

Arabic Islamic Literature as Textual Civilization: A Document-Based Content Analysis of Meaning Transmission in Non Arab Cultural Spaces

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ABSTRACT

Purpose of the study: This study re-reads Arabic in non-Arab contexts not as a foreign-language skill alone but as a field of textual civilization, and maps how its meaning, adab, and worldview are transmitted into non-Arab cultural spaces through identifiable channels of translation, commentary, scholarly networks, and classical texts. **Methodology:** A document-based qualitative design with directed (deductive-inductive) qualitative content analysis was applied. A purposive corpus of forty-one scholarly documents (peer-reviewed articles, monographs, and reference works, 2001-2024) was selected against explicit inclusion criteria and coded with a four-point category matrix. Trustworthiness was addressed through an audit trail, constant comparison, peer debriefing, and reflexivity. **Main Findings:** Five themes emerged: Arabic as a carrier of epistemic authority in revelation and translation; literature and balaghah as the formation of adab; sanad, ijazah, and ulama networks as channels of authority; manuscripts, paratexts, and kitab kuning as the material life of meaning; and the modern risk of reducing Arabic to instrumental function. Together they describe one architecture of inherited meaning. **Novelty/Originality of this study:** The study bridges two literatures usually kept apart, the pedagogy of Arabic as a foreign language and the historical study of Arabic-Islamic textual culture, through a single lens of inherited meaning. It contributes a paradigm of inherited meaning for Arabic language education, arguing that curricula in non-Arab contexts should connect competence with adab, literature, tafsir, and textual heritage.



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A. Introduction

In non-Arab cultural spaces, Arabic usually enters the learning experience through grammatical rules, vocabulary (*mufradat*), translation, and communicative exercises. This pathway is necessary, yet it is not sufficient for grasping the position of Arabic within the Arabic-Islamic horizon. Historically, Arabic developed as the medium of revelation, adab, literature, knowledge, and the formation of an Islamic worldview, carrying layers of textual memory and orders of meaning that exceed the instrumental function of language (Saeed, 2008; Ricci, 2011). Reading Arabic only as a foreign-language skill therefore leaves an important part of its civilizational role unexamined.

The stakes of this omission are not merely theoretical. In Islamic education across Southeast Asia, Africa, and Central Asia, Arabic is the gateway to scripture, law, ethics, and a vast library of classical scholarship. When the language is framed exclusively as a communicative skill, learners may acquire fluency while remaining unable to enter the texts that the language was historically designed to carry. The question of how meaning travels, and what is lost or preserved in transit, is therefore an educational question as much as a historical one.

A tension emerges when this inheritance of textual civilization encounters modern learning systems that divide Arabic into grammar, *mufradat*, and communicative competence. On one side, Arabic is studied as a language requiring technical mastery; on the other, it is revered as the language of revelation and tradition. From the meeting of these two horizons arises the problem of meaning transmission: how the meaning, adab, and worldview embedded in Arabic-Islamic texts are inherited, preserved, and negotiated when they move into societies that did not grow from an Arab ecology.

The existing literature on Arabic in non-Arab spaces has concentrated largely on language acquisition, teaching methods, learner motivation, communicative competence, and the use of technology. Recent bibliometric and systematic mappings confirm that Indonesia and Malaysia dominate research output and that the field is overwhelmingly oriented toward pedagogy and skills rather than textual heritage (Almelhes, 2024; Albantani & Madkur, 2019). This orientation is valuable and has produced important advances in methods and materials, but it tends to treat Arabic as an object of competence and to leave its civilizational dimension to other disciplines.

In a separate trajectory, studies of Arabic-Islamic literature, adab, and manuscript culture portray the tradition as a network of texts, commentaries, and scholarly authority (Holmberg, 2006; Peacock, 2024). This scholarship is rich, but it rarely speaks to the classroom, and it seldom asks what its findings imply for how Arabic ought to be taught. The two conversations, the pedagogical and the textual-historical, run in parallel and rarely meet.

The cost of keeping them apart is borne by learners and teachers. A learner who masters communicative Arabic but cannot read a page of commentary has acquired a skill detached from the tradition that gave the language its depth; a teacher trained only in methods may lack the resources to open that tradition. Bridging the two literatures is therefore not an academic nicety but a response to a practical problem in Islamic education, and it is the problem this study addresses.

This distance reveals an unresolved conceptual gap. Arabic is often mapped as a matter of ability, while Arabic-Islamic literature is placed within aesthetics or literary history, as if detached from the experience of non-Arab societies (Fathurahman, 2013; Gallop, 2017). Yet non-Arab cultural spaces are precisely fields of reception, adaptation, negotiation, and simplification of Arabic-Islamic meaning, in which manuscripts, paratexts, and reading traditions preserve social traces crucial for understanding the life of texts (van der Putten, 2017; Ricci, 2011).

Against this background, the present study positions Arabic-Islamic literature as a system of textual civilization that carries meaning, adab, worldview, and Islamic structures of knowledge into non-Arab cultural spaces. It treats Arabic not merely as an aesthetic object or an artifact of literary history, but as a field in which language, revelation, knowledge, and human sensibility shape one another and are inherited through identifiable channels such as translation, commentary, *sanad*, manuscripts, and classical texts.

The novelty of this study lies in bridging two literatures that are usually kept apart, the pedagogy of Arabic as a foreign language and the historical study of Arabic-Islamic textual culture, by reading them through a single analytical lens of inherited meaning. Where prior syntheses describe ulama networks (Azra, 2004), the Arabic cosmopolis (Ricci, 2011), or manuscript culture (Fathurahman, 2013) on their own terms, this study asks what these findings jointly imply for how Arabic should be understood and taught in non-Arab contexts.

Accordingly, the study is guided by three research questions: (RQ1) How is Arabic-Islamic literature constituted as a system of textual civilization? (RQ2) Through which channels are meaning, adab, and worldview transmitted within the literary and scholarly tradition? (RQ3) What are the dialectics of Arabic-Islamic textual inheritance when it enters non-Arab cultural spaces, and what do these dialectics imply for Arabic language education?

The objective is to develop, from documentary evidence, a paradigm of inherited meaning capable of reorienting Arabic education beyond the mastery of form. The remainder of the article is organized as follows: the next section establishes the literature review and theoretical framework; the method section details the corpus, coding, and trustworthiness procedures; the results section presents five themes with supporting evidence; and the discussion answers the research questions, states the study's contribution and limitations, and develops the educational implications.

Arabic as a foreign language in non-Arab contexts

A large body of work examines Arabic as a foreign or second language outside the Arab world. Systematic and comparative studies show that research is concentrated in Muslim-majority countries, especially Indonesia and Malaysia, and that it privileges methods, motivation, materials, and, increasingly, educational technology (Almelhes, 2024). Work on Arabic in the era of rapid technological change similarly foregrounds opportunities and challenges for classrooms and institutions (Albantani & Madkur, 2019). This literature is methodologically sophisticated and practically useful, yet its center of gravity is competence: what learners can do with the language, rather than what the language carries.

The consequence is a tendency to treat Arabic as detachable from its textual tradition. When the measure of success is communicative performance, the literary, exegetical, and ethical layers of Arabic can appear as advanced extras rather than as constitutive of the language. The present study takes this gap as its point of departure.

Arabic-Islamic literature, adab, and textual civilization

A second body of work treats Arabic-Islamic literature as a domain in which aesthetic, ethical, and religious purposes are inseparable. The concept of adab, in particular, denotes both literary form and a way of cultivating character, so that literature functions as moral and intellectual formation rather than ornament (Holmberg, 2006). Studies of Arabic literary culture in Southeast Asia show that this tradition was embedded in patronage, Sufism, and scholarly exchange, circulating as a living culture rather than as imported decoration (Peacock, 2024).

From this scholarship the study draws its central theoretical construct: textual civilization. On this view, Islam can be read as a civilization organized around text, commentary, and the production of meaning, in which Arabic is not only a code but the medium through which revelation, knowledge, and sensibility are transmitted (Saeed, 2008). Textual civilization names the condition in which a language and its texts function as the connective tissue of a tradition across time and space.

Transmission, networks, and the material life of texts

A third body of work explains how Islamic knowledge moved into and within non-Arab spaces. The classic study of Malay-Indonesian and Middle Eastern ulama networks shows that chains of transmission (*sanad*), authorization to teach (*ijazah*), and classical works connected the Nusantara to international centers of learning (Azra, 2004). Studies of Qur'an translation demonstrate that even the transfer of revelation is governed by exegetical standards and

institutional authority (Yakubovych, 2022, 2024), while comparative reception studies show that the same text can be received differently across contexts (Ichwan, 2001).

Alongside networks, scholars have emphasized the material life of texts. Research on Malay manuscripts and their illumination, and on paratexts such as marginalia and ownership notes, shows that meaning is preserved and reshaped in the physical and social life of documents (Gallop, 2017; van der Putten, 2017; Fathurahman, 2013). In living institutions, the kitab kuning read in pesantren continues this material tradition, even as its methods change under modern conditions (Nurtawab, 2019; Widodo et al., 2023). Taken together, these literatures supply the channels through which, this study argues, textual civilization is inherited. The framework that guides the analysis therefore links three constructs: textual civilization (the what), channels of transmission (the how), and the dialectic of reception and reduction in non-Arab spaces (the where and the risk).

Document-based and library research as method

Because this study reads a tradition through its scholarship rather than through fieldwork, a fourth strand of literature is methodological. Qualitative content analysis offers a systematic and transparent way to convert a heterogeneous body of texts into categories and themes, and it can be conducted in inductive, deductive, or, as here, combined modes (Elo & Kyngas, 2008; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Its strength for the present problem is that it preserves interpretive depth while imposing procedural discipline, allowing the analyst to remain accountable to the data even when the data are conceptual.

The literature on trustworthiness in qualitative content analysis stresses that credibility depends on a clear account of how categories were formed and how conclusions were reached (Elo et al., 2014; Schreier, 2012; Krippendorff, 2019). This guidance directly shaped the procedures reported below, including the category matrix, the audit trail, and the explicit separation of description from inference in the results. In this sense, the method is not merely a technique applied to the corpus; it is part of the study's argument that meaning can be traced rigorously.

B. Methods

Research design

The study employs an interpretive, document-based qualitative design, because its object consists of texts, concepts, scholarly narratives, and constructions of meaning within the Arabic-Islamic tradition. This choice is consistent with the view that qualitative research enables the reading of meaning, context, and social processes through in-depth interpretation (Creswell, 2014). The analytical focus is not the measurement of language competence or classroom observation, but the reading of relations among Arabic, revelation, literature, adab, knowledge, and non-Arab cultural experience. Within this design, documents are treated as discursive traces that reveal how Arabic operates as a system of textual civilization.

Qualitative content analysis was chosen as the analytical strategy because it provides a systematic and replicable procedure for distilling large bodies of text into categories and themes while preserving interpretive depth (Krippendorff, 2019; Schreier, 2012). The approach is well suited to a corpus that is conceptual rather than numerical, and it supports the study's aim of building a model of inherited meaning rather than testing a hypothesis.

Corpus and selection criteria

Data were collected through documentation, following the principle of library research, which treats written materials as the primary field for exploring conceptual data.

Documents were selected purposively against explicit inclusion criteria: (a) peer-reviewed articles, scholarly monographs, or recognized reference works; (b) direct relevance to at least one of the four focal points; (c) publication between 2001 and 2024, with a small number of foundational works admitted for conceptual grounding; and (d) availability of a verifiable, citable record (DOI or stable repository). Sources were excluded if they were non-scholarly, duplicative, or addressed Arabic purely as decontextualized grammar without reference to text, meaning, or transmission.

Application of these criteria produced a final corpus of forty-one documents. The corpus deliberately spans three layers, summarized in Table 1: foundational and conceptual works; thematic studies on revelation, literature, networks, and manuscripts; and supporting studies on learning models and institutional practice. This layering ensured that the analysis could move between the theoretical construct of textual civilization and the concrete channels and settings in which it operates.

Table 1. Composition of the documentary corpus (n = 41)

Layer	Documents	Focus and example sources
Foundational / conceptual	9	Textual civilization, adab, qualitative method (Saeed, 2008; Holmberg, 2006; Creswell, 2014; Krippendorff, 2019)
Revelation and translation	7	Exegetical authority and reception (Yakubovych, 2022, 2024; Ichwan, 2001)
Networks and inheritance	8	Sanad, ijazah, ulama networks (Azra, 2004; Awaludin, 2024; Burhanudin, 2021)
Manuscripts and material culture	9	Manuscripts, paratexts, kitab kuning (Fathurahman, 2013; Gallop, 2017; van der Putten, 2017; Nurtawab, 2019)
Education and modern practice	8	Learning models, technology, reduction risk (Almelhes, 2024; Albantani & Madkur, 2019; Widodo et al., 2023)

Source: Authors' construction.

Coding and analysis

Analysis followed directed qualitative content analysis, combining a deductive category matrix derived from the four focal points with inductive sub-coding that allowed new categories to emerge from the data (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Elo & Kyngas, 2008). The process moved through the three standard phases of preparation, organization, and reporting: documents were read in full and units of meaning identified; units were coded and grouped under the matrix while permitting emergent codes; categories were compared across sources through constant comparison; and themes were synthesized by interpreting the relations among categories (Schreier, 2012).

The coding instrument comprised a documentation sheet, the category matrix shown in Table 2, and a coding guideline that defined each code with inclusion and exclusion rules and an anchor example. Deductive categories corresponded to the four focal points; inductive sub-codes (for example, 'epistemic authority of translation' or 'paratext as social trace') were added as they emerged and were then consolidated into the five reported themes.

Table 2. Category matrix linking focal points to codes and themes

Focal point (deductive)	Representative codes (inductive)	Resulting theme
Arabic as medium of revelation	Exegetical choice; translation authority; reception variation	Theme 1: Revelation and epistemic authority
Literature as textual civilization	Adab as formation; balaghah; aesthetic-ethical unity	Theme 2: Literature, adab, and balaghah
Islamic intellectual inheritance	Sanad; ijazah; teacher-student chains; reading community	Theme 3: Sanad, ijazah, and networks
Meaning transmission in non-Arab spaces	Manuscript; paratext; kitab kuning; adaptation	Theme 4: Manuscripts, paratexts, kitab kuning
Cross-cutting, emergent	Instrumentalization; communicative-only framing; worldview drift	Theme 5: Modern risk of reduction

Source: Authors' construction.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness was addressed through strategies appropriate to qualitative content analysis (Elo et al., 2014). Credibility was supported by constant comparison and by triangulating sources across disciplines, including Qur'anic studies, literary studies, manuscript studies, and education. Dependability and confirmability were supported by an audit trail documenting selection decision, the coding guideline, and category revisions, so that the path from data to conclusions can be followed by an external reader. Peer debriefing was used to test the coherence of the emerging themes, and reflexivity notes recorded the researchers' prior assumptions about Arabic and Islamic education so that these could be examined rather than silently imported.

Transferability is supported by the transparent description of the corpus and criteria in Tables 1 and 2, which allows readers to judge applicability to other contexts. Because the design is document-based and uses published scholarship, no fieldwork or human-subject data were involved, and no ethical approval was required; nonetheless, all sources are cited in full so that the evidentiary basis of each claim can be independently verified.

C. Result and Discussion

Findings

Content analysis of the corpus produced five interrelated themes that answer the research questions. Table 3 summarizes each theme, its core analytical claim, and the principal documentary evidence on which it rests. The narrative that follows elaborates each theme, distinguishing throughout what the sources report (description) from the analytical inference drawn in this study (interpretation).

Table 3. Themes, analytical claims, and principal evidence

Theme	Analytical claim	Principal evidence
1. Revelation and epistemic authority	Linguistic transfer of revelation always carries exegetical authority, not merely word replacement.	Yakubovych (2022, 2024); Ichwan (2001); Saeed (2008)
2. Literature, adab, and balaghah	Arabic-Islamic literature forms reason, taste, and adab, not only aesthetic pleasure.	Holmberg (2006); Peacock (2024); Saeed (2008)

Theme	Analytical claim	Principal evidence
3. Sanad, ijazah, and networks	Authority of knowledge is built through teacher-student chains and reading communities.	Azra (2004); Awaludin (2024); Burhanudin (2021)
4. Manuscripts, paratexts, kitab kuning	Meaning lives materially in manuscripts, margins, and classical texts read in pesantren.	Fathurahman (2013); Gallop (2017); van der Putten (2017); Nurtawab (2019); Widodo et al. (2023)
5. Modern risk of reduction	Grammar- and communication-only approaches thin out the textual-civilizational depth of Arabic.	Albantani & Madkur (2019); Almelhes (2024); Barton et al. (2021)

Source: Authors' construction.

Revelation and epistemic authority

Across the corpus, Arabic appears first as the language that carries epistemic responsibility for revelation. Studies of Qur'an translation into Central Asian languages show that the movement of revelatory meaning never stops at the replacement of words; it involves exegetical choices, translation standards, translator authority, and procedures for validating understanding (Yakubovych, 2022). The same dynamic operates at the institutional scale, where the translation of revelation is bound to state authority and the controlled distribution of understanding (Yakubovych, 2024).

When revelatory texts enter non-Arab spaces, responses to translation and exegesis are not uniform. Differing receptions of translation and commentary in Egypt and Indonesia indicate that meaning is shaped by structures of authority, religious politics, and local culture (Ichwan, 2001). The descriptive evidence, then, is that translation is always accompanied by interpretation and authorization.

The analytical inference drawn here is that transmission of Arabic is never a neutral transfer between codes: it carries questions of legitimacy, reception, and the boundaries of what counts as valid meaning. This reading is consistent with the conception of Islam as a text-centered civilization in which Arabic functions as the bearer of authoritative meaning rather than as a transparent medium (Saeed, 2008). For RQ1, this theme establishes that the constitution of textual civilization begins at the level of revelation itself.

This finding also has a pedagogical edge that the discussion develops later. If even expert translation embeds exegetical choices, then translation exercises in the classroom are never purely linguistic; they quietly teach an interpretation. Making this visible, rather than leaving it implicit, is one way the textual-civilizational dimension can be reintroduced into ordinary teaching without adding a separate subject (Yakubovych, 2022; Ichwan, 2001).

Literature, *adab*, and *balaghah*

The corpus consistently positions Arabic-Islamic literature as a space of *adab* and the formation of linguistic sensibility rather than ornamentation. Comparative literary scholarship treats *adab* as a category in which ethical and religious purpose is inseparable from aesthetic form, so that literature works simultaneously as instruction and as the cultivation of character (Holmberg, 2006). In the Southeast Asian setting, Arabic literary culture appears embedded in patronage, Sufism, and intellectual exchange rather than as imported decoration (Peacock, 2024).

Reading these sources together supports the inference that *balaghah* and literary analysis are components of how the Qur'an and the tradition are understood, not optional refinements. Where the pedagogical literature often treats literature as an advanced module, the evidence here suggests that the literary and the linguistic are intertwined from the outset: to read Arabic well is already to read it as literature.

This theme answers part of RQ1 by specifying the content of textual civilization: it is the place where beauty, morality, and meaning converge in language. Arabic-Islamic literature thus becomes a path for forming intellect, taste, adab, and a consciousness of meaning, and not merely a body of texts to be decoded.

Sanad, ijazah, and scholarly networks

A third cluster of evidence shows that Islamic intellectual inheritance moves through texts and the authority of reading. The classic account of Malay-Indonesian and Middle Eastern ulama networks demonstrates that *sanad*, classical works, and connections with international centers of learning were constitutive of Islamic tradition in the region (Azra, 2004). More recent mapping of half a century of Islamic-education research confirms that questions of authority, transmission, and networks remain central to the field (Awaludin, 2024).

Biographical and institutional studies reinforce the point. Accounts of reformist scholars show how individual teachers anchored long chains of influence, linking distant centers of learning to local communities and shaping the direction of reform (Burhanudin, 2021). Authority, on this evidence, is relational: it is produced and reproduced through the bond between teacher, text, and student.

The analytical claim, in answer to RQ2, is that authority does not arise from texts alone but from the continuity of teachers, texts, and reading communities. Arabic functions within this network as an epistemic binder that links books, teachers, *sanad*, and the receiving community, so that the transmission of meaning is simultaneously the transmission of legitimacy.

Manuscripts, paratexts, and kitab kuning

The fourth theme concerns the material life of meaning. Non-Arab cultural spaces do not receive Arabic-Islamic texts into a vacuum; the texts enter fields of manuscripts, institutions, and readers with their own histories (Fathurahman, 2013). Illumination in Malay manuscripts reveals relationships among texts, audiences, patronage, and the social world of readers (Gallop, 2017), while paratexts, marginalia, and ownership notes preserve traces of circulation and the social life of manuscripts (van der Putten, 2017).

This material life continues in living institutions. The kitab kuning, classical texts read in pesantren, remains a basis for forming expertise, adab, and a way of standing before the text. Studies of reading methods such as *bandongan* show both the endurance and the vulnerability of this practice, as traditional methods adapt to, and sometimes decline under, modern and online conditions (Nurtawab, 2019; Widodo et al., 2023).

The inference for RQ3 is that meaning is not transferred intact from center to periphery; it is processed within the social and intellectual fields of receiving communities, where it acquires historical form. Non-Arab spaces are therefore active fields of reception rather than passive peripheries, and the manuscript and the classical text are the concrete sites where reception happens.

The modern risk of reduction

Finally, the corpus surfaces a recurring tension introduced by modernity. As Arabic instruction in non-Arab contexts adapts to communicative and technological demands, its literary, ethical, rhetorical, and textual-civilizational dimensions can weaken (Albantani & Madkur, 2019; Almelhes, 2024). When Arabic is approached primarily through grammar, *mufradat*, translation drills, and communicative competence, the depth that connects it to *adab*, *tafsir*, and scholarly networks risks thinning out.

The wider stakes are not only pedagogical. Because Arabic carries worldview, the way it is taught participates in how Islamic values are interpreted in public and social life, including contested and politicized readings of tradition (Barton et al., 2021). A purely instrumental formation may leave learners without the interpretive resources that the tradition itself developed to guard against narrow or distorted readings.

The analytical claim is that reduction is a real risk, not an inevitability. The same channels that transmit textual civilization, literature, *sanad*, manuscripts, and classical texts, remain available, and they can be reconnected to contemporary curricula. This sets up the discussion's central argument about a paradigm of inherited meaning.

Cross-theme synthesis: the architecture of inherited meaning

Read in isolation, each theme repeats a familiar observation from its own field. Read together, the five themes describe a single architecture. Revelation supplies the authoritative core (Theme 1); literature and *balaghah* give that core a form that shapes character and sensibility (Theme 2); *sanad*, *ijazah*, and networks supply the human chains that carry it (Theme 3); manuscripts, paratexts, and *kitab kuning* supply the material and institutional body in which it lives (Theme 4); and modern instrumentalization marks the point at which the architecture can be flattened (Theme 5).

This synthesis is the study's analytical pivot. It shows that the four channels are not parallel alternatives but layers of one process, and that the risk identified in Theme 5 is best understood as the severing of competence from the other layers. The contribution of the synthesis is to convert a set of well-documented but separate findings into a coherent model that can guide both interpretation and practice, and it is this model that the discussion develops into a paradigm of inherited meaning.

Analysis/Discussion

The five themes, read together, answer the three research questions and yield a single argument: in non-Arab cultural spaces Arabic cannot be adequately understood as linguistic competence alone. Rules, *mufradat*, translation, and communicative skills are entry points, but they do not exhaust the architecture of meaning. The deeper question is how Arabic-Islamic meaning is inherited, preserved, and negotiated when it enters cultural spaces that were not born from an Arab ecology.

Arabic-Islamic literature as textual civilization

In answer to RQ1, the evidence supports reading Arabic as a textual civilization rather than a system of signs. Themes 1 and 2 converge on the point that Arabic carries relations among revelation, *tafsir*, scholarly tradition, and the authority of reading, and that literature and *balaghah* are part of how meaning is produced and understood (Saeed, 2008; Holmberg, 2006).

This finding extends the pedagogical literature, which treats Arabic largely as skill (Almelhes, 2024), by showing that the same language simultaneously functions as a field of

inherited meaning. Where earlier accounts describe the Arabic cosmopolis as a literary-historical formation (Ricci, 2011), the present analysis reframes it as a still-operative educational reality: the cosmopolis is not only a past network but a present curriculum waiting to be made explicit.

Channels of transmission

In answer to RQ2, Themes 1, 3, and 4 identify concrete channels through which meaning, adab, and worldview travel: exegetical translation, *sanad* and *ijazah*, ulama networks, manuscripts and paratexts, and the kitab kuning read in pesantren (Yakubovych, 2022; Azra, 2004; Gallop, 2017; Nurtawab, 2019).

This finding confirms prior work on networks and manuscript culture, but it also extends it. Rather than treating these channels separately, as the source literatures tend to do, the analysis shows them functioning as one transmission system in which Arabic binds books, teachers, chains of authority, and reading communities. The contribution here is integrative: it connects Qur'anic-studies, manuscript-studies, and education literatures that are usually pursued in isolation, and it names the common function they share, the inheritance of meaning.

Dialectics in non-Arab spaces and implications for education

In answer to RQ3, Theme 4 shows that non-Arab spaces are active fields of reception in which meaning is adapted and negotiated rather than passively received (Fathurahman, 2013; van der Putten, 2017). Theme 5 shows that modernity places this inheritance under pressure, so that instrumental approaches can displace the textual-civilizational dimension (Albantani & Madkur, 2019; Barton et al., 2021). The dialectic, therefore, is between inheritance and reduction, and it is precisely this dialectic that the study converts into an educational paradigm.

The principal contribution is to articulate a paradigm of inherited meaning for Arabic language education. Methodologically, the deductive-inductive content analysis allowed the four focal points to organize the corpus while letting the five themes emerge, which is what made the integrative reading possible (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Elo & Kyngas, 2008). Substantively, the paradigm implies that curricula in non-Arab contexts should pair communicative competence with structured exposure to adab, *balaghah*, tafsir, and classical texts, so that learners move from mastery of form toward becoming readers of texts. This does not reject communicative pedagogy; it reframes it as one layer within a richer architecture of meaning.

Positioning relative to prior integrative work

Earlier scholarship has gestured toward integration without completing it. Network studies establish that knowledge traveled through teachers and texts but stop short of pedagogy (Azra, 2004; Burhanudin, 2021); manuscript studies recover the material life of texts but rarely address the contemporary classroom (Gallop, 2017; van der Putten, 2017); and the literature on Arabic teaching addresses the classroom but tends to bracket the textual tradition (Almelhes, 2024; Albantani & Madkur, 2019). Each is indispensable, and none, on its own, answers the question this study poses.

The present analysis differs in that it treats these literatures as describing one object from different angles and then asks what their convergence implies for teaching. In doing so it neither claims to replace the specialist studies nor to add new empirical data about any single channel; its value is synthetic and orienting. This is also why the study is careful about

the status of its claims: the model is an interpretive proposal grounded in published evidence, offered as a framework to be tested rather than as an empirical result about learners.

Toward a model of inherited meaning

The convergence documented across the five themes can be stated as a compact theoretical model. In this model, meaning in Arabic-Islamic textual culture is not produced afresh at the point of reception but is *inherited*: it arrives already structured by revelation and its exegetical apparatus, already shaped by literary and rhetorical conventions, and already authorized by chains of transmission and the institutions that maintain them (Saeed, 2008; Holmberg, 2006). What the receiving community contributes is not invention from nothing but a disciplined re-entry into this structure, a process that the kitab kuning tradition and the practices of *sanad* and *ijazah* make visible (Nurtawab, 2019; van Bruinessen, 1990).

Three properties distinguish this model from a simple diffusion account. First, it is *cumulative* rather than linear: each layer of meaning, scriptural, exegetical, literary, juridical, presupposes and reworks the layers beneath it, so that transmission is better pictured as sedimentation than as transfer (Kooria, 2022; Peacock, 2024). Second, it is *mediated*: meaning travels with its material and social carriers, manuscripts, paratexts, teachers, and networks, rather than as disembodied content, which is why the material and institutional channels identified in Themes 3 and 4 are constitutive and not merely incidental (Gallop, 2017; Azra, 2004). Third, it is *generative*: precisely because reception is a re-entry into a structured tradition, non-Arab communities produce new commentary, translation, and literary work that extend the tradition rather than merely copying it (Ricci, 2011; Awaludin, 2024).

Read this way, the contrast with the communicative paradigm sharpens. The communicative model treats language primarily as a present-tense instrument for exchange; the model of inherited meaning treats it additionally as a diachronic structure into which learners are inducted. The two are not rivals. A learner can be communicatively competent and an inheritor of meaning at once, and the analysis suggests that Arabic education in non-Arab Muslim contexts is impoverished when it cultivates only the former (Almelhes, 2024; Barton et al., 2021). The model thus functions as a corrective rather than a replacement, naming what risks being lost when Arabic is taught as if it had no textual past.

Implications for Arabic language education

Translating the paradigm of inherited meaning into practice does not require abandoning communicative methods; it requires layering them. First, curriculum design in non-Arab contexts can sequence competence and inheritance together, introducing short, graded encounters with *adab*, *balaghah*, and classical texts alongside communicative tasks, so that learners experience Arabic as both a usable skill and a bearer of meaning from the earliest stages (Holmberg, 2006; Saeed, 2008).

Second, the channels identified in the results can become pedagogical resources. Annotated manuscripts and paratexts can be used as authentic materials that show meaning in its social life (Gallop, 2017; van der Putten, 2017); the logic of *sanad* and *ijazah* can inform how teachers model reading and authorize interpretation; and the kitab kuning tradition offers a tested model of close, cumulative reading that can be adapted, rather than displaced, by digital tools (Nurtawab, 2019; Widodo et al., 2023).

Third, teacher education can foreground the interpretive dimension of Arabic. If reduction is a risk that arises when worldview is detached from skill (Barton et al., 2021), then preparing teachers to handle the literary, ethical, and exegetical layers of the language is a safeguard, not a luxury. Fourth, assessment can be broadened so that it values learners'

ability to enter a text, follow a commentary, or recognize adab, aligning measured outcomes with the fuller aims of Arabic education. Fifth, realizing these changes is an institutional task: language departments, pesantren, and manuscript libraries can build bridges to the faculties that house textual scholarship and treat the kitab kuning tradition as a partner to, rather than a relic displaced by, modern methods (Azra, 2004; Hefner, 2009; Nurtawab, 2019).

A research agenda

The limitations below translate into a concrete agenda. First, the paradigm of inherited meaning should be tested empirically through classroom-based and ethnographic studies in pesantren, madrasahs, and Islamic higher education, examining whether exposure to adab, *balaghah*, and classical texts changes learners' relationship to Arabic (Nurtawab, 2019; Widodo et al., 2023). Second, the model should be examined comparatively across non-Arab regions; the corpus is weighted toward Southeast Asia, and comparable work on West African, South Asian, Central Asian, and East Asian contexts would test the transferability of the five themes (Yakubovych, 2022; Ichwan, 2001). Third, future content analyses should incorporate independent inter-coder checks and mixed designs that combine documentary analysis with survey or interview data (Elo et al., 2014; Krippendorff, 2019), and design-based research could prototype curricula and assessments that operationalize the paradigm.

Limitations

Several limitations qualify these claims. First, the design is document-based and interpretive; it does not observe classrooms, learners, or teachers directly, so its conclusions about education are analytical rather than empirical. Second, although selection criteria were explicit, purposive sampling carries the risk of selection bias, and the corpus is weighted toward Southeast Asian and Qur'anic-studies scholarship, which may limit transferability to other non-Arab regions such as West Africa, South Asia, or East Asia.

Third, qualitative content analysis depends partly on interpretive judgment; despite an audit trail and peer debriefing, a single research team coded the data, so independent inter-coder verification would strengthen confirmability. Fourth, the boundary between description and inference, although explicitly marked in the results, inevitably reflects the framework adopted here. These limitations are not fatal, but they delimit the scope of the claims and point directly to the research agenda above.

D. Conclusion

Arabic in non-Arab cultural spaces cannot be restricted to a linguistic system, a communicative instrument, or a set of technical competencies. The content analysis of forty-one documents shows that Arabic-Islamic literature functions as a node of textual civilization linking revelation, tafsir, *balaghah*, adab, *sanad*, *ijazah*, kitab kuning, manuscripts, and scholarly networks. Meaning transmission is not a passive movement from an Arab center toward non-Arab spaces; it unfolds through reading, inheritance, negotiation, and the reconfiguration of meaning within the cultural horizons of receiving communities.

The study's distinct contribution is a paradigm of inherited meaning that integrates the pedagogy of Arabic with the historical study of Arabic-Islamic textual culture, and that specifies both the channels of transmission and their implications for the classroom. The practical implication is concrete: Arabic learning in Islamic education should not be directed solely toward grammar, *mufradat*, translation, or functional communication, but should also open structured pathways into literature, adab, *balaghah*, tafsir, and textual inheritance.

Because the present reading rests on documents, future research should test the paradigm through field-based studies that trace the presence of literature, adab, and textual

traditions in actual learning practices within pesantren, Islamic higher education, madrasahs, and non-Arab Muslim communities, ideally with multiple coders, cross-regional comparison, and learner outcome data. In this way, the argument advanced here can be examined, refined, and, where necessary, revised against the realities of practice.

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