

Building and Environmental Awareness Through Arabic Language Education: Conceptual Study Based on the SDGs

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to study Arabic Language education, which often focuses on grammatical aspects in both formal and non-formal institutions. This narrow fokus may pose a global challenge, contributing to environmental crises and social inequality, thus requiring a more transformative educational approach. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly goals 4, 13, 16, emphasize the importance of inclusive education that is aware of social and environmental issues. This study seeks to conceptually examine the relationship between arabic language education and social development, and to highlight an integrative pedagogical role aligned with the SDG framework. The methodology is based on a literature review from comprehensive sources related to Arabic language education and the SDGs. The findings are summarized into three main points: 1) Arabic language education can contribute to fostering social and environmental awareness when the learning content is integrated with sustainable values; 2) Integrating social and environmental themes into Arabic reading texts encourages meaningful and contextual learning; 3) There is a need to develop curricula and educational materials that address SDG-related issues within Arabic language instruction.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Arabic Language has a central role in the tradition of Islamic education, particularly in its efforts to equip students with the ability to comprehensively understand the sources of religious teachings. The study of nahwu (syntax) and shorof (morphology) as the core of Arabic language learning forms a foundation that cannot be overlooked. However, along with the evolving global challenges and the growing complexity of social life, learning approaches need to be directed not only at structural aspects but also at contextual dimensions that encourage the transformation of values.

Contextual learning has become a necessity in all areas of education, including in Arabic Language Education (ALE). This effort is needed so that learning is not merely focused on mastering linguistic structures, but also capable of bridging students with social realities and the evolving values of life within society.

Global issues such as environmental degradation, social inequality, and the decline of human values demand an active role from the educational world in shaping students' character with social awareness and ecological responsibility. In this regard, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) initiated by the United Nations particularly Goal 4 (Quality Education), Goal 13 (Climate Action), and Goal 16 (Peace, Justice, and

Strong Institutions) serve as important references in promoting a more inclusive, participatory, and sustainable educational direction. (Hope Sr, 2020)

Arabic language learning has the potential to contribute to these goals. Beyond developing linguistic competence, Arabic can serve as a medium to instill social values and environmental awareness. By presenting value-laden reading texts, using reflective approaches, and linking learning with real-life contexts, students can be shaped into individuals who uphold the values of 'adl (justice), rahmah (compassion), and khilāfah (stewardship of the Earth). The educational concept that emphasizes the cultivation of adab (ethics and manners), as theorized by Al-Attas (1991), remains relevant as a philosophical foundation that stresses the integration of knowledge, morality, and social concern. (Siregar, 2025)

Several previous studies have examined the contribution of Islamic education to the formation of environmental and social awareness. (Aini, 2023) highlighted the integration of ecological values into the madrasa education curriculum, while (Nur et al., 2023) showed the role of pesantren in internalizing environmental responsibility through religious activities. Additionally, (Fadilah, 2024) discussed the use of Islamic texts in Arabic language learning that carry moral and ethical messages. However, these studies have not specifically addressed the concept of Arabic language learning that systematically integrates social and environmental values within the framework of global sustainability as reflected in the SDGs.

Based on this, the present article aims to formulate a concept of Arabic language learning that integrates social and environmental values. The approach used is a literature review of various relevant theoretical and conceptual references, in order to establish a conceptual basis for developing Arabic language learning that is contextual, meaningful, and responsive to the challenges of contemporary education.

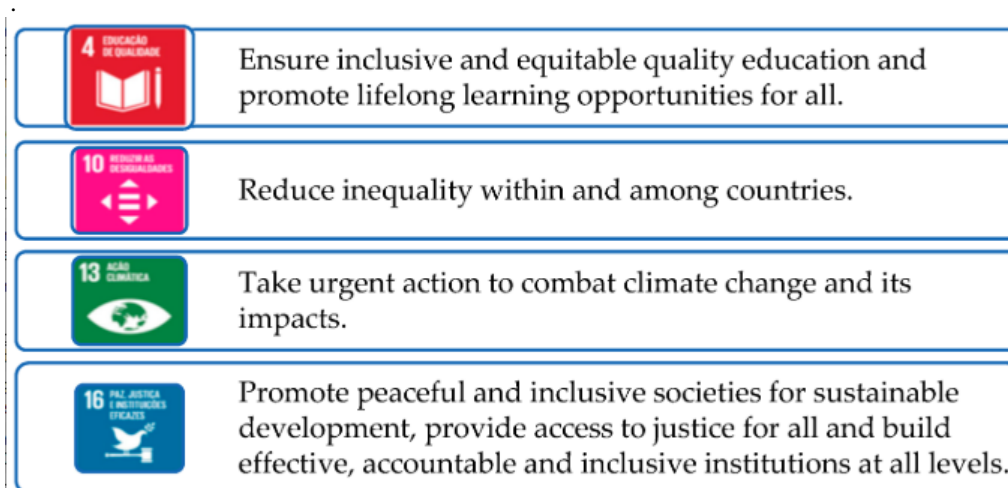


Figure 1. Selected Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The integration of an SDG-oriented curriculum and contextual Arabic texts, as illustrated in the diagram, presents a transformative model for Arabic language education aimed at building environmental awareness. The SDG-based curriculum serves as a foundation by embedding themes such as environmental protection, sustainability, and ethical responsibility into educational goals. Meanwhile, the use of contextual Arabic texts that discuss real-world environmental issues like pollution, water scarcity, and ecological ethics in Islamic teachings makes language learning more meaningful and socially relevant for students.

At the intersection of these two elements lies a new pedagogical approach: contextual and Arabic language learning that promotes both linguistic proficiency and ecological consciousness. This model not only improves students' understanding of Arabic but also empowers them to reflect on their roles as stewards of the Earth, in alignment with Islamic values and global citizenship principles. Thus, Arabic language education becomes a powerful vehicle to instill sustainable thinking in local learners within a global framework.

These selected SDGs reflect the multidimensional goals that Arabic language education can support when appropriately contextualized. By embedding themes such as inclusive education (SDG 4), equality (SDG 10), environmental responsibility (SDG 13), and peace-building (SDG 16) into Arabic language learning materials, educators can transform linguistic instruction into a platform for character development and global citizenship.

For example, narrative and descriptive Arabic texts can explore environmental topics like pollution, recycling, and climate change, enhancing students' vocabulary while fostering ecological awareness. Dialogues and role-playing activities can be designed around themes of justice, cooperation, and social responsibility, encouraging empathy and intercultural understanding among learners.

Such an integrative approach not only enhances linguistic competence but also aligns with the broader goals of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) as advocated by UNESCO (2017). This demonstrates that Arabic language teaching is not limited to grammatical mastery but can become a strategic means to promote sustainability and ethical values in diverse educational contexts, including pesantren and Islamic schools.

1.1. The Potencial of Arabic Language for Social Awareness

Education is a consciously and systematically designed process to create a supportive learning environment, through active learning students will easily develop their abilities, form good characters and will acquire skills that are useful for themselves and the surrounding community. (Pendidikan & Makassar, 2022)

Education and language are two things that influence each other in realizing social awareness, social awareness refers to a person's ability to understand and respond critically to the dynamics that occur in society including in social, political, and economic aspects. In the context of language learning, this awareness will help us to analyze social phenomena that occur in the use of language and communication interactions. (Sastra, 2024) Arabic is not just a tool for communicating between humans but is a window for us to understand the culture, history and values contained in Islam through Arabic.

Thus, Arabic has great potential to realize social awareness for students and society, through several functions that will have an impact after being studied and implemented, including:

- a. Arabic as a language of communication between humans and between cultures, especially Muslims in worshipping and worshipping Allah SWT as their God, because in every application of worship it is done using Arabic such as; dhikr, prayer, and prayer.
- b. Arabic as an international language because it can be used in the world of Islamic and non-Islamic education, Arabic has also been used as a study at major universities in the world, such as Oxford University, Harvard and Goettingen. Arabic has also been used in international forums.
- c. Arabic plays a role in various studies and to study Islam more deeply through the holy book of the Qur'an, yellow books on fiqh, interpretation, hadith and even Sufism. so studying and understanding it is very important. (Habibah, 2023)

Through the entire series of explanations above, it can be seen that the use of Arabic is not only used as a tool for communication, but we can also use it as a means of cross-cultural communication, understanding religion, and can even be used as multicultural awareness.

1.2. Arabic Language Education and Social Transformation

Arabic is used in Islamic education as a foundational medium for understanding and transmitting religious teachings, particularly those that emphasize social values and empathy. Like most formal educational programs, Arabic language education is structured into different levels primary, secondary, and higher education. Within these frameworks, Islamic education serves as a vital avenue for promoting values of tolerance, empathy, and social responsibility among students.

The effectiveness of teaching methods must be critically considered. It is essential that instructional strategies include interactive elements to avoid monotonous learning experiences. From the students' side, participatory learning plays a crucial role in helping learners understand and internalize the social and ethical values embedded in the Arabic language. This aligns naturally with the goals of Islamic education, making the two inseparable and complementary in fostering a more harmonious and peaceful society.

Concrete examples of such values can be found in everyday Arabic expressions such as "السلام عليكم" (peace be upon you) and "جزاك الله خيراً" (may Allah reward you with goodness), which reflect peace, mutual prayer, and care for one another. In both classical and modern Arabic discourse, vocabulary related to brotherhood (ukhuwwah), compassion (rahmah), and social justice ('adalah ijtima'iyah) is frequently encountered. (El-Nashar, 2020)

Arabic is one of the world's languages with broad cultural and spiritual reach. It functions not only as a means of daily communication but also as a medium for conveying social values, empathy, and peace. The language plays a historical and philosophical role in delivering messages of humanity within religious texts, literature, and even diplomatic communication.

As the language of the Qur'an, Arabic articulates moral teachings that uphold values of fraternity, social justice, and compassion. This is evident in numerous verses that emphasize the importance of diversity, justice, and forgiveness. According to (Zulkifli, 2022) the Qur'anic lexicon is rich in Arabic terms with universal meanings such as rahmah (compassion), 'adl (justice), and silm (peace), which, when analyzed semantically, reflect the call for harmonious and mutual understanding among individuals and nations.

Furthermore, Arabic is an effective medium for conveying empathy and peace through literature. Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish, for instance, uses Arabic to voice the suffering of his people due to ongoing conflict. Through powerful metaphors and word choices, his poetry not only reflects social realities but also invites readers to share in the collective pain. (Shunnaq, 2021) notes that contemporary Arabic literature

often explicitly develops discourses of peace and justice, positioning Arabic as a tool for advocating empathy and social awareness.

In education and media, Arabic is used to build character and instill social values, especially among children. Initiatives like Ahlan Simsim by Sesame Workshop employ Arabic to help children particularly refugees and those affected by conflict recognize emotions, build empathy, and resolve conflicts peacefully. According to the 2022 report by Sesame Workshop, using children's mother tongue (in this case, Arabic) significantly enhances the effectiveness of teaching empathy and social skills, especially during trauma recovery. (Sesame Workshop, 2022)

Arabic also plays a strategic role in international forums. As one of the six official languages of the United Nations, Arabic is used in global policy discussions concerning world peace. According to (Al-Khatib, 2020), Arabic's role in cross-cultural communication is crucial not only conveying messages linguistically, but also carrying Middle Eastern values rooted in respect, mutual consultation (*shūrā*), and peaceful dialogue.

Thus, Arabic serves not only linguistic functions but also cultural and ethical ones. It is a medium that unites spiritual, aesthetic, and social dimensions rich in values essential for building a more empathetic and peaceful society.

1.3. INTEGRATION OF THE SDGS INTO TE EDUCATIONAL CURRICULUM

Sustainable education has become an important agenda in global education systems since the United Nations established the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015. Among the 17 goals outlined, one of the most prominent is SDG 4: Quality Education, which explicitly emphasizes the importance of access to inclusive and equitable education, as well as the need to strengthen sustainability values within the curriculum.

In principle, sustainable education is founded upon values such as social justice, environmental preservation, solidarity, and economic development that does not compromise the future of the next generation. Therefore, education curricula in various countries are encouraged not only to transfer knowledge, but also to develop students' critical awareness of global issues such as climate change, poverty, gender equality, and responsible consumption. (UNESCO, 2021)

In Muslim countries, the integration of sustainability principles into education is not only a response to globalization but also aligns with Islamic values. In Islam, concepts like *khalīfah* (stewardship of the earth) and *ḥifẓ al-bi'ah* (environmental protection) are philosophically in line with the values of sustainability. (Osman, 2020) Thus, the integration of SDGs into curricula in the Muslim world is not only possible but normatively supported by strong religious foundations.

For example, Indonesia, as the largest Muslim-majority country in the world, has developed the Merdeka Belajar (Independent Learning) curriculum which includes elements of the SDGs, such as environmentally-based learning projects, strengthening the value of mutual cooperation, and financial and social literacy. Several secondary schools and madrasahs have implemented the Student Profile Strengthening Projects that address themes such as climate change, waste management, and social justice. (RI., 2022)

Meanwhile, in the United Arab Emirates, the Ministry of Education has formulated the Education for Sustainability Strategy 2030, which integrates environmental education into science, social studies, and even Arabic language subjects. In schools, students are involved in activities such as energy audits, water conservation, and urban farming. This approach is not only academic but also transformative in shaping environmentally friendly behavior.

Malaysia also stands out as a progressive Muslim country in integrating the SDGs into its education system. Universities such as the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) have explicitly developed curricula based on the Islamic Worldview on Sustainability, which combines *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* with SDG indicators. Students are guided not only to understand global issues but also to respond to them through Islamic ethical values. (Ibrahim, M., & Salleh, 2021)

From the above explanation, it is clear that the integration of sustainability principles into curricula in Muslim-majority countries serves as a bridge between global and local values. Education is no longer only expected to develop students cognitively, but also to equip them with social and spiritual awareness to ensure the sustainability of life on Earth.

The integration of social and environmental values into Arabic language learning is not merely a conceptual discourse, but has begun to be actualized in various practices within Islamic educational institutions. Arabic language instruction in this context is not solely aimed at developing linguistic skills, but is also directed toward fostering students' awareness of humanitarian and ecological issues.

One example can be found at Pondok Pesantren Sabilil Muttaqin in Pangandaran, which integrates social values through language discussion programs and thematic wall magazine projects. These activities are regularly carried out by *mu'allimin* students, who discuss social issues in both Arabic and English and deliver presentations in front of their peers. Additionally, the creation of Arabic-language wall magazines serves as a medium for reflecting social values and raising awareness about environmental concerns.

.(Interview with Siti Nurlaela, Former Head of the Language and Education Division, PSM Girls' Dormitory, June 6, 2025, n.d.)

A similar practice is carried out at the Ath-Thaariq Ecological Pesantren in Garut, which instills environmental awareness through contextual Arabic language learning. Students write texts on conservation and deliver messages about environmental preservation in Arabic.

(Irawan & Widjajanti, 2021). Meanwhile, at MA Al-Muayyad Surakarta, teachers integrate social themes into Arabic language materials and relate them to students' life contexts through classroom discussions and writing projects.(Supriyanto et al., 2022)

These activities demonstrate that Arabic language learning can serve as a space for dialogue between text, values, and reality. Learners are not only taught to understand meaning grammatically, but also trained to read and interpret the world through language. This approach reflects Islamic values, which view humans as khalīfah the meaning stewards responsible for maintaining social and ecological balance.

From a deeper perspective, this integrative approach also supports the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 4 (quality education), Goal 13 (climate action), and Goal 16 (peace and social justice). When Arabic language learning fosters care, empathy, and responsibility, education no longer merely produces students who are fluent speakers, but cultivates individuals who embody rahmatan lil 'ālamīn the meaning compassionate beings who are sensitive to others and committed to caring for the earth they inhabit.

2. THIS ALSO INVOLVES SDG-ORIENTED CURRICULUM DESIGN AND CONTEXTUAL ARABIC TEXTS

Along with global developments, education is not only aimed at improving academic abilities but must also play an active role in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set by the United Nations. In the context of Arabic language learning, this means that curriculum design should integrate values and themes relevant to the SDGs so that learners not only master the Arabic language linguistically but also develop awareness and competencies to contribute to sustainable development.

Research findings from several studies in the field of Arabic language education show that the implementation of an SDG-oriented curriculum is very effective in shaping students' critical and social character. For example, a study conducted by (Irsyadi et al., 2024) stated that the use of contextual Arabic texts addressing issues such as quality education, environmental preservation, and gender equality can enhance students' understanding of language meaning while increasing their awareness of global social issues.

(Miftah et al., 2023) emphasized that integrating SDG themes into Arabic language learning materials not only enriches vocabulary and language skills but also instills moral and social values that are highly needed to face today's global challenges. For instance, in learning Arabic texts discussing al-ḥifāẓ 'ala al-bi'ah (environmental preservation), students are encouraged not only to understand language structure but also to develop an attitude of care towards the environment.

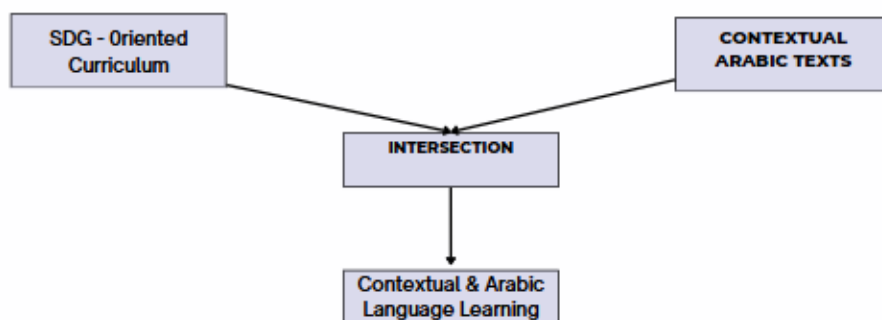


Figure 2. Intersection between SDGs and Contextual Arabic Texts

3. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Arabic language education does not only function as a means of communication, but it can also serve as a strategic tool for instilling social values and environmental awareness. As the language of the Qur'an and the legacy of Islamic civilization, Arabic encompasses important concepts such as ukhuwah (brotherhood), adl (justice), and khilafah (human stewardship of the earth), which align with the goals of sustainable development or the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

According to Al-Ma'arri (2020), Arabic language education directed toward character building and social responsibility can shape a generation that is environmentally conscious and socially active.

Best Practice Example:

At Al-Ittifaq Islamic Boarding School in Bandung, Arabic language learning is integrated with sustainable agricultural activities. Students learn Arabic vocabulary related to the environment, farming, and maintaining cleanliness through practical, everyday experiences. (Purbaya et al., 2022)

a. Integration of SDG Values into Arabic Language Learning Materials

Integrating SDG values such as quality education (SDG 4), gender equality (SDG 5), clean water and sanitation (SDG 6), and climate action (SDG 13) into Arabic teaching materials makes the learning process more contextual and meaningful. Materials such as narrative texts, descriptive passages, and dialogues in Arabic can be designed with sustainability and social themes. According to Al-Hassan & Al-Jabri (2021), Arabic teaching materials that include social and environmental themes have a positive impact on students' empathy and awareness of global issues.

Best Practice Example:

"At Modern Islamic School Al-Azhar, students learn Arabic texts with themes such as environmental cleanliness, recycling, and social ethics. For instance, they read Arabic articles about al-bi'ah (the environment) and create campaign posters in Arabic about water conservation." (Omara, 2023)

b. Designing Contextual Arabic Language Curriculum and Texts for SDGs

(Include scientific citations and best practices in pesantren, modern Islamic schools, or Arab countries) The Arabic language curriculum needs to be developed thematically and contextually by incorporating topics related to the SDGs. The curriculum should no longer focus solely on grammatical skills, but also aim to develop global awareness and sustainability values. According to UNESCO (2017), Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) should be integrated across all fields of study, including language learning.

Best Practice Example:

"In several schools in the United Arab Emirates, Arabic textbooks developed by the Ministry of Education include SDG-related themes such as sustainable urban planning, climate change, and social responsibility, adapted to the students' learning levels." (Ruban, 2012)

Based on the discussion above, it can be concluded that Arabic language education holds significant potential in fostering social and environmental consciousness, especially when sustainability values contained in the SDGs are integrated into the learning process. By including themes such as social justice, environmental preservation, and human responsibility as part of the curriculum, Arabic language learning moves beyond linguistic proficiency toward character building and student engagement with global issues. This integration makes learning more contextual, relevant, and meaningful. Therefore, the development of thematic curricula based on sustainability values is essential so that Arabic language education can make a tangible contribution in shaping environmentally aware and socially responsible generations.

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