



Redefining Arabic in the Global Era: A Critical Examination of *Silsilat Al-Lisan* Textbooks

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Abstract The discourse on Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) within the *Silsilat Al-Lisan Arabic Language Learning* (SAALL) textbook series extends beyond simple language teaching, elevating Arabic to a global status comparable to English. Through critical discourse analysis, this study examines the globalization discourse of Arabic within these educational materials. With the content analysis method, research reveals the SAALL series' ambition to develop Arabic proficiency and establish Arabic as a global lingua franca essential for science, technology, and communication, surpassing geographical, temporal, and contextual limits. Additionally, it illustrates Arabic's embodiment of Arab culture broadly, positioning the SAALL series as a testament to the Arab world's, particularly the United Arab Emirates' (UAE), advancements in various contemporary life aspects. However, distancing it from Islamic discourse may hinder Arabic's evolution, given Islam's significant historical contribution to its development.

Keywords: *Discourse, Arabic, Globalization, Modern standard Arabic, Silsilat Al-Lisan*

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1. Introduction

The Gulf States, including Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Oman, and Qatar, were once considered traditional and overly attached to Islam and tribal customs (Vora & Koch, 2015). The discovery of oil around 1938 significantly changed their global image, steering them towards development in various sectors such as politics, society, culture, technology, economy, education, and language, with an aim to elevate Arabic to the status of global languages like English or French (Kubursi, 2015; Luthfi, 2020; Suleiman, 2023).

Arabic's designation as a global language by the United Nations, largely due to its role in Islam, highlights its international significance (Tahir, 2021). This recognition allows its 1.9 billion followers to easily engage with the language (Saeed et al., 2023). Middle Eastern nations are leveraging this status to promote

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Arabic for scientific use and global communication, distancing it from purely religious connotations. Educational programs tailored specifically are considered crucial in elevating the international status of Arabic (Al-Batal, 2007; Chakrani, 2020).

There's a discernible change in the content of Arabic language educational resources, particularly for learners abroad or those not native to the language. Prior to the 2000s, the emphasis lay heavily on aspects of Arab culture and Islamic teachings, illustrated by the widespread adoption of textbooks such as *al-'Arabiyyah baina Yadaik*, especially noted in Indonesia from 1991 onwards (Ibrahim et al., 2007; Muassomah et al., 2023). During this period, preference was given to teaching Classical Written Arabic (CWA) as the normative academic benchmark (Abdelali, 2004).

In recent times, there has been a notable trend in Arabic education materials to integrate aspects of various global cultures, reducing the focus on Islamic motifs from the Quran and Hadith (Thohir et al., 2020). This evolution towards Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) has ignited discussions, with critiques pointing out its divergence from the traditional Islamic foundations of Arabic (Al-Mahrooqi et al., 2016; Al-Mamari, 2011; Findlow, 2006). Furthermore, for Arab learners accustomed to their local dialects or Spoken Arabic (SA), MSA can seem foreign (Hamzaoui, 2014).

Several academics argue that Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) elevates Arabic to the status of major global languages due to its widespread use and significance as a universal means of communication, particularly valuable in the Middle East where local dialects and English overlap (Bani-Khaled, 2014; Daquila, 2020). The UAE's *Silsilat Al-Lisan Arabic Language Learning* (SAALL) series embodies this strategy by emphasizing MSA while minimizing the focus on Islamic and Arab cultural elements. Having been introduced to Indonesia recently, SAALL has become favored in prestigious universities for its high-quality content that meets the criteria for effective language acquisition (Asrory et al., 2023; Syihabuddin et al., 2023a).

Considering the discussion above, the SAALL textbooks identify four key themes (social, science and technology, humanities, and religion) covering 31 varied topics. It reveals effort to downplay local and Islamic traditions in favor of a global cultural perspective. The textbooks aim to make Arabic relevant worldwide, across different nations and cultures, establish it as a scientific language, and feature the newest technological and architectural developments. They also focus on communicative competence, incorporate technology in their design, and modernize the language structure.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a tool for analyzing texts to uncover the often-concealed intentions of those who use them to further specific goals, requiring an understanding of the sociological context of these objectives. The analysis delves into the subjective motives behind a text's creation, requiring a detailed investigation to reveal the authors' hidden meanings, viewpoints, and ideological aims (Darma, 2013; Eriyanto, 2022). Fairclough (2010) expands on this, describing CDA as a holistic, interdisciplinary method that examines the relationship between discourse and social processes, going beyond mere text critique to provide an in-depth, systematic examination aimed at revealing the implicit aspects of discourse.

Eriyanto (2008, 2022) delineates five core characteristics inherent to critical discourse: action, context, history, power, and ideology. Action signifies that discourse is crafted as an act by individuals or institutions aiming to achieve particular objectives, such as to invite, critique, persuade, or dissent. The conscious intent of its creators underpins this production of discourse. Context implies that the generation of discourse is influenced by its intended audience, the location of its production, and the surrounding environmental factors. The historical aspect underscores that the creation of discourse is invariably linked to its temporal context, with historical factors potentially shaping its content (Haryatmoko, 2023).

Regarding power, discourse is perceived as a mechanism for establishing or sustaining power dynamics, utilized to broaden power's reach, undermine adversaries, or implement authoritative policies. Ideology

within discourse pertains to the conveyance of beliefs or doctrines, often originating from minority groups, utilizing discourse to promulgate specific ideologies and facilitate the acceptance of these groups by the wider society. Contrasting with Eriyanto's perspective, Kristina (2023) posits that critical discourse predominantly emanates from dominant groups rather than minorities, highlighting a divergence in the source of critical discourses.

2.2. Language Globalization

Language globalization involves adapting a language for international use, extending beyond its original geographical limits to be utilized globally in areas like science, technology, economy, culture, politics, and diplomacy (Crystal, 2003; Fairclough, 2009). It primarily concerns languages recognized as international (Swaan, 2001). Globalization transcends the goal of universal application; it also seeks to imbue the language with scientific accuracy, objectivity, and prestige, facilitating its global use across diverse scenarios (Daquila, 2020; Dolgenko, 2020).

Language globalization elevates a language beyond its cultural or national origins, making it a universal tool for communication across diverse social and national backgrounds. It transforms into a *lingua franca*, facilitating equal communication among users (Dolgenko, 2020). Consequently, language transcends its traditional role as a marker of national or cultural identity, instead shaping and generating new cultural contexts as suggested by Sapir and Whorf (Leavitt, 2010). This situation could even suggest a separation of language from its cultural roots, as explored by Chomsky (Ninsiana, 2018).

Outside the spheres of political and economic influence (Dolgenko, 2020), achieving language globalization involves various strategies. These include making language objective or neutral, advancing it scientifically or as a medium for science, using it for cross-cultural communication, and incorporating it into digital tools like software, websites, and apps (Hidayah et al., 2017; Hjarvard, 2004). Moreover, international mass media such as TV, news channels, and online platforms also play a role in promoting globalization (Hjarvard, 2004).

Language globalization often originates from governmental policies, which are then implemented by linguists within language institutions or language teaching programs (Hamel, 2005). Hence, it is logical that one of the primary methods of achieving language globalization is through international language teaching programs in various countries (Dolgenko, 2020). The more educational institutions and language courses are promoted to foreign speakers, the more the language will be used and recognized worldwide (Hamel, 2005).

2.3. Educational Textbooks

An educational textbook crafted by experts acts as a detailed guide for a specific academic field aimed at meeting teaching objectives. Equipped with instructional tools, these books are designed for clarity and ease of use in diverse educational environments like schools and universities, enriching the curriculum (Tarigan, 2009). It will also include educational ideologies or hidden agendas from the author with the aim of subtly influencing students (Hosseinzadeh et al., 2022). Musyrifa et al. (2022) identify textbooks as comprising essential content, additional resources, and assessment materials.

The core material encompasses essential topics and concepts that students are required to engage with and assimilate to achieve proficiency in a given area, integral to the academic framework of the subject matter (Tursunovich, 2022). Within the scope of Arabic language learning, for instance, this material spans linguistic elements such as phonetics, vocabulary, syntax, and discourse (Wekke, 2017) alongside foundational language skills, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Banditvilai, 2016). In the context of second language acquisition, competencies in translation are additionally emphasized (Falla-Wood, 2018).

Supplementary material supports the core content, providing guidance, direction, and assistance to educators and learners in implementing planned activities and exercises derived from the core subjects (Musyrifa et al., 2022). On the other hand, evaluative material comprises resources to assess the learners' mastery over core and supplementary contents through specific assessment tools, thus enabling informed decision-making or policy development. Examinations are often used as such instruments.

In terms of their presentation, textbooks are classified as either print or digital formats. Print versions consist of physical materials such as books, modules, flyers, and leaflets, designed for teaching or sharing knowledge. On the other hand, digital textbooks include learning materials delivered through engaging visual, auditory, or auditory, or multimedia channels, accessible through apps or online services (Syaifulloh & Izzah, 2019).

The SAAL textbook is organized around the three design principles highlighted by Musyrifa. Additionally, Asbarin (2023), notes that the SAALL series adheres to William Francis Mackey's four foundational guidelines for developing educational resources: the selection, grading, presentation, and reinforcement of Arabic instructional content. This makes the textbook highly effective for non-Arabic speakers. Syihabuddin (Syihabuddin et al., 2023b) (2023), also acknowledges this, focusing on the suitability of gender representation in Arabic within the SAALL series. Employing a praxeological method, their study indicates that the well-structured content enhances learners' grasp of Arabic gender norms, aligning well with the competency expectations for non-Arab learners, particularly those from Indonesia.

3. Methodology

3.1. Materials

In this study, content analysis was done to examine the discourse of Arabic globalization in reading texts contained in textbooks (Kyngäs, 2020). This study focuses on the *Silsilat Al-Lisan Arabic Language Learning* (SAALL) textbook series published in the year 2021, in its 10th edition, as its primary data source. The series is structured across four proficiency levels: beginner, pre-intermediate, intermediate, and advanced. Each level is detailed through two main textbooks (1 & 2) and is complemented by an additional workbook. A team of experts led the development of these textbooks proficient in the pedagogy of Arabic for non-native speakers, comprising Mohamed Abs, Amer Alsibai, M. Saeed Alabrash, and Mumin Alannan, with critical reviews provided by Bakri Sheigh Ameen, Ali Hamadallah, Fakhruddeen Qabawah, Mazen Almubarak, Mahmoud Almasri, and Mahmoud Bay. The publication of the SAALL series is an initiative of The Mother Tongue Arabic Language Center in Abu Dhabi, under the auspices of the United Arab Emirates government.

In Indonesia, numerous educational establishments teaching Arabic, such as universities, schools, and language institutes, have extensively utilized the SAALL textbooks (Syihabuddin et al., 2023a). The series' publishing entity has established a branch in Indonesia, tasked with conducting training workshops on the utilization of these resources for a broad audience of Arabic language students across the country. The study focuses on analyzing the content within these textbooks, particularly the reading sections that comprise the main substance, covering a wide range of themes and subjects included in the series.

3.2. Procedure

The study began with a thorough review of the four volumes of the SAALL textbooks to explore the discourse on the globalization of the Arabic language. It systematically categorized themes and subjects from these volumes for a coherent understanding of the issue.

The study utilized the methodology outlined by Miles and Huberman (1994) which comprises three phases: condensing data, presenting data, and deriving conclusions. During the condensation phase, pertinent text and dialogue were sorted into specific themes and topics. Next, in the presentation phase, the results were graphically arranged in charts and tables, enhanced with numerical and percentage-based quantitative analysis. The concluding phase aimed at integrating the findings to discern the role of the SAALL textbooks in promoting the global spread of Arabic via educational content.

4. Results

4.1. Discourse in SAALL Textbooks

In discourse analysis, the diversity of textual content, particularly in terms of themes and topics, serves as essential data. Such diversity underscores the depth of textual analysis and elucidates the objectives

underlying the production of the text. The discourse data identified within the SAALL textbooks are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1
Themes, Topics, and Their Distribution in the Book

Themes	Topics	Tam-1	Tam-2	Mub-1	Mub-2	Mut-1	Mut-2	Mut-t-1	Mut-t-2
Sains dan Teknologi	1 Health		3, 14	3	4			6	8
	2 Physics		9			1	9		
	3 Architecture		2	2					
	4 Zoology		10	8					
	5 Astronomy					6	2		
	6 Sports		4	5					
	7 Biology		7, 8						
	8 Industry				10			8	
	9 Technology	3							
	10 Botany							4	
	11 Transportation	4							
	12 Music						3		
	13 Mathematics							3	
	14 Geology								2
Social	1 Social	1, 5, 7, 8, 11, 13	5, 11, 12, 13	1, 7	3	5, 6, 10		1,3	3
	2 Economy	9, 10	1	4					2
	3 Ethics	12			8	7			1
	4 Communication	6			7		6		5
	5 History			6	10	9			
	6 Geography				1, 9				
	7 Education					4			
	8 Fashion			9					
	9 Politics							1	
Humanities	1 Culture				5		2, 10	5	
	2 Literature							4, 7, 8, 9	
	4 Psychology		6		2	8	7		
	3 Linguistics	2							6, 9
	5 Logic		15						
	6 Philosophy						5		
	7 Art								7
Religion	1 Islam								4
Total Lessons		13	15	10	10	10	10	9	9

Notes:

Tam-1 and 2 : *al-Kitab at-Tamhidi* (Beginner) levels 1 and 2

Mub-1 and 2 : *al-Kitab al-Mubtadi'* (Pre-Intermediate) levels 1 and 2

Mut-1 and 2 : *al-Kitab al-Mutawassith* (Intermediate) levels 1 and 2

Mutt-1 and 2 : *al-Kitab al-Mutaqaddim* (Advanced) level 1 and 2

Table 1 delineates that the discourse within the SAALL textbooks spans four distinct themes and 31 topics, which are disseminated across 86 lessons. These themes include science and technology, social life, humanities, and religion, illustrating the textbooks' comprehensive coverage of contemporary knowledge fields. This breadth of themes underscores the textbooks' aim to provide an all-encompassing educational resource that mirrors the multifaceted nature of modern scholarship. An illustrative excerpt from the theme of science and technology is provided below.

- (1) Buyer : Excuse me, I would like to buy a computer.
 Seller : Welcome. Take a look at this. This is a modern device with a large screen.
 Buyer : True, but it's heavy and expensive.
 Seller : What do you think about this tablet? It's lightweight, reasonably priced, has a large memory, fast charging, a three-year warranty, and you get free earphones from the store.
 Buyer : Right, I'll buy it. Please send the invoice to my email.
 Seller : Of course. (Beginner 1, p. 82)

Text 1 delves into the science and technology theme, centering on a dialogue about acquiring a tablet computer. This conversation highlights the tablet as a pervasive technological tool, emblematic of modern advancements widely utilized globally. The ability of such a device to connect individuals across geographical and temporal divides, once connected to the internet, exemplifies the transformative power of technology. Including a tablet in the discourse indicates the Arabic language's adaptability to incorporate terminologies related to cutting-edge technology and reflects its relevance in contemporary Arab society. Additionally, mentioning "email" in the transactional context underscores the language's versatility in facilitating digital communication, further emphasizing the integration of Arabic within the digital transactional domain.

The subsequent theme revolves around social life. The following is an illustrative excerpt.

- (2) Rahaf : Where are you going, Basimah?
 Basimah : I'm going to the club. Do you want to come with me?
 Rahaf : I can't. I have to clean the house, iron clothes, and prepare food.
 Basimah : That's a lot of work. Why doesn't your husband help you?
 Rahaf : My husband is busy with his job.
 Basimah : And you, Nagam, can you come with me?
 Nagam : I can't right now, I'm going to work.
 Basimah : Then, who helps you at home, Nagam?
 Nagam : My husband helps me in preparing food and washing dishes. (Pre-Intermediate 1, p. 3)

Text 2 explores the social theme, particularly focusing on gender dynamics. The dialogue between the three women reflects a significant cultural transformation in gender roles within domestic settings. Historically, in Arab societies, women were predominantly relegated to domestic roles, while the public domain was reserved for men. This text, however, depicts a progressive shift towards gender role fluidity, illustrating that men's participation in household duties is no longer stigmatized, and women's engagement in the workforce is not deemed improper. Furthermore, the text delves into contemporary social activities, such as visiting clubs, which traditionally might have been viewed skeptically and associated with nightlife. In modern Arab society, such activities are portrayed as normal and acceptable for both genders, highlighting a broader acceptance of social freedoms and changing norms.

The humanities theme is explored in the following excerpt:

- (3) Mr. Khalid sat observing several photos displayed on the wall. These photos reminded him of the beautiful days in his life. They were as precious to him as certificates and awards of appreciation. He was once a renowned lecturer among his peers. He felt all students were his children and deserved to succeed in the future. Therefore, he earnestly worked to realize this dream. He was dearly loved by students and colleagues alike for his dedication and sincerity. He dedicated his life to learning and teaching. He was with his students in the morning, and in the evening with his books. He loved his job, working honestly and sincerely. (Intermediate 1, p. 111)

Text 3 delves into the humanities theme, discussing the feelings of a retired lecturer. Through a psychological approach, SAALL captures the mixed emotions of sadness, happiness, and pleasure experienced by the former lecturer when reminiscing about his active teaching days. The text also portrays the lecturer's efforts in fostering communication with his students to help them realize their dreams. Moreover, this lecturer is depicted as an ideal, intelligent, and expert educator, as evidenced by the various academic awards he received. His entire life was dedicated to education, almost excluding family life, as implied by "in the morning, he was with his students, and in the evening, with his books."

From the theme of Islam, we have the following text:

(4) Al-Ghazali, recognized as Muhammad ibn Muhammad al-Ghazali, stands out as a distinguished philosopher within Islamic civilization, shedding light on the Dark Ages. Imam Ghazali was born in 1057 AD. He studied philosophy and emerged as a leading intellectual (in Islam), renowned in all lands, with insights that became foundational to Islamic thought, and exerting a profound influence across ages. Al-Ghazali epitomized the ideal scholar, adept at overcoming opposition through solid argumentation and clarity of expression. (Advanced 2, p. 38)

While Texts 1 and 2 are sociological in nature and take the form of dialogues, and Text 3 offers an introspective or psychological viewpoint in a dialogue format, Text 4 engages with the theme of religion. Initially, the narrative does not seem to center directly on Islam but instead presents al-Ghazali as a philosopher. Closer analysis, however, reveals al-Ghazali as a seminal Islamic thinker, one credited with enlightening the so-called dark ages of the Arab world. This portrayal in the introductory sentences emphasizes al-Ghazali's role as a distinguished philosopher within the Islamic civilization. Moreover, this narrative implicitly argues against the Western Orientalist perception of Islam as irrational, showcasing Islam's enduring rational foundations.

These overarching themes are further delineated into 31 topics. The theme of science and technology comprises 14 topics (45.16%), covering health, physics, architecture, zoology, astronomy, sports, biology, industry, technology, botany, transportation, music, mathematics, and geology. The social theme is articulated through 9 topics (29.03%), addressing social issues, economics, ethics, communication, history, geography, education, fashion, and politics. The humanities are represented by seven topics (22.58%), including culture, literature, psychology, linguistics, logic, philosophy, and art. Lastly, the theme of religion is encapsulated in one topic (3.23%), specifically Islam. These thematic elements are distributed across 86 lessons, with the social theme featuring in 40 lessons (46.51%), science and technology in 27 lessons (31.40%), humanities in 18 lessons (20.93%), and religion in one lesson (1.16%). Further details are presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Comparison between the Number of Topics and Their Distribution in Lessons

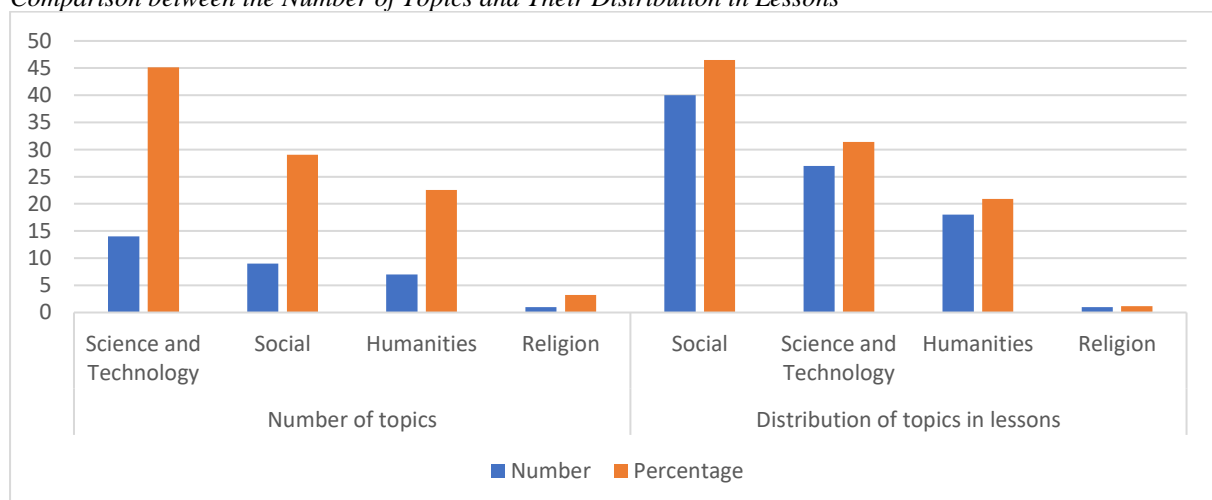
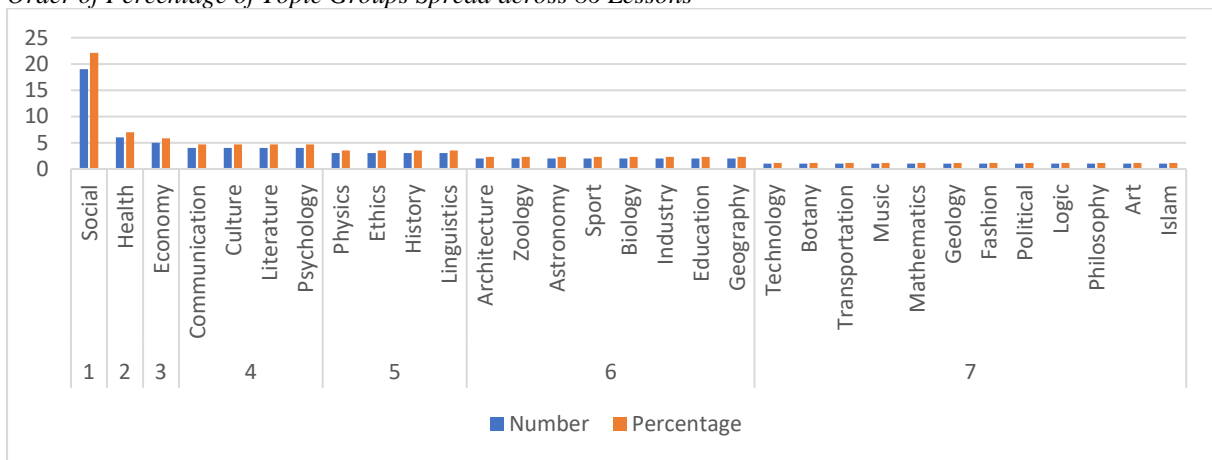


Figure 1 demonstrates that in terms of topic quantity, the science and technology theme is more prominent than the social theme. Yet, when evaluating the spread of topics within the lessons, the social theme exhibits a greater prevalence than that of science and technology. The humanities and religion themes maintain their positions as the third and fourth, respectively. The allocation of topics across the 86 lessons is categorized into seven groups as detailed: Firstly, topics related to social issues are present in 19 lessons (22.09%); secondly, health topics are addressed in 6 lessons (6.98%); thirdly, economic topics feature in 5 lessons (5.81%); fourthly, the areas of communication, culture, literature, and psychology are each the focus of 4 lessons (4.65%); fifthly, ethics, history, education, linguistics, and physics are the subjects of 3 lessons each (3.49%); sixthly, geography, architecture, zoology, astronomy, sports, biology, and industry topics are included in 2 lessons each (2.33%); and seventhly, the themes of fashion, politics, logic, philosophy, art, technology, botany, transportation, music, mathematics, geology, and Islam are each explored in 1 lesson (1.16%). For further details, see Figure 2.

Figure 2
Order of Percentage of Topic Groups Spread across 86 Lessons



4.2. Discourse Construction on the Globalization of the Arabic Language

A critical review of themes and topics previously discussed reveals the discourse aimed at globalizing the Arabic language within the SAALL textbooks through its strategic construction. Figure 3 is an illustration of the sequence of discourse construction within the book.

Figure 3
Sequence of Discourse Construction on the Globalization of the Arabic Language

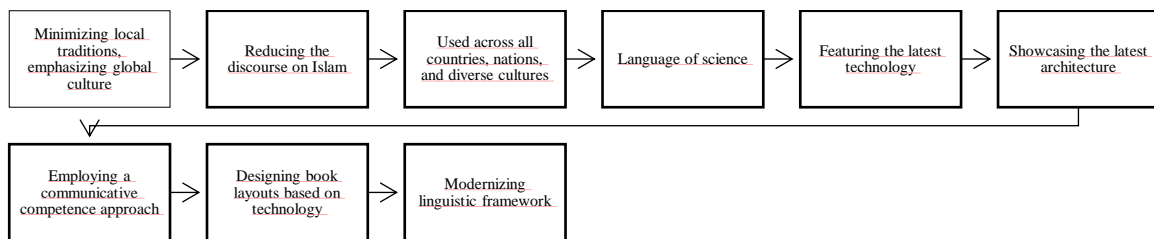


Figure 3 underscores the strategic discourse in this series to globalize the Arabic language, emphasizing the reduction of local Arab traditions to foreground global culture. This strategy aims to develop a linguistic narrative that aligns with the contemporary context of the Arab world, especially within the UAE. Inspired by Petkovic (2007), the authors reflect on the global transformations that resonate at the local level within the daily lives of the Arab community. For instance, the Beginner 2 book features lessons highlighting modern marketplaces, contemporary fashion trends, and communal events.

Today's Arabic-speaking populations are not insular groups resistant to change or excessively bound to traditional customs; instead, they are societies capable of engaging with and adapting to modern cultural norms (Bosca, 2014). Even in scenarios where the SAALL texts incorporate elements of local culture, such elements are recontextualized within a modern framework.

An illustrative example is the "Shopping" lesson, which portrays a traditional market transitioned into a semi-modern setting. Through such portrayals, the SAALL authors aim to present the Arabic language as evolving within a culturally progressive landscape, responsive to the pace of global cultural evolution (Dwakat et al., 2023). Significantly, the series also explores narratives that contest the conventional norms of Arab culture, as evidenced by the Pre-Intermediate 1 book's exploration of gender equality, spotlighting the involvement of women in the public domain and men in domestic roles.

The emphasis on global culture within the Arab community elevates the prestige of the Arabic language, thus prompting the international community to perceive Arabic as a language of modern societies. This initiative also seeks to inspire Arabs to engage in learning their language.

To promote Arabic globally, this book deliberately reduces Islamic references, acknowledging the West's often negative view of Islam as linked to violence and extremism (Al-Mahrooqi et al., 2016). This stigma affects the Arabic language's reception, as it's closely associated with Islam, making some non-Muslims hesitant towards it (Khawlah, 2010). Recognizing the deep connection between the language and Islam, the book seeks to appeal to those wary of Islam by presenting Arabic independently of religious connotations (Morrow & Castleton, 2007). Islamic elements, when included, are treated academically. For instance, the SAALL lessons commend Muslim scholars like Muhammad ibn Jabir (astronomy), Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (philosophy), and Muhammad Zakaria ar-Razi (chemistry and medicine) for their scientific achievements, not their religious beliefs.

Unlike other Arabic textbooks, which often incorporate the Qur'an and Hadith as key Islamic references, the SAALL series intentionally steers clear of this tradition. This choice aims to cast Arabic in a favorable light, enhancing its global appeal by framing it within a sociological context rather than a strictly Islamic theological one (Haeri, 2003). Moreover, when Islam is referenced, it is treated as an academic topic rather than strictly a religious one (Guessoum, 2015).

The SAALL series further globalizes Arabic by covering its diversity across different countries, communities, and non-Arab cultures. It includes examples from Malaysia and China in Asia, Egypt in Africa, France and Russia in Europe, and the United States in America, emphasizing indigenous ethnicities. It also promotes cultural tolerance, highlighting the acceptance of practices different from Islamic-Arab traditions. Examples in the Intermediate 2 book include the ancient Chinese ritual of consuming a deceased enemy's heart, the Gauls' acceptance of killing, and the Eskimo custom of elderly euthanasia.

This discussion highlights how Arabic has become a global language, resonating with people across various countries and cultures and showcasing its worldwide acceptance and use (Cenoz, 2013; Crystal, 2003). Consequently, the presence of Arabic extends beyond merely symbolizing Arab socio-cultural norms, embodying also the socio-cultural dimensions of various other nations (Theodoropoulou, 2018).

Another strategy SAALL utilizes to globalize the Arabic language involves highlighting the discourse of modern science through Arabic. This approach promotes Arabic as a scientific language and aligns it with its historical role since the Golden Age of Islam under the Abbasid dynasty (Ragab, 2017). Indirectly, the book positions Arabic as one of the oldest languages still in use, showcasing its capacity to adapt to and integrate with modern scientific advancements. Arabic is portrayed as adept at developing and incorporating technical terminology within science and technology fields (Aleryani, 2018), a claim substantiated by the prominence of science and technology subjects in the SAALL series, which constitute 45.16% of the topics.

Through this lens, the textbooks' authors aim to convey to both current and prospective learners that Arabic encompasses a lexicon for scientific discourse, capable of articulating abstract and complex concepts with precision, accuracy, and clarity. The language's sophisticated structure and vocabulary, firmly established for delineating modern scientific concepts (Ibrahim et al., 2022), underscore the

necessity of proper grammar and vocabulary for effective scientific communication. Therefore, Arabic is portrayed not just as a means of conveying information but also as a tool for argumentation, underscoring the importance of precise vocabulary and coherent grammatical frameworks essential for scientific exploration (Aleryani, 2018). This theme is interlaced across various subjects in the texts, spanning social matters, science, technology, and communication across economic, political, cultural, and health sectors.

To reinforce the idea that Arabic functions as a scientific language, the SAALL textbooks explore topics at the cutting edge of technological advancements. This perspective acknowledges that scientific development is closely linked with technological advancement (Sudarsih, 2022). The texts spotlight modern technologies including smartphones, cameras, computers, and digital banking systems (Rani et al., 2023).

Additionally, in an effort to encourage the global adoption of the Arabic language, SAALL presents discourses on cutting-edge architectural developments. The evolution of a civilization is often marked by its architectural achievements (Szolomicki & Golasz-Szolomicka, 2019). The book points out that Arab countries host an array of modern constructions, including skyscrapers and, notably, the world's tallest building, the UAE's Burj Khalifa, which adorns the cover of the Advanced 2 book—emphasizing its publication within the nation that houses this iconic structure. To further substantiate its claims, the text contrasts classical and contemporary architectural styles. An instance of this is found in the Pre-Intermediate 2 book, featuring a conversational discourse between two generations—a grandchild and a grandfather—reflecting on the contrast between past and present construction methodologies.

Transitioning from discussions predominantly centered around science and culture, the SAALL textbooks pivot towards language education as a crucial step in the globalization of the Arabic language. This focus aligns with the broader objective of facilitating Arabic's global dissemination through educational materials. In developing SAALL, the authors advocated for a communicative-pragmatic approach to Arabic language acquisition (Alshams & Hassan, 2022). Designed for an international audience, the series introduces Arabic language learning methodologies anchored in the communicative approach, recognized as the forefront of language education strategies. This method posits that language mastery hinges on four principal competencies: linguistic, social, cultural, and strategic (Gu, 2016).

Moreover, the pragmatic perspective linked to communicative competence underlines the importance of excelling in the four skills integral to actual communicative acts, while linguistic knowledge serves as both a facilitative tool and supervision or monitoring for language use (Lichtman & VanPatten, 2021). Consequently, the series simplifies Arabic grammatical rules, notably eschewing grammatical discussions at the beginner level. Instead, idioms or collocations pertinent to specific contexts are introduced early on, reflecting their significance to social, cultural, and strategic competencies.

SAALL integrates the Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) proficiency standards, a U.S.-based linguistic framework with five levels, to measure language proficiency after study (Harsch & Malone, 2020). By implementing these standards, excluding the top level, SAALL seeks to equate Arabic's educational stature with English's role in regional education systems (Gitsaki & Zoghbor, 2023). This adoption reflects a move towards modern second language teaching principles, offering a systematic, well-structured, and measurable learning approach. It represents a departure from traditional Arabic teaching methods, which were influenced by the classical Arabic linguistic tradition (Luthfi, 2020).

To realize the globalization of the Arabic language, the SAALL series is made available not only in high-quality print editions but also as e-textbooks via their website at <https://mothertongue.ae/>. This dual-format strategy recognizes that regardless of the quality of design and layout, the reach of SAALL would be restricted if confined to print due to both limited accessibility and the high cost of production. Conversely, offering SAALL in a digital format with a visually appealing, elegant, and contemporary design significantly broadens access. This dual availability is a clear indication that SAALL targets all non-Arab learners globally, especially those familiar with the latest technological and cultural developments, allowing anyone, anywhere, to learn Arabic, thereby potentially increasing interest and engagement among non-Arab audiences.

SAALL adopts a strategy to globalize Arabic by modernizing its linguistic structure, including phonology enhancements (Benkharafa, 2013). It introduces vowel markers for certain consonants to aid learners, especially beginners, in overcoming a frequent obstacle in Arabic pronunciation due to the conventional lack of vowel signs in the script (Alshehri, 2021). This selective vocalization indicates that mastering Arabic pronunciation can be manageable for learners at any level.

SAALL broadens its content with more than 1,500 scientific, technological, and international communication terms demonstrating Arabic's ability to assimilate new words. Graddol (2006) identifies Arabic as among the quickest expanding languages worldwide, a detail reinforced by SAALL's addition of approximately 160 idioms and phrases suited for specific situations. This method highlights Arabic's versatility in expressing a range of concepts and addressing various communication requirements, from routine dialogues to intricate scientific and literary debates (Oueslati et al., 2020).

SAALL streamlines Arabic, by passing the complex grammar usually found in traditional textbooks, and shows Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) leaning towards structural patterns similar to English. This indicates the language's capacity for ease of use. Such a strategy aligns with Hendl's (2019) characteristics of worldwide languages, highlighting their simplicity, flexibility, and cost-effectiveness.

In SAALL, MSA is presented as open to adopting external vocabularies and formats with minimal restrictions, enhancing its accessibility and portraying Arabic as open to linguistic variation (Dolgenko, 2020). This openness is illustrated by the textbook's implementation of transposition and transliteration techniques. With these updates, SAALL seeks to attract non-Arab students by presenting Arabic as a language that is both appealing and capable of achieving worldwide prominence.

5. Discussion

The SAALL collection is classified among textbooks dedicated to teaching Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), a formal linguistic style also referred to as *fusha*. *Fusha* serves as the basis for the structure and lexicon of the Arabic language in an official setting (Abdelali, 2004).

Within the UAE, Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) has developed as a response to globalization, alongside classical Arabic and the Emirati dialect. This response addresses the challenge posed by the dominance of classical *fusha* Arabic and its competition with English. The introduction of MSA, motivated by worries from policymakers, linguists, and scholars over the prevalent use of the Emirati dialect, aims to safeguard the Arabic language by providing a contemporary variant apt for today's world (Al-Allaq, 2014; Mustofa, 2019).

This reflects the wider scenario in Middle Eastern countries where Arabic, spoken by around 300 million people, is the official language (Horesh & Cotter, 2016). Consequently, these countries have established Arabic language institutions to monitor and manage the impact of foreign languages, notably English, on Arabic and to harmonize the variety of local dialects (Benkharafa, 2013).

The UAE distinguishes itself from other Gulf and Arab countries, such as Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Yemen, Egypt, Syria, and Lebanon, in its approach to globalization, embracing it as an inevitable force affecting all aspects of life, including language. The nation understands that neglecting globalization might risk the Arabic language's relevance. English, previously seen as a competitor, is now acknowledged as a language that is adaptable and thriving globally, unlike Arabic, which requires active protection from foreign influences (Kennetz & Carroll, 2018).

By borrowing the opinion of Pishghadam (2024), it can be said that the majority of Arab countries tend to be more traditional because they maintain a culture of "high waitance" in the influence of globalization on the Arabic language. Unlike these countries, the UAE is trying to put this influence into a more modern "low-waitance" culture, so it doesn't wait for something to happen to its Arabic language (Pishghadam, 2024).

To support Arabic, the UAE has developed strategies that include improving Modern Standard Arabic educationally and linguistically, establishing language institutions, making Arabic the national

language, and mandating MSA use in government, education, and formal sectors (Al-Allaq, 2014; Carroll et al., 2017; Raddawi, 2015).

Despite these initiatives, the UAE's policies have not been fully realized, with many remaining unclear and unimplemented (Batakji-Chazy, 2020). A large portion of UAE students still prefer English due to its perceived prestige and the opportunities it provides in education and employment. This inclination is amplified by the fact that only 16% of the UAE's populace are native citizens, while immigrants from non-Arabic-speaking countries form the majority, making English the dominant language for everyday communication. Additionally, the preference for local dialects over MSA in casual contexts by the native population contributes to this trend (Al-Allaq, 2014; Carroll et al., 2017; Kennetz & Carroll, 2018).

The UAE's external approach includes working with language education specialists to enhance and spread MSA using modern Teaching Arabic as a Foreign Language (TAFL) methods. With the rise of the 5.0 industrial revolution, TAFL now encompasses a broad spectrum of global initiatives, both formal and informal (Redkin & Bernikova, 2016), such as producing Arabic textbooks for non-native speakers. A key part of this strategy is SAALL, with the UAE government backing The Mother Tongue Arabic Language Center's global promotion of MSA.

This strategy aims to elevate Arabic from an international to a global status, positioning it as neutral, objective, communicative, and suitable for scientific discourse. Neutrality means the language does not favor any particular user group or linguistic background. Objectivity implies its use without cultural prejudice (Alyan, 2013). Its communicative nature ensures adaptability across various contexts and ease of learning. The label 'scientific' denotes its capability to convey knowledge in science and technology. The strategy also involves associating Arabic with a modern, globally pervasive culture, aiming to broaden its user base. This aligns with Crystal's (Crystal, 2003) definition of a "global language," which gains worldwide prominence through official status and preference in educational systems globally, surpassing other languages in usage.

Internationally, the deployment of MSA textbooks for Arabic globalization has received varied responses. The shift away from Islamic content and traditional Arab culture towards modern, liberal perspectives faces opposition from educators and scholars due to Arabic's strong ties to Islam, which is a key incentive for its study (Thohir et al., 2020). The depiction of Western cultures in these textbooks often contradicts the values of learners from regions that prioritize respect and conservatism, typical of Eastern cultures. Nevertheless, the inclusion of current scientific discoveries, technological progress, and modern architectural designs in MSA materials has garnered significant interest, matching the global pursuit of knowledge. Furthermore, the simplified and practical modern Arabic rules introduced are seen as more applicable and fitting for today's uses (Thohir et al., 2020).

In Indonesia, Saudi Arabia has adopted approaches similar to the UAE's, such as founding the Islamic and Arabic College of Indonesia (LIPIA). LIPIA emphasizes the traditional aspects of Arabic, promoting Islamic ideology and preferring classical *fusha* Arabic over modern versions (Muhtarom, 2020). As a result, Saudi Arabian textbooks, such as *al-'Arabiyyah baina Yadaik*, are particularly popular in Indonesia (Muassomah et al., 2023), indicating a favor towards traditional language and cultural values.

Thus, if we adopt the three categories that Kachru (1985) compiled for English, the MSA referred to by UAE is actually intended for the inner circle, the expanding circle, and the Outer Circle (Al-Mutairi, 2020). The Inner Circle is a country that makes Arabic its official language. The Outer Circle is a country that makes Arabic a religious language and includes it in the official education curriculum, such as Indonesia or Malaysia. The Expanding Circle is made up of countries that want to learn Arabic as a foreign language for communication, business, politics, and other purposes, such as France, the Philippines, and others. Not only that, MSA is also trying to enter the outer circle of candidates, namely countries that have the potential to use Arabic. Each category has its own level of difficulty, but the most difficult is the outer circle; this is because the speakers are bound by Islamic ideology in the form of CWA. In other words, changing the CWA means harming the Islamic religion, especially their Book (read: the Koran) (Fajri, 2020).

The analysis of the SAALL textbooks identifies four key themes (social, science and technology, humanities, and religion) covering 31 varied topics. It reveals an effort to downplay local and Islamic traditions in favor of a global cultural perspective. The textbooks aim to make Arabic relevant worldwide, across different nations and cultures, establish it as a scientific language, and feature the newest technological and architectural developments. They also focus on communicative competence, incorporate technology in their design, and modernize the language structure.

Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) has the capacity to compete with the global spread of English. However, distancing it from Islamic discourse may hinder Arabic's evolution, given Islam's significant historical contribution to its development. This presents a notable obstacle for Gulf nations, especially the UAE, which distinguishes between MSA and CWA. This research uniquely examines Arabic's interaction with globalization and proposes how the UAE could leverage this to enhance Arabic's global presence. Given that this study is limited to textbook analysis, further research expanding the data and reference base is advised to support these findings.

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