilities were mobilized in order to invest in teaching the language in a way that achieves the preservation of identity, as the language is nothing but an identity as the mother tongue, on the one hand, and on the other hand to achieve the spread of the Arabic language as a language that possesses the elements of spread that it possesses, if it has its capabilities, or its importance Religious, economic, tourism and social.

Many countries have made efforts to explore the possibility of investing in the Arabic language, for exampl, the International Council for the Arabic Language in Beirut in March 2012. It was followed by holding another conference in Dubai in May 2013. Then the third Arabic language conference entitled Investing in the Arabic Languag an its National, Arab and International Future was held in Dubai in May 2014.

The last conference came to emphasize that investment in language is nothing but an investment in the various aspects of human life ,in its existential, social, value-based and spiritual dimensions. It is an investment in material, scientific and technical progress, just as it is an investment in the identity and spiritual culture of the present and future generations, just as it is an investment in The cultural entity of the nation. (Saad Al-Din, 2014). Table 1 shows Arabic Language Investment Conferences.

Table 1  
*Arabic Language Investment Conferences*

<b>Conference Title</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Key Outcomes</b>	<b>Participating Organizations</b>	<b>Notable Speakers</b>
First Arabic Language Conference	March 2012	Beirut	Highlighted the cultural and existential value of investing in languages.	International Council for the Arabic Language	Various linguists and educators
Second Arabic Language Conference	May 2013	Dubai	Discussed strategies for promoting Arabic globally and integrating it in education.	Various educational and cultural ministries	Policy makers and academic scholars
Third Arabic Language Conference "Investing in the Arabic Language and its Future"	May 2014	Dubai	Emphasized the importance of language investment for economic, social, and human capital development.	Multiple Arab and international educational organizations	Economists and language experts

With the persistent efforts shown by countries today to invest in their language internally and externally, in this paper I will undertake to address investment in language from the existence of the role to its radiance, and my paper will consist of two chapters: In the first chapter will discuss three topics:

The first topic: The concept of investment in language.

The second topic: the history of linguistic investment.

The third topic: Why do we need to invest in the language?

As for the second chapter: I will discuss four topics:

The first topic: forms of investment in the language and its motives.

The second section: The most important returns expected from investing in the language.

The third topic: The challenges of investment in the Arabic language and its enhancements.

The fourth section: investment experiences in the Arabic language in Oman.

### **Research Aims**

- 1- Clarifying the concept of linguistic investment.
- 2- Statement of the history of linguistic investment.
- 3- State the need for linguistic investment.
- 4- Explaining the most important forms of investment and their returns.
- 5- Explaining the challenges and benefits of investment in the Arabic language.
- 6- Clarifying the most important investment experiences in the Arabic language in Oman.

### **Research Questions**

- 1- What is the concept of linguistic investment?
- 2- What is the history of linguistic investment?
- 3- What is the need for linguistic investment?
- 4- What are the forms of investment in language? What are the expected returns?
- 5- What are the most important challenges facing investment in the Arabic language?  
What are the incentives for investing in it?
- 6- What are the most important Omani experiences in investing in the Arabic language?

### **Research Importance**

The importance of the research stems from its shedding light on a very important topic related to the identity of countries, as well as their investment aspirations in diversifying language sources, as what can be hoped for from linguistic investment is very great.

### **Research Methodology**

The research will rely on the descriptive approach in dealing With reality with some analysis.

### **Search Limits**

The research will focus on the Arabic language as a topic and on the institutions concerned with investing in it as a location.

### **The Most Important Results Expected from the Research**

- 1-Review The most important investment experiences in the Arabic language in Oman.
- 2-Explaining the challenges facing linguistic investment.
- 3-Explaining the most important motives for linguistic investment.
- 4-Statement of the most important incentives for investing in the Arabic language and investment opportunities.

**The first topic: The concept of investment in language**

-What is the concept of investment in language?

To answer the first research question, which states: What is the concept of investment in language? It is necessary to address the clarification of the meanings surrounding the linguistic root (fruit) starting with the bearing of trees, money and its types, growth, and multiplication. (Ibn Manzur, Thamar article,64-86)

.These meanings have different fields, but they are not without a hidden link between them, which is represented by growth and multiplication.

As for the concept of investment in the economy and production it is spending money in some way with the intention of obtaining income, including investing in establishing or purchasing factories, establishing resorts and dormitories, purchasing bonds and stocks, and investing in them. (Gharbal & others, 1965)

Not far from the multiplication and development derived from the linguistic and economic meanings is the concept of linguistic investment, which indicates “commercial, financial, and economic practices that take language as their subject.” Under this economic concept, we may talk about profit, loss, resource development, tenders offers, and other economic concepts. Or, very briefly, we can say that. investment in language is an economic activity whose subject is language. ( Abu Milha & others, 2015)

From the above, I conclude that the concept of investment in the language is any economic activity that seeks to grow the income of a person or institution, according to the approach of countries or individuals in diversifying or maximizing sources of income, driven by various economic ,developmental, so to speak, and civilizational reasons.

Table 2  
*Table of Case Studies*

<b>Region</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Methods</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Economic Impact</b>	<b>Key Institutions Involved</b>
Oman	To promote and enhance Arabic education	Establishment of educational platforms and dictionaries	Increased accessibility to Arabic resources	Boosted local education and tourism sectors	Sultan Qaboos University, Oman Ministry of Education
UAE	To integrate Arabic into higher education	Implementing Arabic in academic settings	Enhanced use of Arabic in scientific research	Supported local industries and academic growth	United Arab Emirates University, Ministry of Higher Education

Table 3

*Economic Impact*

Sector	Description of Impact	Examples of Impact
Education	Investment in Arabic language teaching has created job opportunities and educational growth	Creation of new academic positions, curriculum development
Tourism	Enhanced language services improve tourist experiences and increase cultural tourism	Guides, informational materials in Arabic, Arabic language tours
Technology	Development of Arabic digital content and software supports the tech industry	Arabic software interfaces, mobile apps, and online services

**Does language have economic value?**

Language is known to be a means of communication through which people fulfill their needs and through which they convey their experiences, stories, history, and ideas. It is also a tool for thinking and conveying feelings and sensations (Al-Sayyid, 2015). This functional aspect of language is not the only indication of it, as it stands out as the identity of this or that people and the carrier of their culture. And his pattern of thinking, his level of civilization, and his vision of life "There is a connection between thought and language. He who has no mind or thought has no sound language and no way to be considered an integrated part of the whole that is society (Al-Ayoubi, 2005)

Based on the above, language does not highlight its importance in its grammatical, linguistic, and morphological system, its communicative ability, or its rhetorical potential, despite the distinct importance of this language over another, but rather in its cultural value and the level of thinking of its people. And also as a symbol of identity that distinguishes one people from another, characterizes its civilization, and the degree of its presence in the theater of existence and life (Al-Sayyid, 2015)

The economic importance of language stems from two aspects first when viewed as a tool of the economy that is relied upon when formulating contracts, negotiations, and conducting economic operations, and second, as a commodity in the economic sector, as the role of cultural industries and their base, the national language, in the global economy has recently increased very significantly.

This was confirmed by a study conducted by the World Bank Marayati (2016) which included in its entirety a sample of more than sixty countries and more than sixty thousand different entities, which concluded that the need for developing countries to achieve economic growth lies in raising the level of knowledge of members of society, not in humanitarian aid, and this is what cannot be obtained. Except through the mother tongue. (Al-Sayyid, 2015)

What distinguishes language as a commodity is its permanence and urgent need for use, as it enhances production whenever it is found in an environment that nurtures it, provides the possibility of learning and speaking it, and supports this with binding laws and supportive decisions. Simmel believes that ideas must take the form of language that is understandable to all others to achieve practical goals in a direct way, and that activities and possessions must take the form of monetary value in order to serve my longer-term purposes (Abdel-Azim, 2012).

**The second section: The history of linguistic investment.**

Through this study, I will seek to answer the second research question, which is: What is the history of linguistic investment?

Table 4  
*Comparing Educational Initiatives among Contries*

Language	Governmental Support	Educational Initiatives	Global Influence	Cultural Significance
Arabic	Strong in Middle Eastern countries, with significant funding for language promotion	Focus on integrating Arabic in education and technology, including computational linguistics	Growing influence due to cultural and religious ties, especially in the Islamic world	Integral to Arab identity and Islamic practice
Mandarin	High governmental investment in global outreach, including Confucius Institutes worldwide	Mandatory language education domestically and abroad, extensive language export initiatives	High global influence due to China's economic power	Deeply intertwined with Chinese cultural heritage
Spanish	Support in both Spain and Latin America, government-funded institutes promote the language globally	Widespread language teaching programs globally, significant in the Americas and increasing in Asia and Africa	Significant due to cultural heritage and population, second most spoken language by native speakers	Cultural heritage spans continents, influencing music, literature, and art
French	Government funds international French teaching, significant support for Francophonie organizations	Prominent in international diplomatic and cultural spheres, substantial investment in Africa	Maintained by historical ties, institutions like the Alliance Française	Represents a key element of diplomatic and cultural identity in Western Europe and Africa

Although the term linguistic investment is a modern term, this modernity should not deceive us, as the emergence of linguistic activities to achieve economic or political goals is not entirely new. The era of Caliph Abdul Malik bin Marwan (65-86 AH / 685-705) witnessed the Arabization of writing in poetry collections. The state changed from Roman into Arabic, which created job opportunities for Arabs and strengthened their presence in offices .Public records were written in Persian and Greek as required by necessity .Persian is the language of offices in Iraq and beyond, and Greek is the language of offices in the Levant (Al-Baladhuri, 1978 & Al-Abd Al-Fattah, 2019).

This step had an economic and political impact that strengthened the Arabic language, as it made its speakers wanted to work in the Umayyad courts. Thus, they were among the first to establish the Arabic language as a state language. This investment in the Arabization of collections is not the only one, but it was accompanied by investment in private libraries, the first of which was the library of Khalid bin Yazid bin Muawiyah bin Abi Sufyan, as he brought in a group of Greek philosophers who had lived in Egypt and mastered the Arabic language and ordered them to transfer professional books from the Greek and Coptic language to Arabic, and this The first transfer was in Islam from one language to another (Ibn al-Nadim, 1997).

Then came the Abbasid era, which witnessed great encouragement and teaching of Arabic sciences and the translation of manuscripts, which led to the growth of investment in the Arabic language in the field of libraries in particular. For example, the library of the literary minister Muhammad bin Abdul Malik al-Zayat, the minister of al-Mu'tasim and al-Wathiq, was known to allocate approximately 2,000 dinars to translators and copyists every month (Awad, 1986).

Another form of investment in the language was promoted by Abu Hatim al-Sijistani, who was a book collector as an imam in the sciences of the Qur'an, language, and poetry. He used to trade in these books, and some state libraries used to make money from lending books, for example: the Mustansiriya Library (Al-Sayyid, 2015).

From the above, I note that the beginning of investment in the Arabic language did not come as a luxury, but rather to achieve economic political, and cognitive returns. The last two reasons are because they seemed separate from the economic return, but in reality they are nothing but reinforcements of the economic goal of linguistic investment in the eras I have discussed.

### **The third topic: Why do we need linguistic investment?**

The language and its resources have a value no less than other material resources such as oil and gas resources, livestock, etc, and since the Arabic language is the sixth language in the written classification of the United Nations, and there are those who see it as the fourth after the decline of the number of languages and their speakers by approximately half a billion, while the Some estimates that by 2050 the number of its speakers will reach 647, or 6.94% of the world population. (Abu Milha,2012)

As for the non-profit program, the number of speakers is expected to reach 9.3 billion people within a non-profit program to spread the Arabic language in the world, known as Arabic for All.

Investing in the Arabic language is urgent due to the diversity of the world's population that needs it:

- 1-There are those who need the Arabic language for economic purposes, for example China and some countries of East Asia and Europe, and the reason is that it is the language of a large segment of global market consumers.
  - 2-For religious reasons in some countries of East Asia, Africa and Europe.
  - 3-For reasons related to the possibility of artistic and stylistic language and the richness of its vocabulary.
- 1- Some other languages compete with it in their homeland, which enhances the economic aspect of those languages and delays the role of the Arabic language.
  - 2- Introducing Arab writers and popular Arab arts such as One Thousand and One Nights and works of fiction and short stories as a human product that has its market.

By answering the third question, I have completed the first chapter of this research, and as follows, I will answer the remaining research questions in the second chapter.

**The first topic: forms of investment in the Arabic language and its motives.**

After it became clear to me the importance of investing in the Arabic language, I will devote the next lines to talking about the forms of linguistic investment. Among the most important forms of linguistic investment in our time are:

**1- Dictionaries**

Preparing it requires huge investments compared to other books but of course it promises a greater income. This is due to its cultural role in embodying the vocabulary of the language and making it available to all speakers of the language. (al Sayyed,2015)

For example, the Oxford Historical Dictionary stands out as a unique historical dictionary of the English language that generates abundant profits for the publisher in the long run (Al-Sayyid, 2015)

What distinguishes the dictionary market is its richness and diversity There are dictionaries of pronunciation dictionaries of spelling dictionaries of meaning, dictionaries of rhyme, dictionaries of style dictionaries of repetition, dictionaries of expressions, dictionaries of terms and names ,dictionaries of verbal cognates, dictionaries of synonymy, dictionaries of basic vocabulary, historical dictionaries and dictionaries of the most common words . Dictionaries of grammatical clauses, and other dictionaries.

**2-Translation**

Because knowledge is diverse and numerous, and because some nations have their own path of progress in knowledge and science they have been able to precede others, and therefore it is necessary for some nations seeking to ride the procession of progress to follow the path of those who preceded them, for knowledge is cumulative there is no doubt about that. As we have seen, the Umayyads Arabized poetry collections, and Arabic-speaking people benefited from this step, and the state is strengthening its presence. In the same context, Japan was able to translate 22,000 books in three years in the decade of the eighties of the last century, and this indicates a great will and determination from the people. The Japanese and their keenness to transmit the latest scientific and literary publications to be available in their mother tongue, and this amounts to an investment in the Japanese person and his progress, and keeping pace with the latest knowledge (Al-Sayyid, 2015)

**3-Teaching foreign languages**

Teaching a language to speakers of another language fully reveals the true face of the commodity of language, and language as a commodity that can have a local market and a regional market, and it witnesses fluctuations like any other commodity based on the demand directed towards this or that language. "Some recent studies have proven that languages can be an investment project in the literal sense, not the figurative sense."

One of the things that must be noted is that the inability to export the national language leads to the leakage of languages that carry marketing factors, as the language that is widespread and creates job opportunities has means of temptation to demand it and invest in it because it is in demand.

Hence, the motives for investment in the Arabic language stem from the existential problem represented by the importance of the Arabic language having everything that calls for its



survival continuity, and strength to compete with other languages, and not waiting for other languages to reach their speakers. It is also important to gather the factors for marketing it, since without it, it would decline. It has become lax, and then the following must be done in order to strengthen the investment aspect of the Arabic language:

- 1- Development of Arabic computational linguistics and its achievements.
- 2- Cooperating with users of foreign languages in Arabic script such as Persian, to develop marketable artistic products.
- 3- Communicating with non-Arab communities that use Arabic due to their affiliation to the Islamic religion to ensure market capacity and support the promotion and exchange process.
- 4- Employing trade relations with advanced Islamic countries such as Malaysia, Pakistan, Indonesia, and Iran to enhance the presence of the Arabic language there.
- 5- Imposing the language in the field of dealing and services so that the language grows in the work environment and then the growth of knowledge and the economy.

#### **4-Areas of investment in the Arabic language**

A-Investing in the field of encyclopedias and digital banks

B-Investing in translating major scientific books and supplying them to Arab universities, as well as in machine translation and technology fields.

C-Investing in developing electronic dictionaries for grammar morphology, rhetoric, and prosody.

D-Investing in creating platforms and applications to teach the Arabic language to native speakers and non-Arabic speakers.

E-Investing in creating frames of reference for teaching the Arabic language for general and special purposes, as well as in creating standard proficiency tests.

F-Investing in developing programs directed at Arab children, such as Iftah Ya Simsim.

G-Investing in maximizing Arabic content on the Internet.

H-Investing in terminology formulation (Al-Sayyid, 2015)

#### **The second section: The most important benefits expected from investing in the Arabic language.**

##### **Enhancing Identity**

When considering the benefits that investment in language can achieve the most important return emerges from my point of view which is the existential reason, that is, preserving and strengthening identity. Language is without a doubt the identity, history, civilization and imprint of this nation in the sea of humanity. Investing in the Arabic language and enhancing its presence regionally will lead to the repositioning of the language among the peoples of the world. The Arabic language was greatly neglected, which led to its decline in the hearts of its people. It also lost competitiveness even in its homeland. In contrast, for example, Spanish invaded the continent of South America and the linguistic reality in it became Speaking of Spanish, Spain succeeded in deepening its identity and its linguistic project, which led to the flow of huge sums of money into its treasury, and the countries of South America lost the bet on language projects as projects to nourish the values of belonging and citizenship, not to mention the material losses that only serve the language of the coloniser (Abu Milha, 2012)

### **Solutions to Unemployment Problems**

Working in the field of language teaching and teaching requires a large number of professors, their assistants, managers, supervisors mentors and workers, and a quick look at the English language teaching centers spread around the world is enough to give us a sufficient amount of what the field of language teaching can accommodate and spread locally and abroad.

### **Achieving High Financial Returns**

There are many Arabs and Muslims investing in teaching the English language and teaching centers for Spanish, German, or Chinese and studies have proven the success of investing in English language institute projects in Arab countries, so why does this success not translate into other experiences heading towards Arabic language institutes in Arab countries for residents? And in foreign countries for residents there and for foreigner (Al- Qattan,2022 &Mukhtar, 2023)

### **The third topic: The challenges of investment in the Arabic language and its enhancements:**

The investment market in the Arabic language suffers from challenges that have weakened the demand for it and increased the trend towards other languages compared to it .The most important of these challenges are:

- 1-There are no incentives to study it, or decisions that force its children and residents to study it.
- 2-The absence of any condition in the list of job requirements for non-native speakers, except what is rare.
- 3-There is no proficiency test in the list of job requirements or university studies.
- 4-Academic teaching in a foreign language and not translating science into Arabic and making Arabic a language of instruction, which reinforces the need for speakers of the language of those sciences, under the pretext that it is the language of science. I do not know why we close our eyes to the Israelis who revived an almost extinct language and made it the language of science. Among 1,147 A title published by Israeli presses, 84% of which were originally written in Hebrew and only 16% of which were translated, so we are in no need to imitate the advanced experiments that teach science in their mother tongue and have created real reasons to invest in the mother tongue, so your skin does not scratch like your fingernail (Al-Sayyid, 2015)
- 5-Poor planning and lack of awareness of the success of Arabic language projects (Abu Milha, 2012)

### **The fourth section: Experiences of investment in the Arabic language in Oman.**

There are many forms of linguistic investment in the Sultanate of Oman, including dictionaries, educational platforms, distance education institutions, and products in teaching Arabic to speakers of other languages. Among the dictionaries are the Sultan Qaboos Dictionary of Arabic Nouns, the Omani Eloquence Dictionary, and the Dictionary of Common Verbs .Among the educational platforms are the Al-Khalil platform for teaching Arabic to non-native speakers affiliated with AETCO Emerging Technologies, the Sidra platform affiliated with Salcon Company, and the Arab platform, which is a personal effort by Asma Al-Sawaiya. As for the field of teaching. The Arabic language is for non-native speakers. Many institutions have emerged distributed across the various governorates of the Sultanate for example:

- 1- Sultan Qaboos Institute for teaching Arabic to non-native speakers in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate.

- 2- Certificate of teaching Arabic to non-native speakers at the College of Arts at Sultan Qaboos University in Muscat Governorate.
- 3- Nour Majan Institute for teaching Arabic to non-native speakers in Muscat Governorate.
- 4- Daris Institute for teaching Arabic to non-native speakers in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate.
- 5- The Arab Expertise Institute for teaching Arabic to non-native speakers in Muscat Governorate.
- 6- Al-Wasel Institute for teaching Arabic to non-native speakers in North Al-Sharqiyah Governorate.
- 7- My Language Institute for teaching Arabic to non-native speakers in Al Buraimi Governorate.
- 8- Al-Dhad Institute for Teaching Arabic to Non-Native Speakers at the University of Nizwa in Al-Dakhiliyah Governorate.
- 9- Majan Institute for Educational Consultation and Teaching Arabic to Non-Arabic Speakers in Muscat Governorate.
- 10- There are programs to teach the Arabic language carried out by some universities, such as Sohar University, Dhofar University and Al Sharqiya University, but they are not fixed, in addition to individual experiments carried out by individuals, in addition to other institutes that have closed their doors, such as the Fassaha Institute in the Interior Governorate.

Based on this linguistic investment experience in the Sultanate of Oman some products have resulted that are worth noting:

- 1- The Sultan Qaboos Institute for Teaching Arabic to Non-Native Speakers has produced some publications that seek to enhance the possibilities of teaching Arabic to non-native speakers, such as:

A-Uno verb forms.

B-uno plural.

C- Linguistic partner book.

D- Grant letter.

2-The Al-Dhad Institute of the University of Nizwa produced the Al-Dhad series on teaching Arabic to non-native speakers. It is a series consisting of three levels, and in each level there are three books in addition to the teacher's guide.

3-The United Group produced the Kalman series for teaching Arabic to non-native speakers. It is a series consisting of paper production in the form of educational books, and also in the form of electronic content accompanied by an educational platform called the Bariq platform.

## **Conclusion**

Investing in the Arabic language seemed to me to be a very important matter, and its importance is not embodied in the hoped-for economic return in reducing unemployment, for example, and diversifying sources of income as well. Rather, it is the strengthening of identity, the preservation of the language, and the vision that its people have towards the world. Investment In the language, because its existential necessities are of necessary importance towards the mother language, which in reality is an identity, and whoever does not preserve his identity is destined to dissolve and disappear. Its end is a civilizational radiation that markets the language, and since language and culture are two sides of the same coin, it is a marketing of culture as well, and therefore it does not. In our Arab environments, at least, we must be keen to teach the Arabic language and market it so that it becomes a

language of radiance and civilization, known for the characteristics that distinguish its people, as well as other economic returns.

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