

Revitalizing Arabic Language Education: Learning from Neglected Historical Traces

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Abstract

This study examines the phenomenon of the extinction of languages related to Arabic by highlighting their historical development, contributing factors, and their impact on linguistic and cultural aspects. Through a literature review and in-depth analysis of various written sources, data was systematically collected and analyzed using content analysis methods. The results of the study show that the dominance of Standard Arabic since the Umayyad and Abbasid Caliphates, accompanied by subsequent political dynamics, triggered a decline in the use of related languages such as Ancient Southern Arabic and Nabataean Aramaic. In addition, the shift of speakers to Standard Arabic, lack of documentation, and socio-political pressures and globalization were the main factors that accelerated the extinction of these languages. As a result, the diverse linguistic varieties and cultural traditions attached to them were lost, which also affected the social identity of the speaker communities. This study emphasizes that language preservation must be carried out through a multidisciplinary approach, including careful documentation and active revitalization, so that this invaluable cultural and linguistic heritage can be protected. The results of this study are expected to provide a deeper understanding and support strategic policies to maintain the sustainability of Arabic languages in the future.

Keywords: *Arabic linguistic, Forgotten history, The Extinction of the Arabic Language*

Introduction

Language is not only a means of communication, but also a reflection of a community's cultural identity. Through language, cultural values, history, traditions, and ways of thinking are passed down from generation to generation. Therefore, language preservation is key to maintaining the cultural and intellectual heritage of humanity.¹

¹ Muhammad Rifqi Maulana, Zein Ridha, and Bakri Mohammed Bkheet Ahmed, "Language Environment on Speaking Skills Training in Islamic Middle School," *Arabiyatuna: Jurnal Bahasa Arab* 8,

Unfortunately, in this modern era, many languages face the risk of extinction. This reminds us that the existence of languages is not always permanent, but rather highly vulnerable to social, political, and economic dynamics.²

Language extinction is one of the crucial phenomena in linguistic and cultural anthropological studies. It occurs when the native language used by a community disappears and is no longer used as a means of communication.³ Therefore, to prevent Arabic from becoming extinct, its learning and teaching must become an essential skill in achieving effective linguistic communication.⁴ This phenomenon is very worrying because, in addition to the loss of a means of communication, language extinction also results in the disappearance of various cultural elements and traditional knowledge stored within it. UNESCO estimates that nearly half of the approximately 6,000 languages in the world are now at risk of extinction, a reality that reminds us of the importance of language preservation efforts.⁵

Within the scope of Arabic, which is one of the languages in the Semitic family with millions of speakers around the world, there are branches of Arabic languages that are related to each other but are now almost extinct or have become completely extinct.⁶ Modern standard Arabic, with its various dialects, is the result of a long evolutionary process involving Arabic and its related languages. Unfortunately, many of these related Arabic variants have become extinct over time, but this fact often receives insufficient attention.⁷

Arabic languages, such as the ancient Southern Arabic languages like Saba' and Minae, Nabataean Aramaic, and other variants, are slowly losing their speakers and becoming

no. 2 (October 2024): 617–40, <https://doi.org/10.29240/jba.v8i2.10962>.

² Muhammad Rifqi Maulana and Nurullah Thorieq Faiz Anaam, “من الشباب إلى الكبار: تعليم النحو بالمسجد “، *بنجرماسين* *Lugawiyat* 7, no. 1 (May 2025): 1–14, <https://doi.org/10.18860/lg.v7i1.31576>.

³ A. Effendi Kadarisman and dkk., *Arunika Linguistik Indonesia* (Jakarta: Masyarakat Linguistik Indonesia, 2024).

⁴ Yusuf Arisandi, Abdul Fatah Mufadhil, and Nurhanifansyah Nurhanifansyah, “طريقة تدريس اللغة “، *العربية باستخدام الكتاب “لا تسكت Kilmatuna: Journal Of Arabic Education* 5, no. 1 (April 2025): 84–100.

⁵ Ade Rahima, “Revitalisasi Bahasa Daerah Hampir Punah Sebagai Dokumentasi Bahasa,” *Pengabdian Deli Sumatera* 3, no. 2 (2024): 51–56.

⁶ Muhammad Rifqi Maulana and Fatwiah Noor, “أصل العرب وسكان جزيرة العرب “، *ICONIS: International Conference on Islamic Studies* 8, no. 1 (October 2024): 33–52, <https://doi.org/10.19105/iconis.v8i1.782>.

⁷ Joniska Wwan Saputra, Nevy Agustina, and Zaenal Rafli, “Bahasa Arab Dan Tantangan Zaman: Perubahan, Pergeseran, Dan Strategi Pemertahanan,” *TADRIS AL-ARABIYAT: Jurnal Kajian Ilmu Pendidikan Bahasa Arab* 5, no. 2 (2025): 301–18.

extinct. This process of extinction not only creates a void in the linguistic realm, but also erases important records that preserve traces of the social, cultural, and historical life of the communities that once used these languages.⁸ Unfortunately, this issue has not received serious attention in modern linguistic studies focusing on Arabic.

The issue of the extinction of related Arabic languages arises from various complex factors.⁹ Historically, the transfer of political power and the dominance of formal Arabic as the language of Islamic liturgy and administration have led to the marginalization of these languages. In addition, cultural and social changes have also contributed to the marginalization of these language variants. Lack of adequate documentation and lack of interest from the younger generation¹⁰, and the lack of conservation efforts has created a huge gap that has led to the complete disappearance of these languages.¹¹ This situation poses a serious challenge to preserving invaluable linguistic and cultural heritage.¹²

The impact of the loss of related Arabic languages is not only felt in the linguistic sphere, but also extends to the cultural aspects and identity of the communities that use them.¹³ The loss of language means the loss of local wisdom, myths, oral literature, and unique traditions that are difficult to replace with other languages. This condition emphasizes the importance of in-depth research to understand the phenomenon of language extinction, because without sufficient understanding, efforts to preserve language and cultural heritage will face great challenges.

In a broader sense, the phenomenon of the extinction of related Arabic languages reflects the powerful influence of social, political, and cultural dynamics on the continued existence of a language.¹⁴ As part of the disciplines of Arabic linguistics and

⁸ Eka Nur Rofik, "Kronologi Bahasa Arab Semitik Perspektif Historis," *Jurnal Studi Islam Dan Sosial Volume* 14, no. 1 (2021).

⁹ Najmuddin H Abd Safa and Amrah Kasim, "Gaya Bahasa Dalam Bahasa Arab Dan Bahasa Indonesia" (Masters Thesis, UIN Alauddin, 2012).

¹⁰ Muhammad Rifqi Maulana, "تطوير مادة القراءة المكثفة في ضوء النظرية البنائية بالواقع المعزز لطلبة قسم تعليم اللغة," *العربية على قراءة النصوص المعاصرة بجامعة أنتساري الإسلامية الحكومية بنجرماسين* (Masters Thesis, Universitas Islam Negeri Antasari Banjarmasin, 2025), <https://idr.uin-antasari.ac.id/29103/>.

¹¹ Muhammad Rifqi Maulana et al., "تطبيق الحروف العربية الملايوية في تعليم النحو بمعهد الفلاح بنجرمارو كاليمنتان," *Arabia: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Arab* 16, no. 1 (2024): 67–78, <http://dx.doi.org/10.21043/arabia.v16i1.25216>.

¹² Muhammad Rifqi Maulana, Ridha Darmawaty, and Nurullah Thorieq Faiz Anaam, "Joyful Listening: Integrating 'Nusa Dan Rara' Animation and KAHOOT! For Maharah Istima'," *Jurnal Al Bayan: Jurnal Jurusan Pendidikan Bahasa Arab* 17, no. 1 (2025), <https://doi.org/10.24042/9rf63d07>.

¹³ Muhammad Rifqi Maulana, Rahmat Shodiqin, and Harits Nasrulloh, "Thariqah Al-Sam'iyyah Wa al-Syafahiyyah Fi Sharf: Tathbiquha, Tahaddiyatuha Wa Hilluha," *Al Intisyar* 10, no. 1 (June 2025): 22–46, <https://doi.org/10.32505/intisyar.v10i1.10996>.

¹⁴ Agus Sri Danardana et al., *Dinamika Identitas Dalam Bahasa Dan Sastra* (Dunia Pustaka Jaya,

anthropology, such studies must thoroughly examine the various causal factors, emerging impacts, and the potential and strategies for revitalizing these languages. Such studies are important for maintaining respect for and preserving the linguistic and cultural heritage hidden behind the process of language extinction.

In addition to historical and social factors, rapid technological advances and globalization have also had a major¹⁵ impact on the survival of minority languages and ancient Arabic languages that are nearly extinct. In the modern era of communication, which is dominated by global languages such as English, Arabic is more widely known in its standard and formal form,¹⁶ so that the space for the existence of related Arabic varieties is becoming increasingly narrow. This phenomenon accelerates the process of linguistic and cultural assimilation, which ultimately erodes the existence of local languages that have fewer opportunities to develop. As a result, younger generations often do not know or even realize the existence of these languages as an integral part of their linguistic and cultural heritage.

Another issue that complicates efforts to preserve related Arabic languages is the lack of attention from the general public,¹⁷ educational institutions, as well as the government in supporting the documentation and preservation of these languages. The lack of academic support and planned public policies has resulted in the absence of effective revitalization programs, leaving these languages as mere “historical traces” without concrete actions to preserve their existence. In fact, preserving languages is not only about preserving linguistic diversity, but also about protecting the valuable cultural values and traditional knowledge contained within them.¹⁸

In this context, it is crucial to raise awareness of the urgency of preserving related Arabic languages through various educational efforts, in-depth research, and interdisciplinary

2022).

¹⁵ Muhammad Rifqi Maulana, “استخدام وسيلة سياحة للممارسة اللغوية في مواجهة اختبارات اللغة العربية” (TOAFL),” *APCoMS: The Annual Postgraduate Conference on Muslim Society* 6 (2024): 29–41.

¹⁶ Muhammad Rifqi Maulana and Latifatul Mahbubah, “الجو المفعم بالحياة: نموذج التعليم التعاوني في تعليم اللغة” *FASAHAH* 2, no. 01 (2025): 13–24.

¹⁷ Muhammad Rifqi Maulana, Hamidi Ilhami, and Rahmat Shodiqin, “MASYĀKILU TA’LĪMI ‘ILMI AL-ŞORFI BI MADRASAH AL-IRSYĀD AL-MUTAWASSITAH AL-ISLĀMIYYAH,” *Al Mi’yar: Jurnal Ilmiah Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab Dan Kebahasaaraban* 6, no. 2 (October 2023): 413, <https://doi.org/10.35931/am.v6i2.2588>.

¹⁸ Laili Mas Ulliyah Hasan, Dewien Nabelah Agustin, and Muhammad Tareh Aziz, “Memperkuat Identitas Budaya Melalui Pengajaran Bahasa Arab Dalam Konteks Lokal Di Desa Klatakan, Situbondo,” *Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat* 2, no. 1 (2024): 191–202.

collaboration. Comprehensive studies can open up new insights into how traces of extinct languages can be used as valuable sources of information in the fields of social history, anthropology, and linguistics.

Several studies have identified various causes of language extinction and ways to preserve languages. Ibrahim said that a language can become nearly extinct if it is no longer used in everyday life. He also emphasized the importance of preservation programs that begin by examining the conditions under which the language is used.¹⁹ Tondo found that the dominance of major languages, bilingualism, globalization, migration, and a lack of appreciation for regional languages are the main causes of the loss of regional languages in Indonesia. The loss of languages also means the loss of local knowledge and culture if they are not properly preserved.²⁰ Ansori added that a complete shift from the native language to another language often occurs because speakers feel inferior, traditions are weakening, and there are economic problems. He emphasized that in order to prevent language loss, there needs to be education and policies that support language preservation.²¹ Overall, this research shows that language extinction is a complex issue that requires a multidisciplinary approach to preserve languages and cultures.

This study aims to thoroughly explore the phenomenon of the extinction of Arabic-related languages by examining their history, underlying factors, and their impact on linguistic and cultural aspects. With a more comprehensive understanding, it is hoped that awareness of the importance of preserving languages not only as a means of communication but also as a valuable cultural heritage will increase.

Method

This study adopts a literature review method with a descriptive qualitative approach, which was chosen to explore the phenomenon of the extinction of related Arabic languages through a review of relevant literature. The sources used include books, scientific journals, articles, as well as historical and linguistic documents that discuss aspects of language extinction, causal factors, socio-cultural impacts, and preservation and revitalization efforts. This literature review approach allows researchers to obtain a

¹⁹ Gufran Ali Ibrahim, "Bahasa Terancam Punah: Fakta, Sebab-Musabab, Gejala, Dan Strategi Perawatannya," *Linguistik Indonesia* 29, no. 1 (2011).

²⁰ Henry Tondo, "Kepunahan Bahasa-Bahasa Daerah: Faktor Penyebab Dan Implikasi Etnolinguistik," *Jurnal Masyarakat Dan Budaya* 11, no. 2 (2009), <https://doi.org/10.14203/jmb.v11i2.245>.

²¹ Mahfud Saiful Ansori, "Kepunahan Bahasa Dalam Aspek Sociolinguistik," *An-Nuha : Jurnal Kajian Islam, Pendidikan, Budaya Dan Sosial* 6, no. 1 (November 2019): 85–95, <https://doi.org/10.36835/annuha.v6i1.294>.

comprehensive overview without the need for direct data collection in the field.²²

Data was collected from various written sources, such as books, scientific journals, articles, research reports, manuscripts, theses, and historical documents related to Arabic and its variants. Special focus was given to the process of language extinction, language vitality levels, and preservation efforts. The literature used as references included studies from the fields of Arabic linguistics, cultural anthropology, and language history. The data collection process was oriented toward documentation containing theoretical reviews, empirical studies, and historical records as a basis for further analysis.

Data analysis was conducted using content analysis methods through structured stages, ranging from classification and coding to grouping information based on main themes such as causes of extinction, socio-cultural impacts, and conservation strategies.²³ With this approach, the study is able to interpret and draw conclusions systematically about the phenomenon under investigation, while revealing patterns and relationships between data in the literature to provide a deeper and more convincing understanding.

Result and Discussion

The Extinction of Related Arabic Languages from a Historical Perspective

Arabic, as one of the main languages in the Semitic language family, has spread widely since the 7th century AD, especially with the spread of Islam in the Arabian Peninsula and surrounding areas. Before standard Arabic (fusha) was standardized, there were many variants and related languages that were alive and thriving in this region.²⁴ However, various variants and dialects of Arabic are now facing extinction or are already critically endangered, due to a long and complex historical process. To understand this phenomenon of extinction, an in-depth study is needed that takes into account the historical, social, political, and cultural contexts surrounding it.²⁵

The extinction of related Arabic languages is a linguistic and cultural phenomenon that reflects the long history of the Arabian Peninsula and its surroundings, especially in

²² John W Creswell, *Research Designs. Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (Sage Publications, 2009).

²³ Primadi Candra Susanto et al., "Konsep Penelitian Kuantitatif: Populasi, Sampel, Dan Analisis Data (Sebuah Tinjauan Pustaka)," *Jurnal Ilmu Multidisplin* 3, no. 1 (April 2024): 1–12, <https://doi.org/10.38035/jim.v3i1.504>.

²⁴ Andi Sahputra Harahap, "Bahasa Arab, Asal Usulnya, Faktor Yang Mempengaruhi Perkembangannya Dan Karakteristiknya," *Hukumah: Jurnal Hukum Islam* 4, no. 2 (2021).

²⁵ Mirsa Triandani et al., "Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab Fushah Dalam Konteks Globalisasi: Peluang Dan Tantangan," *Jurnal Intelek Insan Cendikia* 1, no. 10 (2024): 7170–81.

Yemen, which is known for its diversity of dialects and Semitic language variants.²⁶ The languages belonging to this Arabic group initially developed locally and were spoken within communities, such as the ancient South Arabian languages, which consisted of the Sabaiyah, Himyariyah, Ma'iniyah, Qutbaniyah, and Hadhramiyah dialects. In addition, the Nabataean Aramaic language, which was once spoken in the Levant region, also belongs to the Semitic language family and is closely related to the development of the Arabic language.²⁷

Data from epigraphy and inscriptions in Yemen show that local dialects flourished during the reign of kingdoms such as Saba', Ma'in, and Himyar, which reached their heyday between the 8th century BC and the 6th century AD. These ancient inscriptions record the use of the distinctive native language of the ancient Yemenites, with its unique Masnad script, which played an important role in administration, trade, and religious rituals. However, following political conflicts and the intervention of external powers such as Persia and Abyssinia, cultural and linguistic changes occurred, leading to the gradual erosion of local languages by the influence of Classical Arabic.²⁸

The development of classical Arabic continued to strengthen since the emergence of Islam in the 7th century, particularly through its widespread dissemination, which led to Arabic becoming the language of liturgy and centralized administration. The conquest of new territories by the Umayyad and Abbasid dynasties opened up massive cultural and linguistic integration, making standard Arabic the dominant language. This assimilation process gradually replaced the use of related local languages, which were then pushed to the social and cultural margins.²⁹

The Nabataean Aramaic language, once used by the Nabataeans who lived in what is now Jordan and northern Arabia, gradually fell into disuse from the 7th century onwards. This coincided with the rise of the Islamic caliphate, which established Classical Arabic as the primary language of administration and culture. Documentation in the form of ancient texts, manuscripts, and records by Muslim historians from the medieval period confirm that the Nabataean Aramaic language experienced a drastic decline in social status and

²⁶ Ahmad Zaki Alhafidz, "The Existence of Arabic Print Dictionaries in the Digital Age/Eksistensi Kamus Cetak Bahasa Arab Di Era Digital," *Ijaz Arabi Journal of Arabic Learning* 6, no. 1 (2023).

²⁷ Musdelifa Abu Samad et al., "Struktur Klausa Bahasa Arab Dan Bahasa Andio: Analisis Kontrastif, Pelestarian Bahasa," *A Jamiy: Jurnal Bahasa Dan Sastra Arab* 14, no. 1 (2025): 123–39.

²⁸ Alhafidz, "The Existence of Arabic Print Dictionaries in the Digital Age/Eksistensi Kamus Cetak Bahasa Arab Di Era Digital."

²⁹ Muhammad Syahrul Fu'ad, Dedy Wahyudin, And Erma Suriani, "Bahasa Arab Sebagai Pilar Peradaban: Studi Perkembangan Bahasa Arab Pada Masa Dinasti Umayyah II," *SOCIAL: Jurnal Inovasi Pendidikan IPS* 4, no. 4 (2024): 522–28.

the number of speakers, ultimately leading to its extinction. This shift reflects significant changes in the linguistic and cultural landscape of the region as the dominance of the Arabic language continued to expand.

The dominance of classical Arabic did not occur naturally, but rather through a historical process influenced by powerful political and religious forces. The spread of Islam established Arabic as the official language of religion and government, particularly during the Umayyad and Abbasid dynasties from the 7th to the 13th centuries CE. Classical Arabic was then standardized and disseminated as the language of science, law, and literature, thereby indirectly suppressing the existence of local and related language varieties that had previously developed.³⁰

In the context of the caliphate, the use of Arabic as the lingua franca across a vast territory led to massive linguistic assimilation. Political policies prioritizing Arabic and reinforcing its role as a sacred language and symbol of social status led subsequent generations of regional language speakers to prefer Arabic in order to gain access to education and government positions. Conversely, local languages, including branches of the Arabic language family, gradually lost their important social roles, resulting in the disruption of language inheritance between generations.³¹

In addition, the shift of power to non-Arab rulers such as the Seljuks and the Ottoman Empire led to the use of Arabic in administrative circles and among the elite becoming increasingly limited. Persian and Turkish took on the primary role as languages of government in various regions, while Arabic remained preserved primarily in religious and educational contexts. These changes also weakened the position of other Arabic languages and accelerated their marginalization amid evolving social and political dynamics.³²

One of the main obstacles to the preservation of related languages is the lack of organized and comprehensive documentation efforts. Most existing manuscripts and archives of related Arabic languages consist only of inscriptions and text fragments, greatly limiting opportunities for study and revitalization. Unlike standard Arabic, which has a strong tradition of writing and literacy, these local languages do not yet have adequate and extensive documentation systems.

³⁰ Maysaroh Maysaroh, "Analisis Dampak Arabisasi Pada Masa Dinasti Umayyah Di Timur: Perspektif Sosial Dan Politik (661-750 M)," *Hijaz: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman* 3, no. 2 (2023): 57–61.

³¹ Maysaroh, "Analisis Dampak Arabisasi Pada Masa Dinasti Umayyah Di Timur: Perspektif Sosial Dan Politik (661-750 M)."

³² Tito Saputra, "Analisis Perkembangan Dinasti Abbasiyah Dalam Dunia Islam," *Beurawang: Indonesian Journal of Humanities* 1, no. 2 (2024): 67–74.

The pressures of modernization and globalization in the 20th and 21st centuries have increasingly narrowed the space for minority languages. The dominance of Standard Arabic in education, mass media, and formal communication has led many speakers of related languages to switch to using Standard Arabic, resulting in a decline in the active use of local languages. Additionally, in diaspora communities far from their homeland, the pressure of linguistic assimilation by dominant national and global languages, such as English in Western countries, has accelerated the extinction of these related languages. Historical analysis reveals that the extinction of related Arabic languages was the result of a series of social adaptation processes and political pressure that took place in a planned and sustained manner. This phenomenon is not merely a matter of linguistic isolation but rather the consequence of the dominance of a language that functions as the language of religion, administration, and science, as well as a tool for the dissemination of power and political legitimacy. Additionally, the lack of preservation policies and the integration of local languages into the educational curriculum further threatens the survival of these related languages.³³

Factors Contributing to the Extinction of Related Arabic Languages

Sociolinguistically, languages can be divided into primary and secondary languages. A primary language is the language that a person uses most frequently in their daily activities, although it may not necessarily be the first language they learned. A secondary language, on the other hand, is a language that is used less frequently because it is considered less important as a means of daily communication.³⁴

There is some debate regarding the definition of language extinction. Some experts define language extinction as occurring only when the last surviving community of speakers has completely stopped using the language. However, others interpret extinction as the complete shift away from a language within a specific community of users, without considering whether the language is still used by people in other locations. In other words, the focus may be on the loss of a language within an entire group of speakers, even if the language is still used by other communities in different locations.³⁵

There are two main aspects of language extinction that are the focus of attention of

³³ Nabila Nurul Insani and Muhammad Rasyid Ridha, "Ancaman Pergeseran Bahasa Daerah Dan Dampaknya Terhadap Keberlanjutan Warisan Budaya Di Era Global," *Menulis: Jurnal Penelitian Nusantara* 1, no. 5 (2025): 91–96.

³⁴ Agus Tricahyo, *Pengantar Linguistik Arab* (Ponorogo: STAIN PO PRESS, 2011).

³⁵ Sumarsono and Paina Parnata, *Sosiolinguistik* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2007).

linguists, namely linguistic and sociolinguistic aspects. From a linguistic point of view, languages that are in the final stages of use in a community undergo changes in their pronunciation (phonology) and grammar, including in some cases simplification or borrowing of elements from other languages. From a sociolinguistic perspective, the focus is on the social conditions that lead a community to eventually switch to and adopt another language. Generally, researchers have identified three main types of language extinction:³⁶

1. Language extinction without language shift.
2. Language extinction due to language shift.
3. The extinction of nominal languages through metamorphosis.

The first type of language extinction occurs due to the sudden loss of a language community as a result of a natural disaster. For example, an oral tradition in Vanuatu tells of a large island called Kuwee that was destroyed by a volcanic eruption, splitting it into the islands of Tonga and Shepherd. A small number of survivors returned from exile and settled on the larger island of Efate. They brought one of the Efate dialects with them and began interacting using that dialect, causing their original dialect to shift.³⁷

The second type occurs due to a shift in the use of the first language to another language. This is the most common case of language extinction. For example, many Aboriginal languages in Australia became extinct after the arrival of new settlers from Europe. Some languages became extinct due to pressure from the settlers, where the older generation was pressured to force their children to use English. In other words, language extinction among Aboriginal communities was caused by an imbalance in language contact, where the dominant group exerted strong pressure on the native language of the people they controlled. Another example is that some Maori communities switched to English due to European colonization, although those who retained the Maori language remained fluent in English.³⁸

In Indonesia, the phenomenon of language shift leading to extinction is becoming increasingly apparent, especially among urban families. This shift is not only occurring in regional languages with few speakers (minority languages), but also in major languages such as Javanese, Balinese, Banjarese, Lampungese, and languages in the Sulawesi region. This situation indicates that various local languages are facing serious challenges

³⁶ Ansori, "Kepunahan Bahasa Dalam Aspek Sosiolingustik."

³⁷ Kushartanti, *Pesona Bahasa: Langkah Awal Memahami Linguistik* (Jakarta: PT. Gramedia Pustaka Umum, 2005).

³⁸ Kushartanti, *Pesona Bahasa: Langkah Awal Memahami Linguistik*.

in maintaining their existence amid the dominance of the national language and globalization trends that influence daily communication patterns within families and urban communities.

The third type of language extinction occurs when a language declines in status to become a dialect because its community of speakers no longer writes in that language and begins to use another language. The main factor accelerating this extinction is the lack of language transmission from parents to their children, so that the mother tongue is no longer taught and actively used in daily life, especially at home. Additionally, government policies that favor the dominant language, the use of language in the education system, and pressure from the majority language in multilingual societies further accelerate the loss of local languages.

Unavoidable natural factors that can cause language extinction include natural disasters, the influence of majority languages, the existence of bilingual or multilingual communities, the influence of globalization, migration, and interethnic marriage. On the other hand, language extinction, including so-called “blood languages,” can also occur due to non-natural factors such as a lack of appreciation for regional languages, low intensity of regional language use, economic conditions, and the dominance of Indonesian language use. These factors interact with one another and accelerate the loss of local languages that should be preserved as part of cultural heritage.³⁹

The extinction of related Arabic languages is the result of complex interactions between various interrelated factors, both internal linguistic factors and external social, political, and cultural factors. This process took place gradually over centuries. To truly understand how these related languages lost their speakers and slowly faded away until they eventually became extinct, a comprehensive understanding of all these factors is required.

One of the main causes of the extinction of Arabic dialects is the shift from local languages to standard Arabic (fusha). Standard Arabic, which developed as the language of Islamic liturgy and administration during the heyday of the Umayyad and Abbasid caliphates, gained a prestigious position that was difficult to match by local Arabic dialects or other languages. Native speakers of related languages began to switch to using Standard Arabic for educational, religious, and administrative purposes, thereby halting the transmission of their native languages to subsequent generations. This phenomenon is known as language shift, which gradually reduces the number of native speakers of

³⁹ Ansori, “Kepunahan Bahasa Dalam Aspek Sociolinguistik.”

these languages. In addition to losing their function in everyday communication, these languages also lose their social status, so their speakers are less motivated to preserve them.⁴⁰

Changes in power and political influence play a crucial role in determining the survival of a language. During the Abbasid Caliphate, classical Arabic was strengthened as the official language of the elite, which provided ample space for the spread of this language while eliminating local variants and other related languages. However, when power shifted to non-Arab forces, such as the Ottoman Empire and Persian influence, the use of Arabic became limited to religious and cultural spheres. Administrative and governmental languages increasingly relied on Persian and Turkish, causing the previously functional local languages within communities to weaken significantly. This situation accelerated the marginalization of these related languages, reducing their functional use in social and governmental life.⁴¹

In this modern era, globalization plays an important role in accelerating the loss of minority and related languages. Global languages such as English, as well as national languages in majority countries, are increasingly popular in education, work, and formal communication. As a result, related languages are increasingly losing their place among their communities of speakers. Additionally, migration of people from traditional areas to major cities or diaspora regions further contributes to the decline in the use of indigenous languages, as social and economic pressures force individuals to adopt the dominant language in order to survive and participate in broader society.

One of the structural factors that greatly weakens the sustainability of Arabic dialects is the lack of adequate documentation. Unlike standard Arabic, which is rich in written documents and has been widely standardized, dialects have not received sufficient academic and institutional attention. The lack of resources to record and document these languages has led to their inevitable decline. Additionally, public policies tend to prioritize national and official languages, so the preservation of local and related languages rarely becomes a top priority for governments or educational institutions. This situation exacerbates the risk of extinction for related languages, despite their importance as part of the cultural heritage and history of local communities.⁴²

⁴⁰ Lailia Nuril Ilma and Muhammad Numan, "Sejarah Transmisi Keilmuan Ke Dalam Bahasa Arab," *An-Nidzam: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Dan Studi Islam* 10, no. 2 (2023): 202–10.

⁴¹ Andi Sahputra Harahap, "Bahasa Arab, Asal Usulnya, Faktor Yang Mempengaruhi Perkembangannya Dan Karakteristiknya," *Hukumah: Jurnal Hukum Islam* 4, no. 2 (2021).

⁴² Harahap, "Bahasa Arab, Asal Usulnya, Faktor Yang Mempengaruhi Perkembangannya Dan Karakteristiknya," 2021.

Bilingual or multilingual communities often experience social and economic pressure to use languages that are considered more “superior” or valuable. In the context of Arabic languages, younger generations tend to choose standard Arabic or their national language for educational and everyday communication purposes. Feelings of inferiority toward regional languages or local variants, as well as a lack of appreciation for ancestral languages, further accelerate this language shift. The lack of language transmission from one generation to the next is one of the early signs of language extinction, as the language is no longer taught or used within the family context.⁴³

External factors such as natural disasters, wars, and large-scale population movements can cause the extinction of a particular language. Such events can result in the physical loss of a group of speakers, which directly destroys the language community. Additionally, the processes of urbanization and demographic changes that alter the ethnic and linguistic composition of a society place significant pressure on the survival of local languages. Population migration to new areas often triggers language shift, as newcomers or relocated communities must adapt to the dominant language in their new environment. This phenomenon leads to a decline in the use of local languages among both indigenous and migrant communities, thereby increasing the risk of language extinction.⁴⁴

The Impact of the Extinction of Related Arabic Languages on Linguistic and Cultural Aspects

The extinction of Arabic languages is not merely the loss of a means of communication, but also has a major impact on linguistics, culture, social identity, and the intellectual heritage associated with these languages. Language serves as a medium for preserving traditions, a marker of group identity, and a repository of local knowledge. When this language becomes extinct, various important aspects that have long supported the sustainability of its speaking community also disappear, causing profound losses for that society.⁴⁵

⁴³ Yolandha Paramitha Irawan and Muhammad Rifqi Maulana, “WAZHĀIFU AL-USRAH `ALĀ T`ALLUMI AL-`ARABIYYAH LI ṬOLABATI AL-MADRASAH AL-ŠANĀWIYAH AL-ISLĀMIYYAH AL-HUKŪMIYYAH BI BERAU,” *Al Mi`yar: Jurnal Ilmiah Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab Dan Kebahasaaraban* 7, no. 1 (April 2024): 359, <https://doi.org/10.35931/am.v7i1.3298>.

⁴⁴ Mirsa Triandani et al., “Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab Fushah Dalam Konteks Globalisasi: Peluang Dan Tantangan,” *Jurnal Intelek Insan Cendikia* 1, no. 10 (2024).

⁴⁵ Triandani et al., “Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab Fushah Dalam Konteks Globalisasi: Peluang Dan Tantangan,” 2024.

Linguistic Impact: The Narrowing of Language Variety and Richness

Arabic dialects have distinctive linguistic variations that differ from standard Arabic (fusha). The extinction of these languages means a loss of diversity in terms of sound (phonology), word form (morphology), sentence structure (syntax), and vocabulary, which are important parts of the richness of Semitic languages. For example, ancient dialects in Southern Arabia such as Sabaiyah, Minae, and Hadhramaut exhibit unique sound patterns and word structures that are not entirely identical to Standard Arabic. This uniqueness reflects the richness of Arabic linguistic variation shaped by location and history, and the extinction of such varieties signifies the loss of an important dimension in the Semitic linguistic heritage.⁴⁶

The loss of related Arabic languages also means a reduction in real data sources that are very important for linguistic research, particularly in studying language change over time (diachronous) and language contact. This interaction has played a role in enriching vocabulary and language structure. With the extinction of these varieties, we lose the “living laboratory” that is essential for understanding the evolution of Semitic languages and supporting studies in the field of linguistic anthropology.

In addition, language extinction contributes to linguistic homogenization, which reduces the diversity of ways of expressing culture and ways of thinking. Language reflects a unique worldview, so the loss of related languages weakens the ability of researchers and communities to understand the unique thought systems and social cultures that exist within the communities that speak them.

Cultural Impact: Loss of Oral Traditions, Local Knowledge, and Identity

Language serves as the primary repository for oral traditions, such as myths, legends, proverbs, customs, and distinctive songs that are difficult to translate fully into other languages. The extinction of Arabic-related languages risks depriving future generations of direct access to cultural values that have been passed down for centuries.

Folklore and beliefs inherent in indigenous languages such as Sabaiyah or Nabath become very difficult to reconstruct authentically when relying solely on translations or records from outside sources. With the loss of these indigenous languages, cultural content becomes distorted and risks being lost or forgotten entirely by future generations. This highlights the importance of preserving the continuity of indigenous languages to

⁴⁶ Nasarudin, *Pengantar Bahasa Arab: Sejarah Dan Perkembangan* (Padang: CV. Gita Lentera, 2025).

ensure that cultural values and oral traditions can be maintained in their original and authentic forms.⁴⁷

Much traditional knowledge is stored specifically in the vocabulary of a language, such as knowledge about traditional medicinal plants, local ecology, farming or fishing techniques, methods of treatment, and environmental management. When a language becomes extinct, access to this valuable knowledge is lost, which impacts the sustainability of culture and the ability of communities to adapt to their environment. In other words, the loss of a language means the loss of a legacy of knowledge that has been passed down through generations and is crucial for the continued existence of that community.

The identity of a community is closely related to the language they use. When a language shift occurs, it is often followed by changes in social values and a decrease in attachment to ancestral heritage. The extinction of related Arabic languages has led to the loss of symbols of identity that reflect the history and identity of certain communities. As a result, social fragmentation has occurred and relationships between members of these communities have weakened.

Social Impact: Identity Crisis and Shifting Intergenerational Relationships

Language is an important symbol of social identity, both for individuals and communities. When a language is lost, community members not only lose a means of communication, but also a way to maintain their connection to their cultural roots and history. The shift to standard Arabic or other dominant languages often causes an identity crisis, especially for younger generations who begin to feel disconnected from their ancestral heritage.

The discontinuation of language transmission from older to younger generations creates cultural and social distance between them, thereby reducing emotional closeness and solidarity within the community. This condition accelerates social and cultural disintegration, which greatly affects the continuity of traditional values and social practices that form the foundation of community life.

Furthermore, in the era of globalization, communities that have lost their native languages often face pressure to conform to dominant cultures that tend to be homogeneous. This situation can lead to the marginalization of local cultures and reduce the space for

⁴⁷ Fahrurrozi, Iqbal Dzulfikar, and Hanik Mahliatussikah, "Analisis Psikolinguistik Terhadap Kesalahan Dalam Memproduksi Kosakata Bahasa Arab Oleh Pelajar Pemula," *FASHOHAH : Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Bahasa Arab* 5, no. 1 (February 2025): 29–38, <https://doi.org/10.33474/fsh.v5i1.22999>.

minority groups to participate socially and culturally. As a result, cultural diversity and the identities of small groups are increasingly threatened with erosion.

Implications for Education, Scientific Research, and Language Policy

In the field of education, the extinction of related Arabic languages reduces the opportunities for future generations to learn and understand firsthand the linguistic and cultural heritage of their ancestors. This has an impact on the decline of cultural diversity in the education system. In addition, language as a means of learning loses its cultural context when it is taught and used only in its standard form without involving authentic local variants.

The extinction of related Arabic languages means the loss of important data sources needed in various scientific studies, including linguistics, anthropology, history, and other interdisciplinary studies. This language is the primary source for understanding philology, the development of Semitic languages, and the social and cultural structure of ancient and medieval Arab societies. Without this language as a living language, the process of reconstructing the history of language and culture becomes more complex and limited, making research on the past of societies that used this language significantly more challenging.

At the public policy level, this situation demands serious attention in order to protect minority languages from extinction. The absence of adequate language preservation regulations and programs reinforces the dominance of official and global languages, thereby accelerating the marginalization of indigenous languages.⁴⁸

The Impact of Globalization and Modernization

In the era of globalization, Arabic languages face major challenges. The dominance of global languages such as English, especially in the fields of technology, science, and education, has marginalized local and related languages. The development of the digital world and cross-border communication has led to the widespread and unfiltered influx of foreign languages, thereby accelerating the process of language shift among native speakers of related languages. This demonstrates that globalization not only connects the world but also exerts strong pressure on the preservation of local and related languages.

⁴⁸ Khairul Hafiz, Dedy Wahyudin, and Erma Suriani, "Linguistic Arab Di Zaman Moderan : Perkembangan, Tantangan Dan Penerapannya Dalam Konteks Globalisasi," *SOCIAL : Jurnal Inovasi Pendidikan IPS* 4, no. 4 (December 2024): 550–57, <https://doi.org/10.51878/social.v4i4.3790>.

Standard Arabic currently faces considerable challenges, one of which is the influx of foreign vocabulary and changes in its usage. This situation often takes precedence over efforts to preserve dialects and local languages. In addition, modernization in education and urbanization have encouraged people to move from traditional areas to urban centers, which has become a critical point where the use of traditional languages has begun to decline and be replaced. These changes are accelerating language shift, particularly among younger generations who are increasingly adopting the standard language in urban environments.

Conservation Efforts and the Importance of Collective Awareness

Although the impact of the extinction of Arabic languages is enormous, there are still various preservation efforts being made, such as documenting the language through writing, audio recordings, and digital media. Revitalizing native speaker communities is also an important strategy, accompanied by the promotion of multilingual education that supports the sustainability of the language. The roles of linguists, anthropologists, and policymakers are crucial in archiving and protecting these languages to prevent their disappearance. Through collaboration and systematic efforts, it is hoped that these related Arabic languages can continue to be passed down and appreciated by future generations. Public awareness of the importance of local languages as part of national and global cultural heritage must continue to be instilled, so that younger generations feel an emotional connection to and are motivated to preserve these languages. The use of local languages in the media, the arts, and education can be an effective means of strengthening cultural continuity and sustainability.

Conclusion

The extinction of related Arabic languages occurred gradually and complexly through a process of cultural assimilation and political change in the Arabian Peninsula and surrounding areas. The ancient Southern Arabic languages and the Nabataean Aramaic language, which once flourished as local languages, began to lose their existence as the standard Arabic language became dominant as the language of liturgy, administration, and culture during the Umayyad and Abbasid caliphates, and subsequent changes in power that centralized the use of standard Arabic and pushed other related language variants to the brink of extinction.

The main factors behind the extinction of Arabic-related languages include the shift of speakers from local languages to standard Arabic as a result of social, political, and

economic pressures; the dominance of Arabic as the language of religion and administration, which erodes the social function of related languages; and the lack of documentation and effective language preservation policies. Additionally, globalization, modernization, migration, and shifts in cultural attitudes, particularly among younger generations, have accelerated the language shift process, leading to the loss of active speakers of Arabic languages.

The impact of the extinction of related Arabic languages is very broad, not only in the linguistic realm in the form of the loss of language structure, phonology, and unique vocabulary, but also in cultural and social aspects. The extinction of these languages leads to the loss of oral traditions, local knowledge, and cultural values inherent to their speaking communities, resulting in a crisis of social identity and weakened intergenerational bonds. Thus, the extinction of these languages is not merely a linguistic event but a loss of cultural heritage that requires serious attention and multidisciplinary conservation efforts moving forward.

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