



DYNAMICS OF ARABIC LANGUAGE BELIEFS IN NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY IN INDONESIA (THEOLOGY, EPISTEMIC-HERMENEUTICS, COMMUNICATIVE)

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Abstract

This study examines the dynamics of Arabic language beliefs in national education policy. Other studies often place national education policy as part of nationalism and Indonesian-ness. This study found that national education policy towards Arabic prioritizes unbalanced modernity, resulting in discrimination. Referring to language policy theory, language policy, including education, is based on the state's language beliefs towards a language, which then becomes a policy in the form of mandatory laws. This study uses a qualitative approach to policy documents in the form of national education policy. Data analysis was conducted using Norman Fairclough's critical discourse analysis (Text, discursive practice, social practice). The results show that the dynamics of language beliefs in the National Education Policy towards Arabic in the national education system include theological beliefs (2003-2014), epistemic-hermeneutic (2019), and communicative (2019-2024). Initially, Arabic was positioned as a sacred religious language in worship activities, as stated in Law No. 20/2003. Following the enactment of Law No. 18/2019 concerning Islamic boarding schools, Arabic was adopted as the language of Islamic religious knowledge. KMA No. 183 and 184/2019 stipulated that Arabic be studied for international communication. Awareness is needed to shift public perception so that Arabic can be seen as a relevant language in various aspects of life, not just the religious realm.

Keywords: language beliefs, policy, education, theology, epistemic, communicative.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji dinamika keyakinan (language beliefs) bahasa Arab pada kebijakan pendidikan nasional. Studi lain sering kali menempatkan kebijakan pendidikan nasional bagian dari nasionalisme dan keindonesiaan. Studi ini menemukan fakta bahwa kebijakan pendidikan nasional terhadap bahasa Arab mengedepankan modernitas yang tidak seimbang sehingga melahirkan diskriminasi. Mengacu pada teori language policy, bahwa kebijakan bahasa termasuk pendidikan di dasari oleh language beliefs negara kepada sebuah bahasa yang kemudian menjadi kebijakan berupa undang-undang yang wajib dijalankan. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif terhadap policy document berupa kebijakan pendidikan nasional. Analisis data dilakukan dengan critical discourse analysis Norman Fairclough (Teks, discursive practice, social practice). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa dinamika language beliefs pada kebijakan Pendidikan Nasional terhadap bahasa Arab dalam system Pendidikan nasional mencakup beliefs teologi (2003-2014), epistemic-hermeneutic (2019), dan communicatives (2019-2024). Pada awalnya bahasa Arab ditempatkan sebagai bahasa agama yang bersifat sacral dalam kegiatan ibadah yang terdapat pada UU No.20/2003. Setelah UU No.18/2019 tentang pesantren lahir, bahasa Arab dijadikan sebagai bahasa ilmu pengetahuan agama Islam. KMA No. 183, 184/2019 menjadikan bahasa Arab dipelajari untuk kebutuhan komunikasi internasional. Perlu adanya kesadaran untuk mengubah pandangan masyarakat agar bahasa Arab dapat dilihat sebagai bahasa yang relevan dalam berbagai aspek kehidupan, bukan hanya terbatas pada ranah keagamaan.

Kata Kunci: Language Beliefs, Kebijakan, Pendidikan, Teologi, Epistemic, Komunikatif.

Background

Law No. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System is an education policy that regulates all dimensions of education. This education policy also regulates language not only as a technical tool for regulating education, but also as an arena for ideological dynamics that reflect a country's political, economic, and cultural

interests. The choice, priority, or marginalization of language within the national education system is always intertwined with how the state constructs a narrative of progress, identity, and civilizational orientation. Identity and religion serve as instruments for articulating cross-identities within



a country.¹ A language can collapse as a result of a language policy that is assimilative to one of the languages.² The fact that the majority of Indonesia's population is Muslim must be a key consideration in decision-making. The status of the Arabic language is determined by both religious considerations and national needs. The state must hold clear convictions regarding the role of Arabic in serving the public. Globalization has always been the main reason for determining which languages are developed and which are not allowed to develop.³ Therefore, language policy in education is an expression of the politics of knowledge that determines which languages are considered relevant, valuable, and worthy of development.

In a global context, the dominance of English as a lingua franca has shaped a modern educational paradigm that positions English proficiency as an indicator of progress, competitiveness, and global connectedness. Many countries, including developing and postcolonial nations, have adopted educational policies that explicitly or implicitly prioritize English over other foreign languages. English dominates various forms of mass media and even serves as a symbol of modernity within social reality⁴.

Languages, essentially the primary languages, are marginalized, becoming of only historical value and accommodated in a particular corpus.⁵ It is part of the politics of language because language has affective value and is involved in politics.

Language in naturalistic accounts is related to social practices and biological structures⁶. Consequently, languages that have symbolic, cultural, or religious functions are often positioned marginally in national education policies, even though they have a strong historical and social role in society.

Arabic holds a unique position in the Muslim world because it is considered the sacred language of Islam and the key to understanding the Quran, hadith, and classical Islamic scholarship. Arabic serves as the foundation of holistic Islamic education, meeting both pedagogical and educational needs⁷. The complexity of Arabic's superiority over other languages should provide wider opportunities⁸. On the other hand, within the framework of educational modernization, Arabic is often perceived as lacking global instrumental value compared to English. This tension between its theological function and the demands of modernity places Arabic in an ambiguous position within various educational policies in non-Arab Muslim countries. This position is not merely a pedagogical issue, but rather the result of an ideologization process through institutionalized educational policies.

Arabic has dual characteristics: on the one hand, it is the language of revelation and a symbol of Muslim religiosity, and on the other, it is an international language with a long scholarly tradition and significant geopolitical significance. Among the world's languages, Arabic ranks fifth in

¹Daniel Tikhir, 'The Politics of Language: Christianity, Language, and Identity Conflict in Nagaland', *Transformation: An International Journal of Holistic Mission Studies*, 41.1 (2024), pp. 17–29, doi:10.1177/02653788231226398.

² Giulia Cabras, 'The Politics of Language Oppression in Tibet', *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 84.4 (2025), pp. 1085–87, doi:10.1215/00219118-11904315.

³ Nicko Enrique Lanuzo Manalastas, 'Language Politics and Prestige in The Walled City: An Exploratory Study of the Linguistic Landscape of Intramuros, Manila', *Multimodal Communication*, 13.3 (2024), pp. 311–33, doi:10.1515/mc-2024-0015.

⁴ Wina Ayusari Tambun Purba, Elza Leyli Lisnora Saragih, Nuryosianna Putri Purba, Diapita Br Sitepu, 'Bahasa Asing Sebagai Simbol Status Dalam Realita Di Indonesia Modern', *MUARA PENDIDIKAN: Jurnal Ilmiah*

Ilmu Pendidikan & Sosial Humaniora, 1.3 (2025), pp. 22–32, doi:10.64365/muradik.v1i3.25.

⁵ Marco Aurelio Golfetto, 'Arabic as a Language of Politics: A Case Study in Corpus-Based Teaching', *Languages Cultures Mediation*, 2021, doi:10.7358/LCM-2021-002-GOLF.

⁶ Joseph Rouse, 'Niche Construction and the Politics of Language', *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, 55.2 (2025), pp. 112–26, doi:10.1177/00483931241299882.

⁷ Abd Aziz Rekan and others, 'Arabic Language Curriculum as a Foundation for Strengthening Religious Education in Public Higher Education', *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam*, 22.1 (2025), pp. 97–121, doi:10.14421/jpai.v22i1.11340.

⁸ St Kuraedah and others, 'Gender Representation in Government-Endorsed Arabic Language Textbooks: Insights from Indonesia', *Frontiers in Education*, 7 (2023), doi:10.3389/feduc.2022.1022998.



terms of speakers and global influence.⁹ Arabic is also a language that is responsive to traditions, values, social norms, and history, which are integrated into the education system.¹⁰ However, this dual status creates a policy dilemma, placing Arabic as a religious language while neglecting its scientific potential. In the context of national education, this dilemma becomes even more complex because it must adapt to national ideology and a secular education system.

The politics of the Arabic language in Indonesia cannot be understood separately from the history of the formation of the national education system. During the Dutch colonial period, education was oriented towards cultural assimilation and social control, deliberately excluding religious languages from the public sphere. After Indonesian independence, in the post-colonial era, this became a symbolic strategy to strengthen nationalism, indirectly placing Arabic in a subordinate position to state ideology.¹¹ Arabic language education policy during the Old Order (1945-1966) did not specifically focus on learning it. Arabic remained dominant as an instrument in religious institutions, Islamic boarding schools, and Islamic religious education for teaching the recitation of the Qur'an and studying classical texts, rather than as a primary component of the formal national education system. Joint decrees of the Minister of Education and Culture and the Minister of Religious Affairs No. 1142/BhgA and

No. 1285/K.J9 dated December 2, 1945, included religious education in elementary schools starting in grade IV.¹² The decision explains that Arabic is not a policy consideration.¹³ The existence of madrasas does not mean that Arabic has a place in national education.¹⁴

During the New Order era (1966-1998), the state made new, more systematic regulations regarding religion, including madrasas, until the 1973-1984 elementary madrasa curriculum was born, which included Islamic religious studies, including Arabic, among the six existing subjects.¹⁵ The reform period (1998-present) through KMA Number 347 of 2022 became a substantial change in Arabic by emphasizing it as part of Islamic Education, which also reduced the space in Education.¹⁶ Islamic religious education is understood through the Arabic language as a tool, emphasizing the color of the political ideology of education that has not changed. Strengthening Islamic religious education, but misunderstanding the Arabic language, which has its own position within the framework of Islamic knowledge.

The dynamics of Indonesian national education policy demonstrate that educational politics are never free from power calculations. Curriculum changes over time are always influenced by the political orientation of those in power and the global context.¹⁷ Political considerations are a consensus of state administrators and factors that influence them,

⁹ Cindy Mutia Annur, 'Inilah Bahasa Yang Paling Banyak Dipakai Di Dunia, Bagaimana Bahasa Indonesia?', 2021 <<https://databoks.katadata.co.id/datapublish/2021/11/01/inilah-bahasa-yang-paling-banyak-dipakai-di-dunia-bagaimana-bahasa-indonesia>>.

¹⁰ YAZID BIN ISA, IBRAHIM BIN ABDULLAH, and MOHD SHAHZUWAN BIN AHMAD RAZAK, 'Implementation of Arabic Cultural Knowledge in Teaching Arabic Language in Schools', *International Journal of Social Science Humanity & Management Research*, 04.02 (2025), doi:10.58806/ijsshmr.2025.v4i2n17.

¹¹ Mohammad Kosim and others, 'The Dynamics of Islamic Education Policies in Indonesia', *Cogent Education*, 10.1 (2023), doi:10.1080/2331186X.2023.2172930.

¹² Anis Luthfiyani and Muhammad Sirozi, 'Politik Pendidikan Islam Di Indonesia Pada Masa Orde Lama', *Tarbiyya: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 10.1 (2023), pp. 38-44, doi:10.32923/tarbawy.v10i1.3450.

¹³ Kasful Anwar US Sismawati, Muhammad Taraki, 'Kebijakan Pendidikan Pemerintahan Orde Lama Serta Pengaruhnya Terhadap Pendidikan Islam Di Indonesia', *Jurnal Manajemen Dan Pendidikan Agama Islam*, 2.5 (2024), pp. 303-15, doi:10.61132/jmpai.v2i5.543.

¹⁴ Iis Susiawati and others, 'Kurikulum Pendidikan Bahasa Arab Dalam Dinamika Sejarah Pendidikan Di Indonesia', *Tarbiyatuna Kajian Pendidikan Islam*, 8.1 (2024), p. 073, doi:10.69552/tarbiyatuna.v8i1.1927.

¹⁵ Muhammad Zulkifli and others, 'Madrasah Pada Masa Orde Baru (Telaah Historis Kebijakan Pemerintah Terhadap Madrasah)', 9.02 (2025), pp. 499-507, doi:<https://doi.org/10.58791/tadrs.v9i02.490>.

¹⁶ B Alwi, A, 'Perubahan Substansi Kurikulum Bahasa Arab Berdasarkan KMA Nomor 347 Tahun 2022', *Journal of Education Research*, 4.4 (2023), pp. 1753-60.

¹⁷ Haidar Putra Daulay and others, 'Kolonialisme Dan Dikotomi Pendidikan Di Indonesia', *Islamic Education*, 1.1 (2021), pp. 1-10, doi:10.57251/ie.v1i1.10.



including non-governmental institutions recognized by the state.¹⁸ Foreign intervention is also part of the political considerations in Education.¹⁹ The stronger the influencing factor, the more it changes the orientation of the driving force.

The interaction between educational politics, power, and various elements influencing educational policy demonstrates a strong dynamic. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology plays a role in formulating educational system policies at every level, often referred to as the curriculum. The Ministry of Religious Affairs regulates madrasah curricula in accordance with the demands of the national education system. Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) often adapt to national education policies issued by the government, despite having flexible space to manage their own education with the authority and autonomy of the kyai.²⁰ The transformation of national education policy also becomes a new direction for Islamic boarding school education as an education system.²¹ Internationally, UNESCO exerts significant influence by providing direction for curriculum improvement and global competitiveness. Multicultural education and global education policies influence international standards that countries use as references when formulating education policies.

The complexity of the ideological contestation of Arabic language education in Indonesia will

ultimately lead to the formation of linguistic identity. Identity is shaped according to sociopolitical conditions through a process of legitimation based on leadership and representation proposals.²² The majority's desires are determined by political considerations. Sociolinguistically, the Arabic language policy is influenced by three main dimensions: nationalism, religiosity, and globalization. Nationalism demands the supremacy of Indonesian as a unifying language and a unifying force for national identity. Religiosity demands the legitimacy of Arabic as a sacred language, and globalization encourages the dominance of English as the language of economics and technology.²³ The meeting of these three forces creates a multipolar linguistic political arena where each language competes to gain legitimacy in education policy.²⁴ Arabic language policy will have a color that continues to develop in accordance with the direction of power policy and the development of science.

This phenomenon reflects the theory of language ideology and identity proposed by Sithole & Maseko (2023), which states that linguistic identity is not scientific but rather the result of social and political construction. Arabic in Indonesia has become an ambivalent symbol, representing spirituality and Islamic tradition, which is associated with conservatism and

¹⁸ Hilman Latief, 'The Masyumi Networks and the Proliferation of Islamic Higher Education in Indonesia (1945–1965)', *Bijdragen Tot de Taal-, Land- En Volkenkunde / Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences of Southeast Asia*, 178.4 (2022), pp. 477–502, doi:10.1163/22134379-bja10043.

¹⁹ Dian Silvia Rozza, Tobroni Tobroni, and Moh. Nurhakim, 'ISLAMIC EDUCATION POLITICS: DYNAMIC AND RELEVANCE DUTCH ETHICAL POLITICS IN INDONESIA', *Research and Development Journal of Education*, 9.2 (2023), p. 772, doi:10.30998/rdje.v9i2.18592.

²⁰ Muhammad Fakhruddin Al-Razi, Abd. Madjid, and Ahmad Hadziq Madani Ilham Khalil, 'Reconstructing the Islamic Education Paradigm in Indonesia', *EDUKASI: Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan Agama Dan Keagamaan*, 22.2 (2024), pp. 294–310, doi:10.32729/edukasi.v22i2.1918.

²¹ Nadhif Muhammad Mumtaz, Evi Muafiah Alghani, and Doli Witro, 'Educational Policy Analysis: Examining Pesantren Policies and Their Implications on the

Independence of Kyai and Pesantren in the Contemporary Era', *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam*, 21.2 (2024), pp. 287–306, doi:10.14421/jpai.v21i2.9612.

²² Jean-François Dupré, 'Language Politics and Recognition under Tsai Ing-Wen', *International Journal of Taiwan Studies*, 5.2 (2022), pp. 224–48, doi:10.1163/24688800-05020002.

²³ Piping Rahadiano, Moh. Choirul Huda, and Muhammad Al Hadaad, 'Students' Instrumental and Integrative Motivation in Learning English as A Foreign Language in Indonesia', *Lingua-Liter.A: Journal of English Language Teaching Learning and Literature*, 5.1 (2022), pp. 1–11, doi:10.55933/lng.v5i1.252.

²⁴ Yasdin Yasdin and others, 'Policies and Politics Development of Vocational Education in Indonesia: A Historical Perspective', *Asian Education and Development Studies*, 12.4/5 (2023), pp. 297–309, doi:10.1108/AEDS-06-2023-0059.



intolerance.²⁵ This view raises the paradox that the more Arabic is associated with religious exclusivity, the less its potential as a universal and scientific language. Conversely, major powers use their languages as instruments of ideological and economic expansion. The United States, Russia, and China conduct language diplomacy through international education policies.²⁶ Countries in the Central Asian region, including Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, and Tajikistan, have experienced language policy conflicts and escalated into identity politics.²⁷ Specifically in China, there is a discontinuity in foreign language learning, namely the restriction of foreign languages by creating policies to maintain their languages.²⁸ This defensive stance is implemented based on political decisions to regulate the education system. There are goals to be achieved in an effort to keep up with social change while also maintaining government power.

Linguistic domination is part of cultural imperialism, which subjugates peripheral countries through the hegemony of discourse and education.²⁹ Their goal is to control all sectors of life, including natural resources, defense, economics, and politics. By dominating languages, these countries not only gain access to abundant natural resources but also influence political and economic policy. In this context, the weakening position of Arabic in Indonesia can be interpreted as a result of the state's inability to articulate a sovereign linguistic strategy.

Several studies have shown that this kind of linguistic hegemony has a direct impact on people's orientation in choosing a foreign language. Muslim communities in Southeast Asia tend to dichotomize religious and global languages, which results in Arabic being trapped in a liturgical role.³⁰ This phenomenon is reinforced by pragmatic, labor-market-oriented educational policies that provide little space for languages based on religious identity. Yet, the experience of countries like Egypt and the United Arab Emirates demonstrates that Arabic can function simultaneously as a language of religion, science, and diplomacy. Linguistic conflicts give rise to social movements, such as the Occitan movement in France, resulting in minoritization, linguistic alienation, and social domination. Using Paul Reed's theory, linguistic conflicts occur related to place and time, resulting in the dominance of certain languages.³¹ This conflict will then lead to the politicization of linguistics in the form of policies that prioritize one form of accommodation. Linguistic imperialism, which began with Western European colonialism, has persisted for a long time.³² This imperialism received a response from countries in the world who felt that their national languages were increasingly being marginalized by European languages.

Arabic language education in the education system has become an object of political power that can reach all aspects of citizens' lives, starting from the economy, defense, social, law, education, and so on (integration power).³³ The position of a

²⁵ Elhafiz Mohammed Ahmed Elwaly -, 'Exclusionary Religious Discourse and Islamophobia: Impact and Solutions', *International Journal For Multidisciplinary Research*, 5.4 (2023), doi:10.36948/ijfmr.2023.v05i04.5560.

²⁶ Tatiana N. Sharapova and Maria A. Fedorova, 'The Influence of Anglo-American Borrowings on the Current State of the French Language in French-Speaking Countries', *Current Issues in Philology and Pedagogical Linguistics*, 3, 2023, pp. 251–58, doi:10.29025/2079-6021-2023-3-251-258.

²⁷ Jacob M. Kellner-Heinkele, Barbara And Landau, *Language Politics in Contemporary Central Asia National and Ethnic Identity and the Soviet Legacy* (Newgen Publisher Chennai, 2022).

²⁸ Júlio Reis Jatobá, 'Geopolitics and Language Planning' (Atlantis Press SARL, 2023), pp. 177–89, doi:10.2991/978-2-38476-038-1_20.

²⁹ Samuel P. Huntington, *Benturan Peradaban, Masa Depan Politik Dunia*, ed. by M. Sadat Ismail (Qalam, 2004), p. 24.

³⁰ Ma Bin Male, 'The Impact of Language Policy on Private Arabic Schools (Gansu)', 56.01 (2023), pp. 172–80.

³¹ Tyler Kibbey, 'Root Rot: Linguistic Conflicts of Place and Agency', *American Speech: A Quarterly of Linguistic Usage*, 98.1 (2023), pp. 91–103, doi:10.1215/00031283-10579481.

³² Juanda Ellard, George Wright, Sue Tarrow, Sidney, Tilly, Charles, 'Environmental Issues In Indonesian Language Policy', *Journal of Literature and Art Studies*, 7.7 (2021), pp. 447–88, doi:10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199566020.003.0019.

³³ Тамара ШАРАПОВА and Сергій ПРИХОДЬКО, 'КОНЦЕПЦІЯ ПОЛІТИЧНОЇ ВЛАДИ В'ЯЧЕСЛАВА



language in a country is the result of the political decisions of the ruler, which then become policy.³⁴ Arabic language education policy influences the goals, processes, and outcomes of education.³⁵ Education policies also change the curriculum, thereby changing the position of Arabic.³⁶ Since the arrival of Arabic in Indonesia, during the Dutch colonial period, the independence period, and the reformation period, the position of Arabic has always changed.³⁷ Every dynamic that occurs influences the position of Arabic in the world of education.

Research on Arabic language politics has attracted significant academic attention recently, with its various findings. Nisa stated that beliefs about language in the Arabic language policy are not affirmative as a global language, both at the university and national levels.³⁸ Sella stated that the current language beliefs in education policy originate from the results of political decisions inherited from Western European colonialism, which persist and have had a destructive impact.³⁹ Hamid and Ali said that the authorities accommodated Arabic only to the extent that it fulfilled the language beliefs (Islamic spirituality) of the people.⁴⁰ Gautam believes that state beliefs tend to use Arabic as a political commodity to strengthen relations between Indonesia and Middle Eastern countries.⁴¹ Jane stated that the current language policy beliefs are conditioned by the following wild public, conditioned by the aim of

modernization.⁴² Jose emphasized that language policy in Indonesia has been caught in an ideological conflict between religion and the globalization of foreign languages.⁴³ The policy politics in the study of Arabic language beliefs can be seen as an effort to negotiate between religion, state, and society by considering foreign policy, even though there is no comprehensive policy to introduce Arabic outside the scope of religion.

This research will analyze (ideological) beliefs using a critical discourse analysis approach to national education policy. This research seeks to uncover how these beliefs work, are produced, and reproduced through policy texts. Law number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System and its derivatives, technically, the main data will be analyzed using Norman Fairclough's approach consisting of textual analysis, discursive practice, and social practice. Then, it will be discussed with Spolsky's Language Policy Framework to see how these language beliefs work. Examining these beliefs in national education policy, it will show a critical reflection on the direction of Arabic language education development in Indonesia. Arabic is not only a religious language, but also an academic and communicative language that is relevant in modern life. This research is expected to open up space for the formulation of a more inclusive and balanced language policy.

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³⁴ Mark Haugaard, 'Kleptocracy, Authoritarianism and Democracy as Ideal Types of Political Power', *Journal of Political Power*, 16.3 (2023), pp. 345–78, doi:10.1080/2158379X.2023.2194712.

³⁵ Golfetto, 'Arabic as a Language of Politics: A Case Study in Corpus-Based Teaching'.

³⁶ Beni Setiawan and Edi Suwandi, 'The Development of Indonesia National Curriculum and Its Changes: The Integrated Science Curriculum Development in Indonesia', *Journal of Innovation in Educational and Cultural Research*, 3.4 (2022), pp. 528–35, doi:10.46843/jiecr.v3i4.211.

³⁷ Erin Aprillia, Cut Nurhayati, and Anjani Putri Belawati Pandiangan, 'Perubahan Kurikulum Pada Proses Pembelajaran', *Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan Dan Sosial (JIPSI)*, 2023.

³⁸ Mauidlotun Nisa', 'Politik Pendidikan Bahasa Arab Di Perguruan Tinggi; Analisis Wacana Atas Program Studi Bahasa Arab UIN Jakarta Dan UI', *Disertasi*, 2018.

³⁹ Tomasz Kamusella, 'Global Language Politics: Eurasia versus the Rest', *Journal of Nationalism, Memory & Language Politics*, 14.2 (2020), pp. 117–51, doi:10.2478/jnmlp-2020-0008.

⁴⁰ M. Obaidul Hamid and Md Maksud Ali, 'Arabic as an Early Language Learning Provision in Bangladesh: Policy Perspectives', in *Language Policy (Netherlands)*, 2021, pp. 131–49, doi:10.1007/978-3-030-76251-3_6.

⁴¹ Bhim Lal Gautam, 'Language Politics in Nepal: A Socio-Historical Overview', *Journal of World Languages*, 7.2 (2022), pp. 355–74, doi:10.1515/jwl-2021-0010.

⁴² (Djennane, 2023)

⁴³ Brij Jose, 'Language and Identity Formations of Second-Generation Migrants in Deepak Unnikrishnan's Temporary People', in *Strategies for Cultural Assimilation of Immigrants and Their Children: Social, Economic, and Political Considerations*, 2023, pp. 69–85, doi:10.4018/978-1-6684-4839-7.ch004.

Findings and Discussion

Arabic Language Beliefs in the National Education System

Based on the facts of national education regulations starting from Law No. 20/2003 concerning the National Education System, Law No. 18/2019 concerning Islamic Boarding Schools, and PP 55/2007 concerning Religious Education, PP 57/2021 & PP 4/2022 (National Education Standards), KMA 183 & 184/2019 (Arabic Language & PAI Curriculum), PMA 4 & 5/2020 (Integration of the Independent Curriculum). In the construction of these regulations, the beliefs of the Arabic language through the causal flow of the domain supported by Pancasila as the state philosophy and the constitution (UD 1945), are formalized by legal instruments (Law 24/2009; Presidential Decree 63/2019; Law 20/2003; Law 18/2019; KMA 183/184/2019; KMA 347/2022) which are brought to life in educational and learning practices. Law 20/2003 emphasizes that religious education at all levels in the context of Islamic Religious Education (PAI), Arabic is treated as the source language for Islamic texts. PP 57/2021 (SNP) and PP 4/2022 (SNP) emphasize that Arabic follows curriculum changes. Permendikbudristek 12/2024 updates the curriculum to provide Arabic language enrichment. Law 18/2019 recognizes Arabic as an epistemic language and an authoritative learning ecosystem (Islamic education), namely the language of science and religion. Law No. 183 and 182/2019 changed the policy direction of Arabic as a communication tool (communication orientation). Law No. 34/2022 serves as the implementation guideline.

The regulations above explain the process of changing language beliefs in Arabic from a theological language to an epistemic-hermeneutic language and then to a communicative language. Initially, the state believed that Arabic was the language of Islam because it is the language of the

holy book, the Quran, as stated in the Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution, whose function is explained by its derivative regulations. Law 20/2003 and Law 24/2009 locked the domain of Arabic as a legal religious language. Government Regulation 57/2014, Minister of Education and Culture Regulation 42/2018, and Presidential Regulation 63/2019 regulate public space in the legitimate religious realm. Law 18/2019 clearly shows the bias towards Arabic as the language of scientific epistemology. KMA 183 and 184/2019 represent a shift in orientation from an epistemic-hermeneutic to an objective-communicative orientation. Strengthening through PP 57/2021 (SNP), PP 4/2022 (Changes to SNP), strengthened by KMA 347/2022 as an implementation guide, and closed by Permendikbudristek 12/2024 strengthens the direction of communicative competence achievement.



Figure 1. Dynamics of language beliefs

Between 2003 and 2024, three forms of language beliefs were identified in Arabic: theological beliefs, epistemic beliefs, and communicative beliefs. This belief structure aligns with the category of religious-based language ideology, as emphasized in the latest international policy on sacred languages in religious education.⁴⁴ Theological beliefs place Arabic as a language of revelation and a means of worship, making its existence not only communicative but also sacred. The belief that Arabic is the language of holiness is a powerful motivational driver, even among non-Arabs.⁴⁵ Epistemic beliefs affirm mastery of Arabic as an epistemological prerequisite for accessing classical and contemporary Islamic scientific

⁴⁴ Ibrar Bhatt, Othman Z Barnawi, and Rizwan Ahmad, 'Exploring a Sociolinguistics of Islam', *Applied Linguistics*, June, 2025, doi:10.1093/applin/amaf043.

⁴⁵ Anna Maria Ramezanzadeh, Robert Woore, and Lars Erik Malmberg, 'Imagining, Believing and Achieving in L2

Arabic: Motivational Self-Concepts and Language Outcomes in a Multiglossic Context', *System*, 135, September (2025), p. 103866, doi:10.1016/j.system.2025.103866.

literature authentically and unmediatedly, because not all of it can be translated.⁴⁶ Beliefs, which signify religious and cultural affiliation, are often characterized as affirmative identities, not merely communication. These three forms of belief apply only to the realm of religious education under the Ministry of Religious Affairs, which includes madrasas, Islamic boarding schools, and Islamic religious universities. This demonstrates that Arabic exists not merely as a formal subject but as a linguistic ideology that transcends and permeates the nation's cultural, spiritual, and intellectual realms.

Theological Beliefs

Theological beliefs about Arabic in Indonesia do not simply float in the cultural sphere, but are supported by a multi-layered network of norms, from state ideology to more detailed technical policies. Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution are the constitutional framework of the state and nation, recognizing the One Almighty God and guaranteeing freedom to embrace religion and practice worship⁴⁷. This foundation provides a value horizon for the presence of Arabic as a language of revelation and worship in the public sphere of education.⁴⁸ The constitutional framework is operationalized by Law No. 24 of 2009 concerning the Flag, Language, and National Emblem, as well as the National Anthem. This is where the domain arrangement emerges clearly, namely that Indonesian is the state language and Arabic is recognized for its use in certain functions.

The norm in this case does not isolate Arabic directly but creates limitations in specific domains. Direct derivatives strengthen the arrangement in Government Regulation No. 57 of 2014 concerning the Development, Fostering, and Protection of Language and Literature, Minister of

Education and Culture Regulation No. 42 of 2018 concerning National Policy on Language and Literature, and Presidential Regulation No. 63 of 2019 concerning the Use of Indonesian. All three specify the mandate to prioritize Indonesian in official domains and open academic and cultural space for other languages. Language beliefs, Arabic as a sacred text, Islamic knowledge, and worship practices are given formal legal space for operation.⁴⁹ Arabic is taught, its corpus is developed, and it is used in the domain of religious knowledge.

In the realm of education, Law No. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System serves as the constitutional backbone of education. This education law functions as a formulation that automatically legitimizes the source language of Islam. Government Regulation No. 19/2005, as a national standard, updates the state of Arabic in education from time to time, including standards for content, process, and assessment. Within this framework, Arabic is included as a subject or specific competency according to the character of the educational unit and pathway, as long as it does not conflict with the mandate to prioritize Indonesian as the primary language in education. From all the language policies explained above, it shows that the theoretical consequences that emerge within the sociolinguistic framework of the policy are the regime of domain, epistemic theology, and dual authoritative hybrid. The regime of the domain is the mainstreaming of the use of Indonesian without eliminating Arabic in domains of worship, Islamic studies, and religious academic practice to maintain a cohesive public space. Epistemic theology within the scope of Islamic religious education shifts the cultural space into a formal academic space toward a meaningful competency that aligns Arabic as the language of

⁴⁶ Baleid Taha Shamsan and others, 'Literary Translation Quality Assessment of The Midnight Library', *Journal of Social Studies*, 31.2 (2025), pp. 47–68, doi:10.20428/jss.v31i2.2706.

⁴⁷ Apri Wardana Ritonga and others, 'Scientometrics of Language Policy in Sustaining Arabic Learning in Indonesia', *Lisanan Arabiya: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Arab*, 9.1 (2025), pp. 73–91, doi:10.32699/liar.v9i1.8954.

⁴⁸ Yasmadi Yasmadi and others, 'Insights from a State Islamic University on Arabic Education as a Catalyst for Religious Moderation in Indonesia', *International Journal of Language Education*, 8.3 (2024), pp. 533–49, doi:10.26858/ijole.v8i3.66496.

⁴⁹ Ibnu Fitrianto, 'Innovation and Technology in Arabic Language Learning in Indonesia', 2.3 (2024), pp. 134–50, doi:https://doi.org/10.59944/postaxial.v2i3.375.



revelation and the language of knowledge. Furthermore, the dual authoritative hybrid is the hesitation in the direction of Arabic to follow the very strict Islamic boarding school scientific tradition with classical values, or to follow global modernity.

Faith as a cognitive-normative structure is not merely a feeling that accompanies learning Arabic, but rather an epistemic foundation that regulates what is considered worthy of learning and for what purpose. Belief in the sacredness of revealed language forms a distinctive motivational orientation and is not merely a worldly instrument but also an integrative element in religious experience. Faith is fundamental to learning Arabic because it is considered highly beneficial and provides a powerful driving force.⁵⁰ A deep understanding of Islam cannot be achieved without a good command of Arabic because translations often fail to capture the full meaning and context of the original.⁵¹ This belief is the dominant foundation, creating motivation to learn and master it. Motivation to learn Arabic stems from two sources: Islamic identity and the learning environment, which fears communication delays due to lack of mastery⁵². Culture is also a driving factor in learning Arabic because knowing the culture will bring us closer to the sacredness of religion.⁵³ The belief in Arabic language not only comes from within oneself to learn it but also from external factors such as regulations and other things.

From a language policy and ideology perspective, Indonesian legal provisions demonstrate a strong affiliation between national education regulations and the position of Arabic as

a theological instrument. Law No. 20/2003 concerning the National Education System explicitly states that the goal of national education is to produce individuals who are faithful, pious, and have noble morals. Within this framework, Arabic, as the language of the Quran and religious texts, is not merely a subject but also an ideological medium for shaping religious subjects aligned with the mission of education.⁵⁴

Epistemic-Hermeneutic Beliefs

Law No. 18/2019 concerning Islamic Boarding Schools (Pesantren) embodies epistemic-hermeneutic beliefs because it recognizes the traditions and uniqueness of Islamic boarding schools, particularly the study of yellow books or Islamic studies. Arabic is not considered merely a subject, but a sacred medium for drawing closer to Allah SWT through understanding Islamic religious texts. Epistemic-hermeneutic beliefs hold that Arabic is a key language for unlocking the intellectual riches of past Islamic civilization, including works in philosophy, science, and literature. Proficiency in Arabic distinguishes a Muslim intellectual from others and confers scholarly authority in the academic field. Epistemic beliefs align with theological beliefs in the academic field, where studying Arabic teaches not only grammar but also methods of interpretation and in-depth understanding of texts, especially at the Islamic boarding school and Islamic universities. This autonomy, along with the recognition and equality of graduates with those in general educational institutions, is not consistently present in the workplace and social settings.⁵⁵ Islamic boarding schools are recognized as

⁵⁰ Ramezanzadeh, Woore, and Malmberg, 'Imagining, Believing and Achieving in L2 Arabic: Motivational Self-Concepts and Language Outcomes in a Multiglossic Context'.

⁵¹ Shamsan and others, 'Literary Translation Quality Assessment of The Midnight Library'.

⁵² Danya Shaalan, 'Measuring Future Selves in Second Language Learning Motivation in Collectivist Cultures: Case Study From Saudi Arabia', *SAGE Open*, 14.4 (2024), pp. 1–14, doi:10.1177/21582440241295489.

⁵³ Danya A. Shaalan, Badriyya B. Al-onazi, and Alya K. Alshammari, 'Instrument to Measure Identity Motivation in

Arabic Second-Language Learners', *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 13.5 (2023), pp. 1105–14, doi:10.17507/tpls.1305.03.

⁵⁴ Shanshan Ma, 'The Religiousness of Cultivation in the Zhuangzi: "The Unity of Self" of Zuowang 坐忘', *Religions*, 14.5 (2023), p. 612, doi:10.3390/rel14050612.

⁵⁵ Iktafi Muzayana, 'Systematic Literature Review on the Implementation of the Pesantren Muadalah Certificate Policy in Indonesia', *Kharisma: Jurnal Administrasi Dan Manajemen Pendidikan*, 3.2 (2024), pp. 112–25, doi:10.59373/kharisma.v3i2.51.



educational institutions with authority and legal standing within the education system, meaning they are on par with other educational institutions. The claim that Arabic is solely the language of revelation is no longer merely cultural, as it is backed by legal authority for sustainability.

Law No. 18/2019 is related to Law No. 20/2003 concerning the National Education System by recognizing that Islamic boarding schools have a contribution to the formation of national character and morals, as well as recognizing that Islamic boarding school diplomas are equivalent to formal education diplomas. These diplomas can be used to obtain employment and continue education at a higher level. The state recognizes the *Turas* book as the main source of Islamic knowledge written in Arabic. Arabic is an epistemic tool (*miftahul ulum*) to access authoritative religious truth. Although Arabic is not directly mentioned in the regulation, its position is implicitly recognized as an epistemic tool for deepening religious teachings in accordance with the national education goal of forming a faithful and pious character⁵⁶. This law legitimizes a curriculum based on religious texts. *Bayani* epistemology functions through Arabic to seek truth through the interpretation of texts (*nas*) using Arabic language knowledge (*Nahwu, Shorof, Balaghah*). Islamic religious texts in Islamic boarding schools integrate the spiritual and the intellectual (theocentric), meaning that knowledge is seen as a means of drawing closer to Allah SWT, so that noble moral values are indicators of epistemic success that are equal to intellectual intelligence.

Law No. 18/2019 marks a new chapter in the history of education in Indonesia, eliminating the dichotomy between general and religious education that had previously overshadowed Law No. 20/2003. The integration of the two strengthens the epistemic function of Arabic, creating a unique Indonesian educational identity. National education is not only oriented towards

the job market (link and match), but is rooted in a deep intellectual tradition. From an ideological perspective, it shows that a language is often embedded in regulations indirectly, namely, ideological and normative assumptions regarding the value of the language. Arabic becomes a bridge that connects past spirituality with current legal formalities, namely ensuring that Islamic boarding school graduates are individuals who are legally recognized by the state and scientifically recognized by tradition.

Communicative Beliefs

Law 20/2003 states that education serves to shape the character and civilization of a dignified nation. For Muslims, Arabic forms their identity, and learning it helps connect them to the rich cultural heritage and civilization of Islam. Madrasahs, as part of the national education system, demonstrate the state's recognition of religious identity-based education, in which Arabic plays a central role. Government Regulations 57/2021 and 4/2022 demonstrate the government's recognition of the religious identity that characterizes Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*). The curriculum established through KMA 183 and 184/2019 prioritizes Arabic as a religious language, but also emphasizes the development of communicative competence, reflecting efforts to make Arabic more functional. Intensive technology adoption has begun in Arabic language learning, using learning applications on various online and multimedia platforms. Understanding classical texts is aided by digital tools that facilitate the process of understanding the content of classical Arabic texts. The dynamics of educational beliefs regarding Arabic and its position in state laws and regulations are dominated by theological beliefs. The transformation of theological beliefs into hermeneutic epistemics in the process of Arabic language mastery in educational institutions today represents a real advancement. A shift in beliefs has

⁵⁶ Mohamad Yusuf Ahmad Hasyim and others, 'Fostering Students' Religious Character Through Arabic Language Teaching and Learning in University', *Arabi:*

Journal of Arabic Studies, 10.1 (2025), pp. 1–13, doi:10.24865/ajas.v10i1.930.



subsequently occurred, making Arabic an international language with communicative and cultural characteristics. The more intensive use of electronic media has transformed the educational practices of Islamic boarding schools, which initially focused on reading and interpreting texts, now involve digital sources.⁵⁷ The curriculum aspect is also the same, changes to the curriculum with an orientation towards the function of language as a means of communication in the community are not limited to the scope of Islamic education but as a language of international communication.

Arabic language teaching in various countries demonstrates the close relationship between Arabic and religion. Indonesia and several countries in Asia demonstrate that Arabic is a sacred language in the Islamic religious sphere. This contrasts with European countries and countries with advanced economies such as China and South Korea, where Arabic is studied with a pragmatic orientation for diplomatic and economic purposes. The gap between Arabic language proficiency and belief is caused by many Muslims who are able to speak Arabic but do not utilize it in their daily lives. The belief gap regarding Arabic in Indonesia is complex and multidimensional. Although regulations have shifted the position of Arabic from traditional to modern, this does not guarantee its practical implementation. Rapid technological developments also do not guarantee that Arabic can compete with other dominant foreign languages.

If we look closely, the network of regulations above is like a normative pyramid, then Pancasila, the 1945 Constitution is the constitutional ethical basis, Law 24/2009 locks the priority of Indonesian in the state system, Permendikbud 42/2018, Perpres 63/2019 regulates public space,

Law 20/2003 completes the National Education Standards (SNP) regulates the national education architecture, Law No. 18/2019 as the epistemic autonomy of Islamic Boarding Schools, while KMA 183,184/2019, PMA 4-5 2021, PMA 12/2024 become operational tools that channel beliefs into the curriculum. Permendikbudristek No. 12/2024 then strengthens the relationship between the national curriculum and the madrasa curriculum with the principle of flexibility and recognition of foreign language enrichment. The conclusion is that there is an elegant compromise between linguistic nationalism and religious linguistics, where Indonesian remains the state language and the main medium of education, while Arabic obtains a recognized and protected domain of religious knowledge.

This regulation ensures continuity between primary and secondary education levels and opens up opportunities for strengthening Arabic as a strategic elective integrated into the national curriculum. In practice, Arabic is a language used as a tool to demonstrate religious moderation⁵⁸. Arabic language learning has become a catalyst for strengthening religious moderation and fostering global awareness, demonstrating the communicative and social functions of Arabic beyond the context of worship. Empirical evidence demonstrates that Arabic language education is now present and directed toward mastering hermeneutic communicative competence, namely the ability to use Arabic for critical thinking, cross-cultural dialogue, and contextual interpretation of religious texts⁵⁹. Arabic language learning has become a catalyst for strengthening religious moderation and fostering global awareness, demonstrating the communicative and social functions of Arabic beyond the context of worship. Empirical evidence demonstrates that

⁵⁷ Zilal Meccawy and Najwan Sebai, 'Third Language Learning: Insights from MA Students Through the L2 Motivational Self-System & Attribution Theory Lenses', *Journal of Education and Learning*, 14.2 (2024), p. 282, doi:10.5539/jel.v14n2p282.

⁵⁸ Yasmadi and others, 'Insights from a State Islamic University on Arabic Education as a Catalyst for Religious Moderation in Indonesia'.

⁵⁹ Ilyas Ilyas, Muh. Rasmi, and Muhammad Rusydi, 'Improving Modern Pondok Students' Arabic Language Skills in Indonesia: Language Institutions as Language Improvement Central', *AL-ISHLAH: Jurnal Pendidikan*, 16.2 (2024), pp. 1303–13, doi:10.35445/alishlah.v16i2.5095.

Arabic language education is now present and directed toward mastering hermeneutic communicative competence, namely the ability to use Arabic for critical thinking, cross-cultural dialogue, and contextual interpretation of religious texts.⁶⁰ Indonesia's language regulation system creates an elegant compromise between linguistic nationalism and scholarly pluralism. Indonesian remains the national language and a tool for national unity, while Arabic enjoys a recognized, protected, and legally affiliated religious scholarly domain. This policy is not merely linguistic tolerance, but a cultural and academic strategy that maintains the integration of national values while simultaneously opening access to Islamic intellectual heritage.⁶¹ This legal framework enables the transformation of religious education from merely transferring dogma to strengthening interpretive and scientific competencies based on Arabic.⁶²

Dynamics of Arabic Language Beliefs

Arabic existed in Indonesia long before independence, coinciding with the arrival of Islam. Arabic literacy did not emerge later, but rather became an essential part of the Islamic educational tradition.⁶³ Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution as the ideological basis that provides a philosophical framework for the entire system of state life.⁶⁴ The first principle provides theological legitimacy that Arabic literacy is part of religious practice, based on revelation. The third principle and Article 36 of the 1945 Constitution establish Indonesian as the national language, the language of administration, education, and public communication. Article 29

guarantees freedom of religion, thus opening up space for the use of Arabic in Islamic education, rituals, and religious instruction.

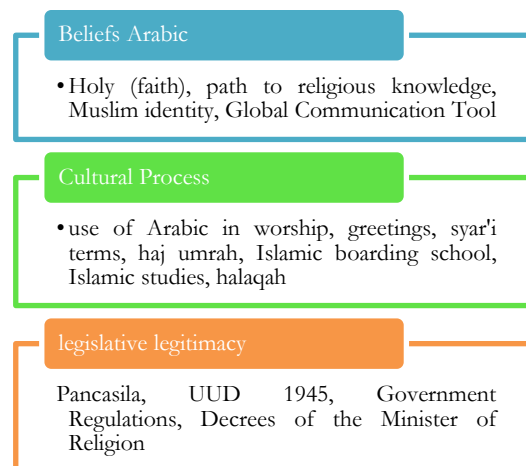


Figure. 2. Internalisasi *beliefs* bahasa Arab di Indonesia

The long-standing dynamics of Arabic language beliefs, reflected in national regulations based on Pancasila, laws, government regulations, presidential decrees, and other provisions, have been present since Indonesian independence. Language beliefs in Indonesia have a dual system: Indonesian is recognized as the national language, Arabic as a religious (foreign) language, and English as an international language of science. Arabic is defined within a dual framework of religious and foreign languages.⁶⁵ Apart from the Islamic religion, Arabic is considered a sacred and holy language because it is the language of the holy book, rather than being considered a foreign language.⁶⁶ This view will strengthen the identity of the Muslim community and become a special argument in the realm of religion in the linguistic system.⁶⁷ The interaction of language policy and

⁶⁰ Vacharee Dedduang and Nur Kholis, 'A Comparative Study of Arabic Language Education in Indonesia, Thailand, China, and South Korea', *International Journal of Social Science Research and Review*, 8.7 (2025), pp. 133–43, doi:10.47814/ijssr.v8i7.2736.

⁶¹ Achmad Baidowi Alwi, 'Perubahan Substansi Kurikulum Bahasa Arab Berdasarkan KMA Nomor 347 Tahun 2022', *Journal of Education Research*, 4.4 (2023), pp. 1753–60, doi:10.37985/jer.v4i4.204.

⁶² Muzayana, 'Systematic Literature Review on the Implementation of the Pesantren Muadalah Certificate Policy in Indonesia'.

⁶³ Nur Laila Azizah and others, 'Development of Arabic Language Learning in Indonesia at 19th – 21st Century',

Jurnal Al Bayan: Jurnal Jurusan Pendidikan Bahasa Arab, 16.1 (2024), p. 219, doi:10.24042/albayan.v16i1.22767.

⁶⁴ Daniel Dagur and others, 'Sila Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa Sebagai Landasan Eksistensi Ahmadiyah Di Indonesia', *Pancasila*, 2.2 (2021), pp. 1–20.

⁶⁵ Ritonga and others, 'Scientometrics of Language Policy in Sustaining Arabic Learning in Indonesia'.

⁶⁶ Fatwa Arifah and others, *Is Arabic a Sacred Language or a Foreign Language?* (Atlantis Press International BV, 2024), doi:10.2991/978-94-6463-376-4_21.

⁶⁷ Agnia Ilma and Zuliati Rohmah, 'Balancing Faith and Identity: Language Policies and Practices in Indonesian Muslim Families', *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural*



users of Indonesian, Arabic, and other foreign languages is the dynamic of language beliefs among Indonesians. Language beliefs are beliefs about language that should be used, studied, and preserved. Belief in a language is the result of cognitive, policy, and social constructs that are interrelated and influence each other.⁶⁸ From all the social components consisting of the government as policy makers, ministries as implementers, and society as objects, a holistic view of the Indonesian language is formed, and the position of Arabic as a foreign language is determined.⁶⁹ The purpose of regulation is to accommodate, even though not everything can be seen as being regulated, because the state, as the maker of regulations, has goals and ideals that are conditioned through regulations.

Indonesian demonstrates absolute identity as the official and unifying language of the Indonesian nation. This very clear affirmative statement affirms the highest status of the Indonesian. Regional languages and Arabic as foreign languages are not implicitly mentioned, thus placing them at a lower level than or below Indonesian. This very short, concise, and straightforward sentence reflects the nature of the constitution, which demonstrates the highest legal basis and contains fundamental principles. Article 36 is declarative and normative in nature, not providing arguments for the establishment of Indonesian as an official language. Constitutional facts reflect its role as a source of law. Arabic, as a foreign language, must conform to this norm as a language that does not have state status. Strengthening Indonesian as the primary means of communication and a symbol of national unity. Every citizen must have a solid command of Indonesian and use it as a national identity. Language, as one of the main pillars of unity amidst regional diversity, can consolidate national identity post-independence and overcome ethnic fragmentation. Language becomes a tool of

the state to project power, so determining and regulating its use is a way to ensure that the state has control over public narratives and communication. As the unifying language, Indonesian reflects national identity and serves as a unifying tool for the Indonesian nation, with a long history. Malay, as a lingua franca, was initially used widely in the archipelago for trade and inter-ethnic communication since the 7th century. Malay's simple structure makes it easily accepted by various ethnic groups, while regional languages can be complex for other ethnic groups.

The Youth Pledge on October 28, 1928, became a significant event in establishing Indonesian as the language of unity. This decision was a crucial political step to break away from colonial languages and build a national identity. Previously, in 1926, M. Tabrani had introduced the term Indonesian. The Youth Pledge in the third point "We, the sons and daughters of Indonesia, uphold the language of unity, Indonesian." Since then, the spirit of grounding Indonesian has continued to burn to use and develop it. In 1936, the Indonesian Language Congress was held as one of the concrete pieces of evidence of efforts to standardize and develop Indonesian. After the proclamation of independence of the Republic of Indonesia on August 17, 1945, Indonesian became stronger by being designated as the national language in Article 36 of the 1945 Constitution. The implications of this law were used in various areas of national and state life, from government administration, education, to the mass media. Indonesian, as a unifying language, reflects the spirit of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (Unity in Diversity), without marginalizing regional languages, as they represent the nation's cultural richness and coexist and enrich each other. In this context, the 1945 Constitution recognizes a language other than Indonesian as a valuable asset of Indonesia. The

Development, 47.1 (2026), pp. 549–64, doi:10.1080/01434632.2024.2396996.

⁶⁸ Gatut Susanto and others, 'Indonesian Language Policy and Perspectives on Its Implementation in Promoting Bahasa Indonesia as an International Language', *Cogent Arts*

Humanities, 11.1 (2024), doi:10.1080/23311983.2024.2364511.

⁶⁹ Putu Gede Angga Mahaputra Permana and Zuliati Rohmah, 'Contemporary Translingual English Language Policy and Practice in Indonesia', *Cogent Education*, 11.1 (2024), doi:10.1080/2331186X.2024.2404059.



presence of Arabic as a language reflects the Indonesian national identity, with its own unique practices.

Linguistic sovereignty is stated in Article 36, which demonstrates the state's power to define official languages, which is the essence of national sovereignty. Legal legitimacy in language policy prioritizes Indonesian and regulates the use of regional and foreign languages. Nationalism is a fundamental ideology for uniting various ethnicities, nations, and social cohesion across diversity. Arabic, as a foreign language, must submit to the position of Indonesian, while limiting the dominance of foreign languages in the public domain to eliminate and limit the colonial languages that cloned Indonesia. Indonesia is a country very rich in regional languages, complete with its literature. This wealth is certainly a source of pride and also a reason to protect it. Ethnologue states that there are 726 languages in Indonesia.⁷⁰ Among these languages, some still exist today, while others have become extinct. Indonesian plays a significant role in uniting speakers of regional languages in Indonesia. The growth and development of Indonesian, as a unifying language among various regional languages, has ensured that Indonesian has become a language used in various fields of communication, including politics, social studies, economics, and science.⁷¹ Economically, Indonesian ranks second only to foreign languages, and second only to regional languages. This means that speaking Indonesian provides greater job opportunities than those who only speak regional languages, and even greater opportunities for those who master a foreign language.⁷² The use of Indonesian in various areas of life can cause the extinction of regional languages.

Geopolitical and technological developments have caused Indonesian language activists to worry about the extinction of the Indonesian language due to its decline in foreign languages. Indonesia, as a member of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) and the G20, is the fourth most populous country in the world.⁷³ Indonesia's position on the international stage has provided an opportunity for the Indonesian language to be recognized by the global community due to the needs of trade as a target market. Businesses, industries, and various countries need Indonesia and its language.⁷⁴ Politically, Indonesian is disadvantaged because English has become a political language in international relations. Strengthening political positions actually changes a language's position on the global stage. Belief in language policy refers to the consensus of a speech community on the values associated with language, its varieties, and its function. The community in this study is a state that provides education and regulates all forms of citizen activity within it. The state, in this case, has the power to determine the direction of language mastery and encourages technical study in educational institutions. Arabic, as the language of Muslims, should be considered essential for understanding their religious teachings. Indonesia, the country with the largest Muslim population in the world, is the reason why Arabic is a language that must be learned by Muslims, regardless of educational institution.

Conclusion

Arabic language education policy in Indonesia reflects the dynamics of the country's ideology (beliefs), political, economic, and cultural interests. The choice and prioritization of languages in education reflect the country's narrative of progress, identity, and civilization. The dominance

⁷⁰ U Dahromi, 'Teknologi Dan Pelestarian Bahasa Daerah', *Sinar Bahtera*, 2022.

⁷¹ Sukatmo, 'Penggunaan Bahasa Indonesia Di Kalangan Generasi Milenial', *Inspirasi Dunia: Jurnal Riset Pendidikan Dan Bahasa*, 1.4 (2022), pp. 62–69, doi:10.58192/insdun.v1i4.224.

⁷² Dwi Purwanto and Fila Fila, 'Fungsi Strategis Bahasa Dalam Kegiatan Ekonomi: Sebuah Kajian Linguistik

Lanskap Iklan Restoran Di Kota Pontianak', *LITERATUS*, 2.2 (2020), pp. 123–32, doi:10.37010/lit.v2i2.82.

⁷³ Fauzan Tri Nugroho, 'Tujuan Dan Fungsi Wawasan Nusantara Bagi Bangsa Indonesia Yang Perlu Diketahui', *Bola.Com*, 2021.

⁷⁴ Eka Dewi Rahmawati, 'Pengembangan Buku Ajar Bahasa Arab Komunikatif Untuk Mahasiswa Program Studi Ekonomi Syariah', *Maharaat: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Arab*, 2021, doi:10.18196/mht.v3i1.11352.

of English as a global language often positions it as an indicator of progress, while Arabic faces challenges in maintaining its relevance in the context of modern education. Language policy in national education is an expression of the politics of knowledge that determines which languages are deemed relevant and valuable. This expression reflects beliefs in a particular language, thus granting it greater space.

The Arabic language beliefs in national education policy in Indonesia encompass three beliefs: theological beliefs, epistemic beliefs, and communicative beliefs. Theological beliefs refer to the belief that Arabic is the sacred language of Islam and is used in routine religious activities such as prayer and supplication, as well as in the daily language of Islam. These beliefs are evident in the country's constitutional foundations, namely Pancasila, the 1945 Constitution, and Law No. 20/2003 concerning the National Education System. Epistemological-hermeneutic beliefs authorize Islamic boarding schools (Pesantren) as educational institutions equivalent to those in Indonesia, which utilize Arabic as a language for understanding religious texts. The legitimacy of Arabic in Islamic boarding schools is enshrined in Law No. 18/2019 concerning Islamic Boarding Schools. Furthermore, language communicative beliefs consider Arabic to be the language of communication in international relations. This is evident in KMA No. 183 and 184 of 2019, which state that Arabic language learning is aimed at communicative competence.

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Declarations

Author Contribution Statement

Irsal Amin contributed to the conceptualization and design of the study, the theoretical framework, data collection, analysis, and interpretation, as well as drafting the manuscript. Martin Kustati contributed to the direction of this research in the field of manuscript criticism, particularly

in the theory and analysis sections. Rahmawati contributed to the content criticism and analysis, resulting in a high-quality paper.

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Data Availability Statement

The research data generated in this study are not publicly available due to confidentiality and institutional sensitivity. The data collected consists of state documents, including cross-ministerial regulations related to Arabic language policy in Indonesia.

Declaration of Interests Statement

All authors declare that they have no known competing financial or non-financial interests that could have appeared to influence the work contained in this paper.

AI Use Statement

During the writing of this paper, the authors used ChatGPT 5.2 and Grammarly to improve writing clarity, visual design, and language editing. After using these tools, the authors carefully reviewed and edited the content as needed and take full responsibility for the accuracy and appropriateness of the published article.

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