

## **ARABIC LANGUAGE AND CONTEMPORER CIVILIZATION (Capturing Arabic Language Roles in Contemporary Era)**

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### **Abstract**

Arabic language has no doubt been regarded an international language that is often used in official meetings. Besides English, Arabic can be used as the official language in international forums. Arabic is a language that has a uniqueness in terms of grammar and linguistics, therefore this language is studied in many countries around the world. Arabic has an important role in current contemporary world, especially as a medium of political, economic and cultural interaction. This paper portrays the role of Arabic in the contemporary era, especially its roles in the development of civilization.

Keywords; Arabic, Roles, Contemporary, Civilization

### **Introduction**

Language is a means of communication that connects one person to another to convey his meaning. Language is also a medium to convey idea because things that arise in the mind are still general, as well as still in the form of concepts, thus a way is needed to express them. How to express what we think through language or pictures or parables/examples? language is the answer (Ibrahim;43)

The thought process constitutes an individual's imagination and its expression is a clear picture of a thought process. There is no agreement either written or verbal about what happens as a language agreement in society (Ibrahim; 43) The example of the word "canggih ('sophisticated)' in the Indonesian language has never been agreed collectively, it grows by itself in society.

Arabic had been the national language before Islam came, but historians agree that the most important event in the history of the development of Arabic was the arrival of Islam and the spread of this religion from Southeast Asia to West Africa. With the advent of Islam and the revelation of the Qur'an in standard Arabic, the position of standard Arabic became more important and attracted the attention of the public wider society. The greater the number

of adherents of Islam, the more widespread the influence of this standard Arabic to the common people (Syakur, 2010; 10)

Before the VII century AD, Arabic was only the language of the Bedouin people who lived in the northern part of the Arabian Peninsula, parts of Syria and Iraq and the language of the inhabitants of the cities in the northern Arabian Peninsula. They do not have a high civilization compared to the people around the region such as Syria, Iraq and Egypt. Therefore, Arabic at that time was still simple and had not yet reached the status of a cultural language (Syakur, 2010; 11)

The dynamics of culture then developed after the revelation of Islam, and al-Qur'an al-Karim as a holy book revealed in Arabic. It turned out that Islam not only expanded the influence of the Arabic language, but also united the Arabs. Enriching the treasures of knowledge and enriching the Arabic language with new vocabularies or new meanings. (Syakur, 2010; 11)

Thus the Arabic language and its development cannot be separated from the history of the arrival of Islam. Even the progress of culture and language is in line with developments and efforts to enrich knowledge and spreading Islam.

#### **Arabic as an International language**

Arabic is actually an inseparable part of the life of Muslims. Therefore, learning and mastering the language is a necessity for every Muslim. For Muslim, Arabic is necessary to form a person as a Muslim and improve the quality of faith and understanding of religious teachings, even as a means of proselytizing the spread of Islam.

Arabic needs to be seen as a religious language and not as a language of culture, ethnicity, region, or a particular country. This is indicated by the large number of Muslim figures and scholars who come from non-Arab regions, such as Al-Gazali, Al-Biruni, Ibn Sina, Al-Razi, Al-Kindi, etc., but master Arabic as part of their Islamic studies. In addition, Islam, one of which is Arabic, should become the dominant culture that colors the lives of Muslims at the personal, family, and community levels (Alwi Shihab; 2010)

On the other hand, it appears that there have been attempts by the colonial and secular circles to marginalize and distance the Arabic language and a number of Islamic cultures from the lives of Muslims. In terms of academic efforts, there is one example, Al-Munjid, an Arabic dictionary which does not include Arabic elements related to Islam; The dictionary was compiled by Lebanese Catholic academic, Louis Ma'luf. In addition, culturally, there are also efforts that want to be implemented and disseminated among the Arab community, namely the popularization of the use of colloquial Arabic (local dialect) and the exclusion of the use of standard Arabic (fusha). This resulted in the lack of knowledge and understanding of the Arab community

themselves towards the official and standard Arabic language. There is one advantage that standard Arabic has, namely its maintenance which directly involves the role of Allah through the revelation of the Qur'an as Allah's revelation in Arabic ((Alwi Shihab; 2010). Thus, it needs to be understood and protected as an important heritage because it is also one of the keys to science and global communication. Therefore, it cannot be viewed only as a language used only by the Arab world. But it has become an international language.

Politically-internationally, Arabic is now recognized as an international language and is also used as one of the official diplomatic languages at the United Nations forum. Some non-Arab countries in the world, such as Malaysia, have even recognized Arabic in their country and have given appreciation in the form of Arabic writings in public places.

In terms of the development of the global economic situation, Arabic takes a very important place and role. This is shown by the growing importance of the Middle East region, which in fact the majority of the people speak Arabic, as the center of the world's energy and mineral resources. Various groups in the world who are interested and want to open lines of communication with Middle Eastern countries, must think and take the attitude that they really need mastery of the Arabic language, as an entry point for intercultural communication which then opens the way for economic, political relations, and so on; For example, the German Ambassador and the Dutch Ambassador who are currently serving in Indonesia are able to speak Arabic very fluently. As a new business area that is very open and promises bright opportunities and prospects, the Middle East is a new prima donna that is grabbing the attention of many people in the world. It was also marked by the increasing number of institutions and companies from outside the Arabs who came and opened offices in Middle Eastern countries. Those who came realized that Arabic, apart from English, was the main requirement for communication and diplomacy as well as an approach to the people and countries of the Middle East (Alwi Shihab; 2010)

It is not only the process of entering foreign investment into the Middle East that requires Arabic. Various countries, including Indonesia, which recognize the importance of the Middle East region as a partner, realize that there are also many expectations for investment from Arab countries to enter their country. In Indonesia, there are even representatives of foreign companies and financial institutions that have opened offices in Indonesia. This is inseparable from the active role and seriousness of the Indonesian government in inviting investors from the Middle East to come to Indonesia. In this case, the process of communication, diplomacy, and bilateral negotiations certainly requires Arabic as the main medium. Unfortunately, it must be admitted that there are still few experts who master Arabic, such as diplomats and so on.

In fact, the need for it is now so high. This is at the same time an opportunity and a challenge for the Indonesian people to see the changing situation, Indonesia's relations with the Middle East region are increasingly intensive and job opportunities are increasingly opening up and rethink that Arabic is now not a third-class language, but has become an important and absolute language. need to be studied. This change in situation clearly benefits the Indonesian people and nation. However, these benefits will only be enjoyed if the ongoing process of intercultural and interstate communication is bridged by a good understanding of language and culture. If the Indonesian people and people do not understand Arabic language and culture well, then all big plans involve politics, economy, etc. between countries it will be difficult to realize something that should be a national concern. This country will continue to suffer huge losses simply because it cannot communicate and culturally approach Arabs who are actually starting to be interested and even competing to enter and invest in Indonesia, even though this country has firmly stated to the Middle East that the government is opening the door as wide as possible. breadth and provide many special facilities to them.

Arabic has received world attention, at least it has received international attention twice, namely: first, when Arabic was used by scholars for various sciences (Classical Arabic); second, when the Arabs and the Islamic world take an important role in the international arena, so that the international community feels the need to make Arabic one of the official languages used at the United Nations (United Nations). Therefore, one should assume that Arabic is one of the great languages that has been recognized by the world today. It is the sixth official language after English, French, Spanish, Russian and Chinese (Ali Maskur; 50)

Thus, Arabic has played a major role in scientific dynamics and has become a means of communication both regionally and internationally. Even from classical times it has been widely used along with the development of the Islamic world to the modern century.

In 1973 for the first time Arabic became the official language within the United Nations (UN) after French and English in 1945, Spanish in 1948, Russian and Chinese in 1949. Besides being the official language of the United Nations, Arabic also used in important regional organizations such as the Organization of African Unity, the World Islamic League, and the Non-Aligned Conferences. Arab scientists have developed Arabic as they get a number of civilizations from nations that have had great civilizations in the past such as France, Greece, Rome, Egypt and others. (Nazri Syakur; 49)

From the description above it can be said that the attention of the United Nations to make the official language since 1973 is important because Arabic is widely used by the Arab world itself and the rest of the world as the

language of the Koran and the language of interaction in the economic, political and other fields other.

The importance of Arabic as follows:

1. Arabic is a branch of the Sammiyah language. The Qur'an was revealed in Arabic (Surah Yusuf (12): 2).
2. Because Arabic is the language of the Qur'an, it becomes the language of warning for mankind.
3. Arabic is used as the language of worship for Muslims all over the world.
4. Arabic is included in the modern language used in international circles that has been recognized by the United Nations (Ilyas; 1996; 31)
5. Arabic is the key language for studying various literatures or sciences written in Arabic. Both classic and modern.

Consediring the opportunities that are now open and the increasing importance of Arabic in relation to existing opportunities, Al Azhar Indonesia University (UAI) or Islamic Boarding School such Gontor Ponorogo and Boarding Schools aware of this situation and take the initiative to become a pioneer institution that requires students and graduates to master a foreign language, namely Arabic.

Thus it can be said that Arabic plays a role in the activities and activities of mankind, in the stages of history, religion, education, economics, international relations, and others. The existence of mastery of Arabic opens up great opportunities to play a role in many aspects. Only people who think big can reach big hopes.

### **Arabic in Development of Civilization**

For centuries, Arabic has been the primary language of intellectuals. Beginning in the eighth century C.E., Arabic-speaking scholars in various cities in the Middle East translated and corrected various scientific and philosophical texts from the time of Ptolemy and Aristotle. Thus, Arabic-speaking scholars preserve and enrich the work of ancient thinkers.

In Islamic history there are differences in leadership orientation between the Umayyad and Abbasid dynasties. While the Umayyad period was a period of expansion of Islamic rule, the Bani Abbas period was a time of formation and development of Islamic culture and civilization (Nasution; 2008; 65)

It was during the time of Banu Abbas that attention to Greek science and philosophy peaked, especially in the days of Harun Al-Rashid and Al-Ma'mun. Under the reign of Harun Al-Rashid, there was a movement to translate Greek science books into Arabic. People were sent to the Roman empire in Europe to buy manuscripts. At first the books that became the main priority were those related to medicine and then later expanded to other sciences and philosophy.

The books were translated first into Syriac, the language of science in Mesopotamia at that time, then into Arabic (Nasution 1992; 11)

At that time there were famous translators who produced many works, including Hunayn Ibn Ishaq (d.873 AD), a Christian who was fluent in Arabic and Greek (had visited Greece). He translated 20 of Galen's books into Syriac and another 14 books into Arabic.

At the time of al-Ma'mun, Bait al-Hikmah was founded, not only a translation center but also an academy that had a library. Among the branches of science that are prioritized in Bait Al-Hikmah are medicine, mathematics, optics, geography, physics, astronomy and history in addition to philosophy.

Among the integrations that occur in this era is the integration in the field of language. The language of the Qur'an is Arabic, it is used everywhere. It has replaced Greek and Persian as administrative languages. Arabic is also the language of science, philosophy and diplomacy. Even some languages have disappeared from use, such as Latin spoken in Africa, Ancient Egyptian in Egypt, Syriac in Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq, and the language spoken on the island of Malta. With the loss of these languages, Arabic is spoken in North Africa, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq and Jordan, while on the island of Malta Arabic is mixed with Italian. (Nasution; 2008; 65)

Integration is also in the cultural field. The existing culture from Spain in the West to India in the East and from Sudan in the South to the Caucasus in the North is Islamic culture with Arabic as its tool. At this time, in recorded history for the first time there was contact between Islam and Western culture, or specifically with classical Greek culture found in Egypt, Syria, Mesopotamia, and Persia. Encouraged by the verses of the Qur'an that encourage Muslims to appreciate the power of reason and the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad to seek knowledge. This contact with Western culture brought a glorious period for Islam. (Nasution 1992; 11)

Islamic scholars and scientists not only mastered the science and philosophy they learned from Greek books, but transferred into the results of their own investigations in the field of science and the results of their thoughts in the field of philosophy. Thus emerged the scientists and philosophers of Islam. As mentioned below:

1. Al-Fazari (VIII century) Islamic astronomer who first compiled the astrolabe (a tool used to measure the height of stars and so on).
2. Al-Fragani in Europe known as Al-Fragmus, composed a summary of the science of Astronomy.
3. Jabir Ibn Hayyan is famous as the father of Al-Kimia. And Abu Bakr Zakaria al-Razi (865-925 AD) authored a great book on chemistry that had just been discovered in the twentieth century.
4. Abu Raihan Muhammad Al-Baituni (973-1048 AD) before Galileo had put forward a theory about the earth rotating around its axle.

5. The greatest influence of Islam is in the medical field, such as Al-Razi, known in Europe as Rhazes, who wrote books on smallpox and measles which were translated into Latin, English and other European languages.
6. Al-Hawi, authored a book consisting of more than 20 volumes, discussing various branches of medical science. This book was translated into Latin in 1279 and became an important handbook for centuries in Europe.
7. Ibn Sina (980-1037 AD) apart from being a philosopher he was also a doctor who wrote an encyclopedia in medical science known as *Al-Qanun Fi Al-Tib*. This book has been translated into Latin. There are many other scientists and philosophers. (Nasution; 2008; 68)

The contribution of the Arabic language itself can be seen from the many Arabic translators who translate accurately and with amazing speed. Therefore, some historians argue that the translators must have known a lot about the subject. Moreover, some scholars use the translated text as a springboard for their own study.

For example, the physician and translator Hunain bin Ishaq (808-873 CE), a Syrian Christian, made an important contribution to the understanding of the eye. His work, which contains accurate diagrams of the anatomy of the eye, became the standard reference for ophthalmology in Arab and European countries. The philosopher and physician Ibn Sina, known in the West as Avicenna (980-1037 AD), wrote dozens of books on a wide range of topics, from ethics and logic to medicine and metaphysics. His great compilation, *al-Qanun fi al-Thibb*, covers medical knowledge of the time, including the ideas of Galen and Aristotle, the famous Greek thinkers. *Al-Qanun* became the standard guidebook for medical science for about 400 years.

Arab scholars used the scientific method, which became the main determinant of scientific progress. This prompted them to recalculate the earth's circumference and correct the geographical information contained in Ptolemy's work. "They even dared to question Aristotle's thinking," says historian Paul Lunde. The progress of science is reflected in many areas of life, such as the construction of reservoirs, aqueducts, and waterwheels, some of which still exist today. Original texts on agriculture, botany and agronomy assist farmers in selecting the most suitable crops for an area to increase yields.

In 805 AD, Caliph Harun ar-Rashid founded a hospital. This was the first in his vast caliphate. Before long, every major city in his territory had a hospital. A number of cities in the Arab world have libraries and centers of knowledge. In Baghdad, Caliph al-Ma'mun established a translation and study institute called *Baitul Hikmah*, or "House of Wisdom." The staff consists of salaried experts. The main library in Cairo is said to hold more than one million books. Meanwhile, Cordoba, the capital of the Umayyad Caliphate in Spain, had 70 libraries, which attracted scholars and students from all over the Arab

world. For more than two centuries, Cordoba has been a leading center of knowledge.

In Persia, where the Greek and Indian mathematical traditions mixed, mathematicians developed a system of using zeros and number positions. In this system, the value of each number is determined by its location and the placement of the zero symbol. The number one, for example, can be worth one, ten, one hundred, and so on. This system “not only simplifies all kinds of calculations but allows the development of algebra,” writes Lunde. Arab scholars also made great leaps in the fields of geometry, trigonometry, and navigation.

When Arabic science and mathematics triumphed, intellectual sluggishness swept over much of the rest of the world. At the same time, efforts were made in medieval Europe, particularly in monasteries, to preserve the works of ancient masters. However, the results are nothing compared to the results from the Arab world. However, from the tenth century on, the situation began to change as works in Arabic flowed into the West. In the end, this flow increased rapidly and Europe also experienced a resurgence in the scientific field. A complete historical picture shows that the knowledge that exists today in the field of science and related fields is not the merit of one nation or one society alone. Today's more advanced cultures owe much to the earlier cultures that fostered research, questioned old-fashioned concepts, and fostered creative thinking.

In line with Philip K. Hitti who stated that today Arabic is the lingua franca for approximately fifty million people. For several centuries in the Middle Ages, Arabic was the language of scientific, cultural and progressive thought in all parts of the civilized world. Thanks to the efforts of the Arabs, between the 9th and 12th centuries many books in the fields of philosophy, medicine, history, religion, astronomy and earth science were created, more in number than ever written in other languages. There are traces of this influence in Western-European languages. Besides the Latin alphabet, the Arabic alphabet is the most widely used throughout the world (K. Hitti; 11)

Thus Arabic plays an important role in the development of science. It becomes a language to explore various kinds of knowledge that have been produced in the form of monumental works. The work is used and utilized to enrich the repertoire of knowledge.

### **Contribution of Arabic in National Culture**

Arabic is the language of communication in the world which has the same position as other foreign languages, such as English, French and other languages. Arabic has special characteristics besides the language of communication between nations, it is also the language of Islam because the Qur'an as the holy book of Muslims uses Arabic. But today's reality, Arabic is starting to be abandoned and isolated and unpopular in Indonesian society. If



you look at its roots, language is an element of culture. it was born from the basic needs of humans in an effort to improve their civilization. Besides that, as a means of communication between humans, language also acts as a tool for thinking, expressing feelings, an absolute supporter of all human knowledge, as well as a symbol of religion and unifying the people.

According to experts, Arabic was born before the arrival of Islam. This is proven by the existence of ignorant Arabic literary texts. The arrival of Islam in Arabia strengthened and clarified the position of the Arabic language. In general, Arabic in national society and national culture has played a role in some way since the development of Islam in Indonesia in the 13th century. Among others; Arabic developed in the circle of scholars, Islamic boarding schools, scholars and the Islamic community, Arabic is integrated into Indonesian or regional languages. at least in the growth of vocabulary, both in the lexical sense and in the semantic, Arabic letters are letters that must be studied specifically for those who are interested in studying Malay literature. because classical Malay literature-the roots of Indonesian language and literature are written in Arabic letters (Yunandra; 2012)

In the nation's struggle for independence. Arabic has also played a role. because the Dutch forbade the Indonesian people to sing heroic songs in Malay and local languages, struggle songs emerged in Arabic. a well-known song in the epic struggle first includes "ya abna ana jinsana Indonesia qum min naumikum, undhur ila wathanikum. Yahuda wa nashara tufsidu fiil ardhi, la takhaf wa la takhzan, innallaha ma'ana" ( .. my sons and daughters of Indonesia", wake up from your sleep, look at your homeland. invaders make mischief on the earth. do not be afraid and do not be afraid, indeed Allah is with us). (Yunandra; 2012)

Conditions are now starting to get out of hand. compared to the position and development of English. seems increasingly rare scholars--Muslim scholars who can speak Arabic well. The assumption is reinforced by repeated statements from Prof. Mukti Ali (former Minister of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia) who stated that mastery of foreign languages (Arabic and English) as an important language t by IAIN students in particular is still very weak and this seems to be the most basic deficiency for IAIN as a place to produce Muslim scholars. Marginalization of Arabic in Indonesia is caused by, among others; There was a cultural conflict between religious culture, western culture and Indonesian culture. The case of Arabic in Indonesia is that the Islamic cultural system has many elements, including the use of Arabic. So that there is a mental attitude that rejects things attributed to like Arabs.

Besides, the prevailing education system is the Dutch colonial system. The system dichotomizes general education and religious education. In high school there is English, French, but no Arabic. Political action, the Dutch cut off the flow of rich and valuable Arabic literary literature in Indonesia. The

logical consequence is that students and society are not familiar with Arabic literature. In contrast to English works such as Shakespeare. Arabic teaching methods did not develop. Focused on Grammatical and put aside muhadasa.

There are several ways to require Arabic namely

1. Eliminating the assumption that learning Arabic is synonymous with Arabization.
2. Changing the current assumption that Arabic is an old-fashioned language that is only used by kyai.
3. Looking back at the structure of the Arabic teaching method that has been used so far.

Thus Arabic has urgency for the development of scientific and religious repertoire. It is also the key to science. Therefore, the education system and learning methodology in an effort to master the Arabic language should be improved. Because there are also many documents or manuscripts that require attention.

### **Conclusion**

1. Arabic is the language of al-Quran, therefore Arabic is always used in the worship of Muslims around the world, it is also a language of warning.
2. Arabic is a means of communication and social language and in 1973 was officially used in the United Nations (UN).
3. Arabic, apart from being the language of religion, is also the language of science and culture in all parts of the civilized world. Arabic is one of the major languages spoken in the world, Arab scientists have developed it as they have obtained a number of civilizations from nations that have had great civilizations in the past. Thanks to the efforts of the Arabs, many books were created in the fields of philosophy, medicine, history, religion, astronomy and earth science and so on.
4. At the time of Caliph Harun Ar-Rashid, and Caliph Al-Ma'mun, translation activities were carried out from books of science and philosophy into Arabic.
5. Many Islamic scholars emerged who not only mastered science and philosophy but they learned from Greek books. Then transfer it to the results of their own research in the field of science.
6. Arabic in national society and national culture has played a role in some way since the development of Islam in Indonesia in the 13th century, namely; Arabic developed in the circle of scholars, Islamic boarding schools, scholars and the Islamic community, Arabic is integrated into Indonesian or regional languages. at least in the growth of vocabulary, both in the lexical sense and in the semantics, Arabic letters are letters that must be studied specifically for those who are interested in studying Malay literature. because classical Malay literature-the roots of Indonesian language and literature are written in Arabic letters.

7. It is necessary to promote Arabic in Indonesia by eliminating the assumption that learning Arabic is synonymous with Arabization and that it is an old-fashioned language.
8. Look back at the structure of the teaching methods that have been used so far.

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