

Theoretical Foundations of Arabic Language Pedagogy in Islamic Studies: An Analysis of Innovative Instructional Approaches and Tools

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Abstract

The method of teaching the Arabic language is a central part of Islamic Studies teaching, and its conceptual framework is the basis of access to the foundational Quranic, hadith, and classical scholarly sources among students. Conventional systems that are focused on the rote memorization and grammatical exercises face increased criticism as limiting communicative and interpretive competence. This paper is a comprehensive theoretical discussion of the innovative teaching methods and pedagogical instruments that can be used to improve the Arabic language in the context of Islamic Studies. The study based on the applied linguistics, Second Language Acquisition theory, and educational technology research analysis explores the relevance of basic frameworks, such as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Content Based Instruction (CBI), Task Based Language Teaching (TBLT) and the constructivist learning theory to the learning of religious languages. The review also relates to digital innovations, such as AI assisted learning applications, mobile assisted language learning (MALL), and blended learning platforms that match linguistic competencies to theological content. The results show that a redefined pedagogy, i.e. the pedagogy that integrates classical Islamic episteme with the modern technology and interactional learning, can enhance linguistic, cognitive and spiritual involvement. This paper is a proposal of an overall conceptual model as well as an implication of the concept in curriculum design, teacher professional development and policy. Future empirical research suggestions include the necessity to conduct context specific intervention research in various Islamic learning environments.

Keywords: Arabic Language Pedagogy, Islamic Studies, Communicative Teaching, Digital Learning, Ai In Language Learning, Content-Based Instruction

Introduction

The Arabic language holds a pivot role in the Islamic educational culture as it is the language of Quran, the traditions of the Prophet (hadith) and the entire body of classical Islamic

literature. The mastery of Arabic is thus not only a language proficiency but a gateway to intellectual and epistemological knowledge that allows the learner to comprehend the original religious texts and transmit the meanings of these texts in terms of their original linguistic environment (Susiawati and Al-Fajr, 2025; Ma et al., 2025). Due to this fact, the study of the Arabic language has traditionally been considered as the inseparable part of the curriculum of Islamic Studies.

In conventional Islamic educational establishments, e.g. madrasas and dar al-ulum, the Arabic pedagogy emerged within a more comprehensive educational philosophy based on the notions of ta'lim (instruction), tarbiyah (holistic moral growth) and tadib (ethical discipline). The teaching methods in these schools usually focused on the memorization (hifz), the study of rules of grammar (nahw and sarf), and the discussion of the texts with the guidance of the authoritative pieces of scholarly literature. These methods were significant in maintaining language accuracy, text integrity and continuity in the Islamic academic traditions over time. Nonetheless, modern pedagogical discourses have grown critical of the educational constraints of these ancient methodologies as they continue to be implemented in modern learning contexts. Although the importance of grammar-centered teaching and memorization should not be denied as a way of text accuracy, critics state that it tends to offer few chances to acquire communicative competence, contextual interpretation, and active learner engagement (Fadli et al., 2025; Susiawati and Al-Fajr, 2025). Conversely, the recent learning of language especially in the second language acquisition discipline, has laid more stress on the meaning-based learning, communicative exchange and the learner autonomy. The Common European Framework of Reference of languages (CEFR) has also promoted the increasing expectations that language teaching ought to promote the development of functional communication skills and use of language in context.

This has resulted in a pedagogical dilemma in the Islamic education system. Institutions must maintain the integrity of classical Arabic scholarship but also be responsive to the changes in the standards of pedagogy that emphasize communicative competence and learner centred pedagogy. As such, the issue of reconciliation between classical linguistic traditions and the modern language teaching practices has emerged as a major issue in Arabic language education as part of Islamic Studies.

Simultaneously, the educational technology has been developing very fast, creating new possibilities of learning the language. There has been the introduction of digital literacy, mobile-assisted language learning, artificial intelligence (AI), and blended instructional models, which could be used to boost learner motivation, interaction, and the exposure of learners to authentic linguistic input (Setiyawan and Rifai, 2025; Osman et al., 2025). These technologies can also greatly improve the learning experience and aid more flexible and learner-focused approaches to instruction once they are used pedagogically instead of superficially (Jabaruddin and Achmada, 2025; Rohmat et al., 2025).

Despite these changes, the concept of incorporating the modern language teaching, technological advancement and epistemological basis of Islamic education is theoretically unsophisticated. To address this requirement, the current paper will discuss the role of theoretical knowledge in applied linguistics and educational technology to design new styles of Arabic language instruction in the field of Islamic Studies. The study will suggest a

conceptual framework to follow, which unites the linguistic, cognitive, cultural, and spiritual aspects of the learning process.

Research Problem and Rationality

The epistemological basis of the Islamic Studies education is the Arabic language pedagogy due to the access to the Quran, the Prophetic traditions, and the vast source of the classical Islamic scholarship. Traditionally Arabic teaching in religious seminaries and colleges has depended on the pedagogy of memorization (hifz), formalism (nahw and sarf) in grammar and rigid textual transmission. The strategies have been essential in maintaining linguistic accuracy and continuity of Islamic academic traditions.

However, the suitability of such traditional pedagogical models to meet the needs of the modern language learning environment is becoming the subject of growing criticism in current educational studies. Specifically, researchers claim that the approach to teaching that is focused on grammar tends to reduce the possibilities of becoming a communicatively competent learner, an interpretive fluent learner, and a learner who can engage meaningfully in the learning process, which is commonly considered as the key to a successful language acquisition.

Concurrently, the new trends in applied linguistics and second language acquisition (SLA) have changed the theoretical conceptualizations of the language pedagogy. Newer instructional models such as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Content-Based Instruction (CBI), Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) and constructivist learning theory focus on meaningful interaction, integration of disciplinary content and participation of learners in the construction of knowledge. Such strategies have redefined the teaching of language in most settings such as in the learning of foreign languages and second languages.

Similar advances in educational technology have also widened the pedagogical environment. Interactive learning experiences, individualized learning and increased exposure to real-world language materials are benefits that are brought forth by mobile-assisted language learning, applications supported by artificial intelligence and blended learning environments.

With these theoretical and technological advances, they are yet to be systematically incorporated into the pedagogy of the Arabic language in the framework of Islamic Studies. Much of the available literature either dwells on individualistic teaching strategies or dwells on digital learning tools without relating them to a holistic pedagogical framework that both caters to the current language-learning theories and technological innovation as well as epistemological and spiritual goals of Islamic education.

Consequently, most of the instructional reforms seem to be disjointed, technologically oriented, or lacking in the intellectual traditions of the Islamic pedagogy. The given theoretical discontinuity has left a large hole in the elaboration of a consistent pedagogical framework that can help to reconcile classical Islamic educational practices with the modern theories of language learning.

Purpose of the Study

This gap needs to be addressed to inform curriculum development, teacher professional training and educational policy in Islamic Studies institutions. Thus, the proposed work presents a theoretically inclined analytical review to create a comprehensive conceptual model of innovative Arabic language teaching in Islamic Studies.

Research Objectives

This study aims to:

Examine the historical and theoretical foundations of Arabic language pedagogy within Islamic Studies education.

Analyse the relevance of contemporary language-teaching theories—particularly Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Content-Based Instruction (CBI), Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), and constructivist learning theory—for Arabic instruction in Islamic educational contexts.

Evaluate the pedagogical opportunities and limitations of technology-enhanced language learning, including digital tools, mobile-assisted learning, and artificial-intelligence-supported applications in Arabic language teaching.

Identify the areas of convergence and tension between traditional grammar-centered pedagogies and contemporary communicative and learner-centered approaches.

Develop an integrated conceptual framework that synthesizes linguistic competence, Islamic epistemology, cultural-spiritual contextualization, and technology-enhanced learning in Arabic language pedagogy.

Explore the pedagogical implications of this framework for curriculum development, teacher training, and institutional policy within Islamic Studies programs.

Research Questions

Based on the objectives above, the study addresses the following research questions:

What are the historical and theoretical foundations of Arabic language pedagogy within Islamic Studies education?

How do contemporary language-teaching theories—particularly CLT, CBI, TBLT, and constructivist learning theory—conceptualize effective Arabic language instruction in Islamic educational contexts?

What pedagogical opportunities and limitations do digital technologies, mobile learning, and AI-supported tools present for Arabic language teaching?

What areas of convergence and tension exist between traditional grammar-based pedagogies and contemporary communicative and learner-centered approaches?

How can Arabic language pedagogy be conceptually integrated with Islamic epistemological and spiritual objectives?

What implications does an integrated pedagogical framework have for curriculum design, instructional practice, and teacher preparation in Islamic Studies programs?

Contribution and Novelty of Studies

The study is impactful in the discipline of social sciences as it presents a theoretically amalgamated approach to the Arabic language pedagogy taking place in the context of the Islamic Studies, a field that has been studied in fragmented approaches. Although the past research has traditionally been divided into two categories either the traditional grammar-based teaching, modern communicative approaches or the application of digital technologies

alone, this study integrates these aspects into a single conceptual framework. In particular, the research involves the combination of the knowledge about applied linguistics, the theory of second language acquisition, education technology, as well as the philosophy of Islam education to suggest a comprehensive pedagogical model that bridges the gap between linguistic competence and cultural, epistemological, and spiritual aspects of education.

The originality of this work is thus in its interdisciplinary synthesis, as well as, in placing the contemporary language pedagogy in Islamic pedagogical traditions into context. The study can be used to add to the wider debate in the social sciences about curriculum innovation, culturally responsive pedagogy, and how global educational systems can be adapted into educational settings with a faith basis. The suggested framework provides theoretical advice to the future empirical studies, curriculum development, and teacher professional training in Arabic language education in the course of Islamic Studies.

Literature Review

Classical Islamic Views on Learning a language

Even in traditional Islamic educational teaching, Arabic did not just exist to be acquired but it was the medium through which all knowledge in the sacred had to be transmitted. The importance of the linguistic correctness, the eloquence in speech (balaghah), and a deep analysis of the canonical sources were given by such scholars as Al Farabi and Sibawayh. In this view, education is considered to be the preparation of the ground to profusion and nurturing to the self, in other words, developing the person so that he or she could perceive his/her uniqueness as a creation and the believer in one God (Kayode et al., 2016). These practices were hermeneutical and dialectical that implied teacher-student dialogue, memorization, and comprehension and synthesis of ethics and theology.

Contemporary research is conflicted between this heritage orientation tradition where grammatical analysis and textual control are too often the order of the day and communicative purposes advanced in the present applied linguistics (Fadli et al., 2025; Susiawati and Al Fajr, 2025). The issue of how to incorporate the formal linguistic frameworks with the meaning-oriented interaction and interpretive competence tailored to religious discourse is a matter of conflicting formal linguistic frameworks and meaning-oriented interaction that is required in the situations of integrating frameworks such as CEFR into the framework of these settings.

Innovation and Modern Pedagogy of the Arabic Language

According to the recent research, there is an increasing range of innovative solution strategies in the Arabic language teaching. The growing cultural, political, and economic relevance of the Arabic language in global settings has amplified the global spread of the language as a means of instruction to non-native speakers within the last twenty years (Nasirudeen and Ishaq, 2025). The existence of the possibilities of communicative pedagogies and cooperative approaches to learning to encourage learners and build an interactive competence is also evidence-based (Jabaruddin and Achmada, 2025).

Acquisition of Arabic as the second language can be best achieved through exposure of the learner to the Arabic environment and specific acquisition strategies, although the effectiveness of these interventions mostly depends on the current patterns of challenges

existing in the language and the learners themselves (Nasirudeen, 2024). As an example, the Al Arabiyah Baina Yadaik textbook model is an integration model of communicative and cultural competencies that have some challenges in the feedback mechanism and adjusting to other profiles of learners (Zulhannan et al., 2025).

With the help of mobile assisted language learning (MALL) tools, such as Duolingo, in a blended instruction model, it has been proven that it is possible to stimulate discourse-level comprehensive and vocabulary learning, particularly when it comes to narrative and literary texts (Osman et al., 2025). However, these tools may be used pedagogically depending on the design of instruction to connect the digital tasks with the learning goals.

Digital Integration and Pedagogical Challenges

The integration of mobile apps, AI-enabled solutions and virtual learning environments leads to higher autonomy in learning, however, it also brings strong language and structural challenges. The acquisition problems in Arabic are distinctive because of the nature of the word, which is a root-and-pattern structure involving the building of words out of interlaced consonantal roots, and vowels (Nasirudeen, 2025). Moreover, Arabic language is complex with a structured syntax; as one who has never learned a Semitic system, the language is arguably the hardest to learn (Nasirudeen and Chtaibi, 2024).

Poor digital infrastructure, teacher digital literacy, and danger of the technology simply taking over the teaching purpose are the structural barriers (Jamil and Abdullayev, 2024; Setiyawan and Rifai, 2025). The combination of communicative interaction, instructor presence, and culturally rich materials can only be successfully implemented in the strategy of online Arabic instruction in association with the level of learner proficiency (Nasirudeen and Lawal, 2025). The digital tools are most useful when integrated into the interaction-based pedagogical models; although they increase access.

The AI language teaching literature suggests that it can be used to offer personalized feedback and adaptive practice, yet also states that it can create difficulties in the application of AI ethically, because of algorithm bias, and because of the need to engage in learning activities in technologically enhanced settings with the support of an instructor (Mohd Yusof et al., 2025).

Theoretical Framework

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

CLT emphasizes interactional competence and natural language use and a teacher may not have the role of providing information but rather facilitating the negotiations of meanings. This approach is aligned with Islamic pedagogies with the focus on comprehension, contextual learning and dialogic learning. The CLT strategies (task based activities, pair work, real communicative interactions, etc.) can be tailored to the context of the Islamic world with the help of interpretive activities (tafsir of the Qur`an, interpretation of the Hadith).

A strategy in which lessons are developed around a particular subject and presented to students through diverse activities that support those lessons.

Content Based Instruction (CBI)

A teaching method where lessons are created on a specific topic and the lessons are taught using various activities that reinforce the lessons. CBI combines language and content learning, whereby subject matter is the channel of language development. Language skills are acquired by working with the religious texts and theological discourse in the context of the Islamic Studies, which contributes to the linguistic and theological competency. This dual focus supports deeper cognitive processing, improves reading comprehension, and aligns language goals with disciplinary knowledge.

Constructivist Learning Theory

Constructivist theories define learning as an active construction of meaning through social interaction and reflection on the priory acquired knowledge. The theory corresponds with the traditional Islamic schooling activities that entail scholarly dialogue (halaqat), commentary (sharh) implying that the heritage practices go hand in hand with contemporary constructivist pedagogy. Collaborative interpretation of classical texts, project based learning, reflective discussions are some of the activities that help learners to build complex language and conceptual knowledge.

Innovative Instructional Tools and Approaches

Digital Learning Platforms

The accessible and flexible instruction in a remote or blended learning set-up is made possible by the use of digital learning platforms and Learning Management Systems (LMS). These platforms facilitate the delivery of multimedia contents, asynchronous practice and interactive activities that go beyond rote activities to the contextual use of language (Jamil and Abdullayev, 2024). Digital literacy, which can be defined as the possibility of purposeful use of technology to learn, is one of the essential skills that determine successful integration (Rohmat et al., 2025; Basuki et al., 2025).

Multimodal, AI, and Gamified Resources

Multimodal resources and gamified tasks, i.e., AI-powered chatbots, visual question answer systems to train vocabulary, as well as interactive phoneme recognition games, provide immersive and adaptive learning tools that can facilitate pronunciation, listening comprehension, and active learning (Setiyawan et al., 2025; Delassi et al., 2025). The studies on AI chatbots indicate the possible improvement of engagement with the learner and the decrease in anxiety and encouragement of communicative practice (Mohd Yusof et al., 2025).

Integrated Curriculum Models

Recent proposals recommend curricular approaches as a way to merge tradition and innovation bringing together digital technologies and interdisciplinary approaches with classical ones. These models focus on the position of cognitive scaffolding, cultural contextualization, and systematic digital incorporation, which guarantee cultural consideration and promote the linguistic ability (Susiwati and Al Fajr, 2025; Jabaruddin and Achmada, 2025). The combination of task based and communicative tasks along with culturally sensitive digital resources will establish the comprehensive curriculum that fits the language skills and theological knowledge together.

Methodology

Research Design

The research design in this study is based on conceptual-theoretical research design, where the important aim is to develop knowledge based on critical analysis, integration of theories, and development of frameworks as opposed to the development of knowledge based on empirical data collection. Conceptual research is also one that best suits the purpose of clarifying constructs, synthesizing disjointed bodies of literature, and coming up with new theoretical insights (Gilson & Goldberg, 2015; Jaakkola, 2020).

Consistent with the current recommendations regarding non-empirical research, the current research project is not expected to test the hypothesis or quantify the results of instruction. Rather it gives precedence to theoretical discussion and conceptual development which has been known as a legitimate and requisite kind of contribution in the field of education and applied linguistics research (Whetten, 1989; Cropanzano, 2009). Such a design is particularly appropriate considering the fact that little theoretical integration is currently present in research on the Arabic language pedagogy in the context of the Islamic Studies.

Analytical Orientation

The theoretical orientation on which the analysis is based is an interdisciplinary one, which combines three complementary areas of knowledge:

Applied Linguistics and Second Language Acquisition (SLA) such as communicative competence theory, task-based learning, interactionist perspectives, and content based instruction.

Educational Theory and Learning Sciences, with emphasis on constructivist and sociocultural learning theories that conceptualize language development as socially mediated meaning construction.

Islamic Educational Epistemology, particularly the pedagogical principles of *ta'lim* (instruction), *tarbiyah* (holistic development), and *ta'dib* (ethical formation), which frame language learning as both intellectual and spiritual practice.

These domains serve as analytical lenses by which instructional practices and pedagogical technologies are discussed, compared and re-contextualized.

Literature Identification and Selection

To achieve the analytical rigor and transparency, the search was conducted using the relevant literature by means of the systematic search in the primary academic databases, such as Scopus, Web of Science, ERIC, and Google Scholar. Peer-reviewed journal articles, scholarly monographs and authoritative edited volumes published mostly since the year 2000, with foundational theoretical works as conceptually appropriate, were prioritized in the review.

The search terms were combined using the Boolean operator and the terms were:

The teaching of Arabic language, the Islamic teaching, teaching Arabic as a religious language, teaching Arabic as a communicative language, teaching Arabic as a content-based language, teaching Arabic as a task-based language, teaching Arabic using digital technology, teaching Arabic using mobile technology and artificial intelligence in teaching language.

The selection of sources was based on the criteria suggested in the case of integrative and conceptual literature reviews (Grant and Booth, 2009; Snyder, 2019; Torraco, 2005, 2016).

Studies contained had to show an evident theoretical applicability, its pedagogical importance, and academic validity. Non-peer-reviewed contents and grey literature were excluded unless it was important to clarify a context.

Analytical Procedure

Analytical process was also based on the iterative and reflexive synthesis process that aligns with the approach of integrative literature review (Torraco, 2005, 2016; Hart, 2018). It was analysed in four stages:

Stage 1: Thematic Mapping

The chosen literature was carefully analyzed to determine the prevalent pedagogical paradigms, frequent issues in the delivery of instruction, as well as the new trends in the Arabic language teaching in relation to Islamic Studies.

Stage 2: Theoretical Categorization

The identified themes were placed under the major pedagogical frameworks- Communicative language teaching (CLT), Content-based instruction (CBI), Task-based language teaching (TBLT) and constructivist learning theory, in order to compare instructional methods in the selected ways.

Stage 3: Critical Theoretical Synthesis

The paper was a critical synthesis of the classical traditions in the history of Islamic pedagogy and modern language learning theory to find the conceptual tensions, epistemological compatibility, and pedagogical convergence. This phase focused on enclosing the correspondence of linguistic efficiency with interpretational, cognitive and spiritual educational results.

Stage 4: Conceptual Framework Development

The conclusions made based on the synthesis were used to build a comprehensive pedagogical model. The model was developed according to the theory-building scholarship recommendations to explain the connections between the major constructs and also elaborate on how instructional practices could empower the learning of the Arabic language in the Islamic Studies contexts (MacInnis, 2011; Whetten, 1989).

Analytical Rigor and Trustworthiness

Though none of the conceptual studies intends to provide statistical generalization, the rigor of the methodology was maintained in various approaches suggested in the theoretical research literature. These comprised cross-disciplinary triangulation of theoretical views, the explicit statement of the categories of analysis, systematically recording the inclusion criteria, and repeated comparing the emerging interpretations with the existing knowledge (Gilson & Goldberg, 2015; Jaakkola, 2020; Snyder, 2019).

These procedures assist in theoretical coherence, transparency, and logical consistency, which are generally considered to be indicators of quality in conceptual research.

Scope and Limitations

This study is a non-empirical theoretical investigation; hence, it does not give direct evidence of the effectiveness in instruction. The suggested framework is thus aimed at being analytically based model to guide future empirical studies but not an evaluative intervention. Furthermore, despite the international scholarship of the literature reviewed, the pedagogical application might be different in institutional, cultural, and curricular contexts. It

is hoped that in the future, empirical research will be carried out to test the framework in various classroom experiments, design-based studies, and longitudinal research in a variety of Islamic educational settings.

Ethical Considerations

In this research, the secondary data used is purely based on published sources. It does not include any human subjects or institutional data and thus it did not need any formal ethical approval. All references were referenced according to the APA 7th edition style and principles of academic honesty.

Proposed Conceptual Framework

Conceptual Framework Proposals.

Based on the reviewed theories and evidence, the present paper suggests a holistic pedagogical model that incorporates four dimensions that are interrelated:

Linguistic Competence: Communicative and interpretive abilities are developed in the form of task and interactive dialogues with the text, involvement in real texts.

Epistemological Coherence: Correspondence of language teaching with Islamic epistemic purposes, so that linguistic forms could be used to gain more theological insight.

Cultural and Spiritual Contextualization: Incorporation of cultural conventions, religious values, and Quranic interpretive activities in learning activities.

Technological Facilitation: Pragmatic application of digital, artificial intelligence, and mobile media that supplement learning without distracting pedagogical orientation.

The model highlights the importance of careful design of the curriculum that enhances consistency and creativity, promotes differentiation in instruction and the development of lifelong learning dispositions.

Implications for Curriculum and Policy

The application of this model needs holistic frameworks in the curriculum to balance the development of linguistic skills and religious content, teacher training focused on digital literacy and innovative pedagogies and institutional support of technology infrastructure. The policy efforts should focus on allocating resources, teacher training programs and research on context specific instructional practices in order to sustain and culturally based integration.

Conclusion

The pedagogy of the Arabic language in Islamic Studies should no longer be traditional models of grammar centred models but adopt modern models in pedagogy based on classical traditions and current theory in the field of education. By combining communicative, content based, constructivist, and technology enhanced methods, rich learning environments can be created which aid the linguistic proficiency, theological understanding as well as the engagement of the learners. The proposed model offers a theoretical basis of the innovation that is supported by the Islamic educational principles but that capitalizes on the discoveries of language pedagogy and teaching technology.

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