



A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF PSYCHOLOGICAL AND SOCIOLOGICAL FACTORS IN ARABIC LANGUAGE LEARNING AMONG FOREIGN SPEAKERS IN INDONESIA

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Abstract

This study systematically reviews 25 empirical articles published between 2019 and 2025 to comprehensively examine the role of psychological and sociological factors in Arabic language learning among foreign speakers in Indonesia, particularly by elucidating the dynamics of language anxiety, learning motivation, and self-efficacy within the social context of learning. This study employs a systematic literature review following PRISMA guidelines, analyzing scientific articles obtained from the Scopus, DOAJ, SINTA, and Google Scholar databases. Thematic analysis was used to identify patterns and correlations between psychological and sociological variables. The results of the study show that speaking anxiety emerges as a significant obstacle to communicative participation, while motivation and self-efficacy play a role in maintaining the sustainability of student learning engagement, which is greatly influenced by the quality of the learning environment, support from teachers and peers, and the dynamics of social interaction in the classroom. These findings indicate that students' psychological conditions do not develop individually but are shaped through continuous social learning experiences. Therefore, Arabic language learning should be understood as an integrated socio-affective process, guiding the development of pedagogical practices to create a learning environment that is psychologically safe, communicative, and responsive to students' needs, thereby supporting the development of sustainable language competence.

Keywords: Arabic Language Learning, Psychological Factors, Sociological Factors, Foreign Speakers, Indonesia, Systematic Literature Review

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INTRODUCTION

مقدمة

In recent years, Indonesians' interest in learning Arabic has increased. Arabic is not only considered a religious language, but also an essential language in science, diplomacy, and economics (Agustini, 2023). UNESCO (2022) notes that Arabic is one of the six official languages of the United Nations and is among the ten languages with the most speakers in the world. This shows that proficiency in Arabic contributes to the formation of identity in a global context and strengthens intercultural relations, especially in countries with large Muslim populations, such as Indonesia (Yahya et al., 2020).

According to data from the Directorate of Islamic Education of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia (2024), more than 14,000 madrasas and Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia have made Arabic a compulsory subject or an extracurricular activity. On the

other hand, the number of students at State Islamic Higher Education Institutions (PTKIN) who choose Arabic as their major has increased by 30% in the last five years (Amrina et al., 2022). This phenomenon demonstrates that Arabic holds an essential place in the national education system, not only in a religious context but also as a means of strengthening global competencies grounded in Islamic, academic, and socio-cultural values.

Despite the increase in the number of students learning Arabic, fundamental challenges persist across educational institutions, including low student confidence, anxiety about speaking, and a lack of motivation to use Arabic outside the classroom. Many students perceive Arabic as difficult to master due to its complex grammar and extensive vocabulary. On the other hand, teachers often place excessive emphasis on cognitive and grammatical aspects without considering students' emotional and social factors. As a result, the learning process becomes rigid and less enjoyable (Richards, 2020).

Various theories of second language acquisition emphasize the importance of psychological and sociological dimensions. From a psychological perspective, the theory of motivation from Gardner, (1985) emphasizes that learning motivation, especially integrative motivation, is the strongest predictor of language skill achievement. Students who seek to understand the culture and community of target-language speakers tend to be more successful in their learning. Meanwhile, Horwitz et al., (1986) introducing the concept of foreign language classroom anxiety (FLCA), which explains that anxiety can be a significant obstacle in the process of foreign language communication. In the context of Arabic language learning, research by Mei et al., (2023) shows that anxiety hurts classroom performance, while self-efficacy has a positive effect on speaking ability and text comprehension.

From a psychological perspective, sociocultural theory, developed by Vygotsky (1978), emphasizes that language learning is strongly influenced by the social environment in which a person interacts. The concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) shows that optimal learning occurs when learners receive support (scaffolding) from more competent individuals, whether teachers or peers. Social support from friends, teachers, and family can foster a sense of security and connection, thereby strengthening motivation to learn. In the Indonesian context, the pesantren environment, which uses Arabic as the everyday language, has been shown to improve students' communication skills naturally. Research by Aqil et al., (2025) shows that emotional support, including peer encouragement and motivational feedback, significantly increases students' confidence. Meanwhile, practical support, such as feedback from lecturers and collaborative learning, directly improves speaking competence.

Although the psychological and sociological aspects of Arabic language learning have been widely discussed in studies, efforts to examine both in an integrated manner in the Indonesian context remain very limited. Existing studies are generally separate, focusing on one particular aspect without considering the interaction between psychological and sociological factors in the dynamic learning process. This condition leads to an understanding that is not yet fully comprehensive of the success of Arabic language learning.

The literature shows inconsistent findings, with some studies confirming that motivation is the most dominant factor in improving language skills (Albab, 2019). Meanwhile, other studies highlight the critical role of the learning environment and social support in determining Arabic language proficiency (Hasan, 2024). These differences in results may be due to variations in context, research methods, or student characteristics. To date, there have been few studies that comprehensively synthesize research findings across contexts of Arabic language education in

Indonesia, such as madrasahs, Islamic boarding schools, and universities, and a holistic picture of the role of psychological and sociological factors has not yet been fully established.

The Indonesian context, with its distinctive characteristics, namely a combination of religious, academic, and socio-cultural motivations, requires special attention. However, understanding how the complexity of this context shapes the learning experience in Arabic remains relatively limited. Therefore, scientific efforts through a systematic synthesis of existing research findings are needed to produce a more comprehensive, consistent, and contextual understanding that can serve as an empirical basis for developing more effective and sustainable Arabic language learning practices.

In this context, a literature review study is appropriate to address this need. This study is based on the understanding that learning Arabic should be understood as a process that engages the whole person, not only intellectually but also emotionally and socially. When students feel psychologically secure and socially accepted, they are more courageous in expressing themselves and taking the linguistic risks necessary to master the language. Conversely, when they experience pressure, embarrassment, or a lack of support from their environment, the learning process is constrained, and outcomes are suboptimal.

This study aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the influence of psychological and sociological factors on Arabic language learning in Indonesia through a systematic review of prior research. Through the analysis and synthesis of data from various studies, this research seeks to identify patterns of relationships between individual psychological conditions, such as motivation, anxiety, and self-confidence, with social factors, such as environmental support, the role of teachers, and interactions between students. Thus, this study is expected not only to contribute theoretically to the field of Arabic language education but also to provide a practical basis for teachers, lecturers, and educational institutions to develop learning approaches that are more empathetic and better aligned with the needs of today's students.

METHOD

منهج

This study employs a systematic literature review methodology that adheres to the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines. The PRISMA framework includes a 25-item checklist and a four-stage flow diagram to ensure transparency and comprehensive reporting in literature reviews (Liberati et al., 2009). This methodical approach ensures a thorough, systematic literature review, providing a comprehensive framework for analyzing studies on the psychological and sociological factors of Arabic language learning in Indonesia.

Eligibility Criteria

Research must be peer-reviewed and published in scientific journals to be included in this review. Trade journals, magazines, and newspapers are not included. Eligible studies must also be published in English and involve empirical research on the psychological and sociological factors of Arabic language learning in Indonesia.

Data Sources and Searches

The databases searched included Scopus, DOAJ, SINTA, and Google Scholar. The last search was conducted in 2025. The search terms used were "Psychological Factors of Arabic", "Sociological Factors of Arabic", and "Arabic Language Learning for Foreign Speakers". All

searches were conducted on article abstracts, and search filters were used to align with the screening criteria.

Study Selection

Studies were selected for inclusion based on the following sequential criteria applied to article abstracts: studies must have been published between 2019 and 2025 in Indonesian or English, appear in scientific journals, and focus on the psychological and sociological factors of Arabic language learning. In addition, the extracted data must be relevant to the study's focus and research questions. Based on these criteria, 25 articles were retained after screening.

The study selection process followed the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines. The selection stages included identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and final inclusion of studies for synthesis. This process is visually presented in Figure 1 (PRISMA Flow Diagram) to ensure transparency and replicability of the systematic literature review.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) is used to identify, analyze, and report themes in data. There are six stages of thematic analysis: (1) Familiarization with the data. (2) Creation of initial codes, (3) Search for themes by compiling codes, (4) Review of themes to ensure coherence, (5) Definition and naming of themes, (6) Preparation of a report linking the themes to the research questions.

An assessment protocol was created, and both authors read all 25 articles that were retained, agreeing on the coding protocol that had been established using three broad categories: (a) Psychological Factors, (b) Sociological Factors, and (c) Arabic Language Learning for Foreign Speakers.

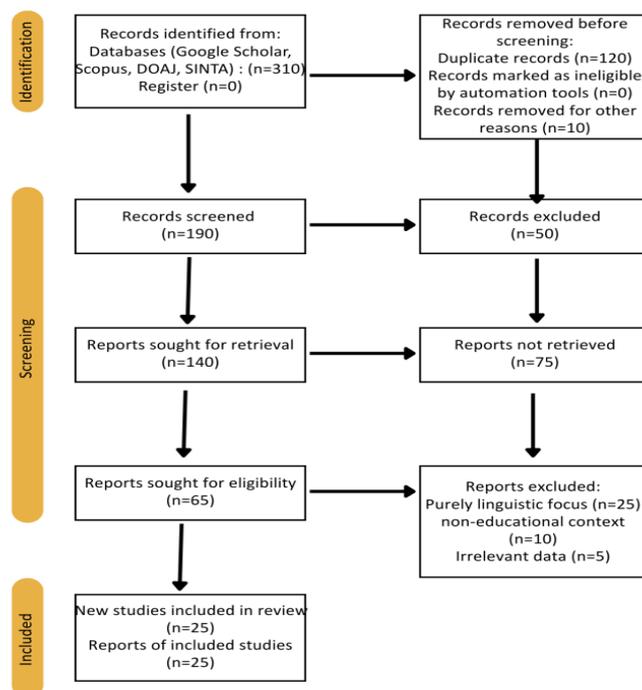


Figure 1. PRISMA Flow Diagram

Quality Appraisal

A quality appraisal was conducted to enhance the methodological rigor of this systematic literature review. All included studies were examined to ensure basic methodological adequacy without excluding articles based on quality scores. Most quantitative studies employed validated instruments such as the FLCAS, motivation scales grounded in Gardner's socio-educational model, and standardized self-efficacy measures, while qualitative studies demonstrated methodological transparency through clear procedures and the use of thematic or content analysis. Overall, the reviewed articles exhibited adequate methodological quality, supporting the credibility of the synthesized findings.

RESULT | نتائج

An analysis of 25 selected articles from 2015 to 2025 reveals significant developments in research on the psychological and sociological factors of Arabic language learning among non-native speakers.



Figure 2. Trends in articles on psychological and sociological factors in Arabic language learning for foreign speakers

Figure 2 illustrates the temporal distribution of research publication on psychological and sociological factors in Arabic language learning. The trend shows growing scholarly interest in affective and dimensions, particularly as communication approaches and educational technology have evolved. The 2019–2021 period was the most productive, as numerous studies examined the integration of psychopedagogical approaches, online learning, and dynamics of student motivation in the post-pandemic era. A notable increase occurred in 2020-2021, reflecting heightened academic attention to learner wellbeing and social support during remote learning conditions. The slight decline in 2022-2023 was followed by renewed interest in 2024-2025, suggesting a maturation of research methodologies and more nuanced investigations into socio-affective learning processes.

Geographically, research was dominated by the Indonesian context (91%), followed by Malaysia (6%) and Egypt (3%). This indicates that academic awareness of the importance of affective and social dimensions in Arabic language teaching is increasing, particularly within Islamic education in Southeast Asia. Indonesia's dominance can be explained by the strategic position of Arabic in the national Islamic education system, from madrasas and Islamic boarding schools to universities.

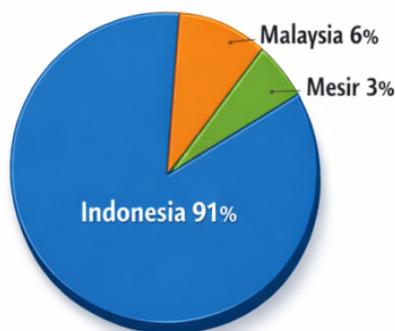


Figure 3. Number of articles by country

The overwhelming representation of Indonesian contexts reflects both the research scope and the distinctive educational landscape where Arabic occupies a unique position as both a religious and academic language. The small representation from Malaysia and Egypt provides comparative perspectives on Arabic learning in different sociocultural settings.

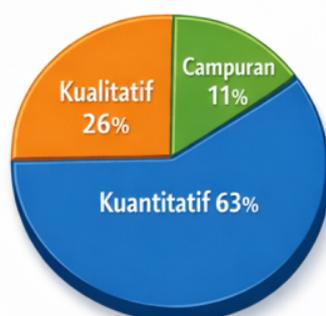


Figure 4. Distribution of research methodologies for psychological-sociological factors In Arabic language learning for foreign speakers

Quantitative methods dominated (72%, n=18), primarily utilizing survey designs to assess psychological variables such as speaking anxiety, motivation, and self-efficacy through validated instruments including the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), Gardner's Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB), and various self-efficacy scales. Qualitative approaches accounted for 20% (n=5), employing interviews, observations, and focus group discussions to explore learners' lived experiences and sociocultural contexts in depth. Mixed-methods studies comprised 8% (n=2), combining quantitative measurements with qualitative insights to provide comprehensive understanding of the psychological-sociological interplay in Arabic learning contexts

Table 1. Synthesis of Key Finding from Reviewed Studies

Theme	Representative Studies	% of Articles	Key Findings
Psychological Factors			
Speaking Anxiety	Basith (2021); Teriza (2024); Al-Busaidi (2019); Mei et al. (2023)	40 %	Anxiety significantly impedes oral communication; fear of negative evaluation and lack of affective support are primary triggers
Learning Motivation	Islam (2015); Miao & Wang (2023); Albab (2019); Calafato (2023)	32 %	Integrative motivation correlates with higher achievement; contextual relevance and teacher pedagogy shape motivational trajectories

Self-Efficacy	Mustapha (2017); Calafato (2023); Mei et al. (2023)	20 %	Positive relationship between self-efficacy and performance; enables linguistic risk-taking and sustained engagement
Cognitive Factors	Ghufron & Anwar (2020); Al-Busaidi (2019)	8 %	Memory, processing, and learning strategies intertwine with socio-cultural influences in shaping readiness
Sociological Factors			
Language Environment (Bi'ah Lughawiyah)	Jihadiy & Yusuf (2022); Hasan (2024); Basith (2021)	28 %	Immersive Arabic environments reduce anxiety and accelerate natural language internalization
Social Support	Abidin et al. (2024); Aqil et al. (2025); Basith (2021)	24 %	Teacher and peer support strengthen motivation, confidence, and collaborative learning culture
Social Constructions of Arabic	Yahya et al. (2020); Agustini (2023)	12 %	Dominant religious framing creates exclusivity; broader positioning as global language increases inclusivity
Code-Switching	Khuluq et al. (2024); Ghufron & Anwar (2020)	8 %	Complex sociolinguistic phenomenon; can facilitate or hinder optimal Arabic use depending on pedagogical management

Psychological Factors in Arabic Language Learning

Psychological factors emerged as a dominant theme analyzed in almost every article. Of the total 25 articles, about 40% discussed speaking anxiety as a significant obstacle in learning Arabic. This anxiety arose from a fear of making mistakes, concerns about negative judgment, and unsupportive communication experiences. Studies by Basith, (2021) shows that more than half of the students in the intensive Arabic language program experience moderate to high levels of anxiety, especially when they have to speak in public. Teriza, (2024) It also reveals that communicative anxiety, assessment anxiety, and situational anxiety are significant factors that affect students' speaking performance, even though they continue to make efforts to practice Arabic. This shows that language anxiety is not merely an indicator of student weakness, but rather a psychological response that arises from the performative demands of Arabic language learning that are not balanced with adequate affective support.

In addition to anxiety, learning motivation is the psychological variable that has been studied the most after that. Islam, (2015) emphasizes that low motivation is attributable to the complexity of the material, limited resources, and monotonous teaching methods. A study conducted by Miao & Wang, (2023) reinforces these findings by emphasizing that attitudes toward Arabic language and culture, perceptions of language usefulness, and teachers' pedagogical approaches are closely related to motivation to learn Arabic as a foreign language. Thus, motivation to learn Arabic is contextual and constructive; it must be cultivated through meaningful learning that is relevant to students' needs and does not treat Arabic as exclusive or inaccessible material.

Self-efficacy was also an important theme in 20% of the articles reviewed. Research by

Mustapha, (2017) shows a positive relationship between self-efficacy and grammatical performance, particularly in sentence construction skills. Conversely, research by Calafato, (2023) found that integrative motivation, namely the desire to understand the culture and identity of native speakers, correlates positively with learning resilience and high academic achievement. Self-efficacy provides a psychological foundation that enables students to take linguistic risks; therefore, strengthening self-confidence should be an integral part of Arabic language learning design, not merely a by-product of academic achievement.

From a psycholinguistic perspective, cognitive factors such as memory, information processing, and learning strategies also influence students' psychological conditions. Ghufroon & Anwar, (2020) emphasizes that cognitive abilities cannot be separated from socio-cultural influences in shaping the mental readiness of Arabic-speaking students. These findings are reinforced by Al-Busaidi, (2019) which reveals that the difficulty of expressing ideas in spoken language often triggers anxiety and self-doubt in non-native learners. This indicates that psychological barriers in Arabic language learning are multidimensional; therefore, pedagogical interventions should integrate the cognitive, affective, and communicative aspects of students' experiences. Thus, Arabic language learning should ideally be directed towards creating a safe, supportive, and humanistic learning environment, so that students develop not only linguistically, but also psychologically as language learners.

Sociological Factors in Arabic Language Learning

From a social perspective, the analysis shows that the social environment and support from the learning community are the most influential external factors in the success of Arabic language learning, particularly in shaping students' attitudes, participation, and confidence in using Arabic. Basith, (2021) emphasizes that the absence of a supportive Arabic-speaking environment is an external factor that reinforces anxiety and hinders students' speaking skills. These findings indicate that Arabic language learning limited to the classroom tends to be less effective at building communicative competence. This shows that Arabic as a foreign language requires a social ecosystem that enables repeated practice; without such support, learning will be passive and purely theoretical.

The linguistic environment (bi'ah lughawiyah) is one of the most frequently discussed sociological factors in the literature. Research by Jihadiy & Yusuf, (2022) shows that the pesantren environment with bi'ah lughawiyah (total language environment) successfully fosters natural linguistic habits and improves students' communicative abilities. A social environment rich in language practice functions as a "social safe space" that reduces anxiety and accelerates the natural internalization of Arabic.

In addition to the environment, social support from teachers and peers has been shown to strengthen motivation and self-confidence. Abidin et al., (2024) emphasizes the importance of synergy between individual potential and external support in maintaining learning motivation. Teachers who are communicative and provide positive reinforcement foster a sense of security that enables students to participate actively. Peer support also strengthens healthy social relationships in the classroom, reduces anxiety, and enhances collaboration in learning. Equal and humanistic social relationships in Arabic language classes are key to building students' linguistic courage.

Another influential sociological factor is the social construction of the Arabic language. Yahya et al., (2020) reveals that an overly dominant religious orientation in Arabic language learning in Indonesia contributes to the exclusivity of Arabic and a decline in interest in learning,

especially among non-native speakers or non-Muslims. Arabic is often perceived as a symbol of religious identity rather than a global language of communication. Social perceptions of Arabic need to be reconstructed so that Arabic language learning becomes more inclusive, contextual, and relevant to diverse social needs.

Social interactions among students, including bilingualism and code-switching, are also important sociological factors. Research Khuluq et al., (2024) shows that the use of code-switching in Arabic language learning has complex sociological and psychological impacts. In specific contexts, code-switching can foster solidarity and mutual understanding, but if not managed pedagogically, it can hinder optimal use of Arabic. This explains that social language practices, such as code-switching, should be understood as a natural phenomenon within bilingual learning communities, rather than as mere linguistic errors. Based on this analysis, ideal Arabic language learning should be sociocommunicative, contextual, and inclusive, positioning Arabic as a living social practice rather than merely a linguistic system studied in isolation.

Implications of Psychological and Sociological Factors

The literature indicates that psychological and sociological factors are interrelated and directly influence the effectiveness of Arabic language learning. Language anxiety, low motivation, and weak self-efficacy among learners cannot be separated from learning contexts that are not supportive, lack communicative practice, and tend to emphasize evaluative aspects. Findings Basith, (2021), Teriza, (2024) Indicates that speaking anxiety is often reinforced by a classroom environment that does not provide psychological security. This confirms that the main implication of these findings is the need for a paradigm shift in Arabic language learning from a cognitive-performative orientation to a more humanistic approach centered on the students' learning experiences.

Next concerns learning design and the role of social actors in the learning process. SLR findings show that the relevance of the material, pedagogical approach, the role of the teacher, and the social climate of the classroom greatly influence student motivation and confidence (Abidin et al., 2024; Islam, 2015; Miao & Wang, 2023). Teachers act as social facilitators who shape interactions, emotional support, and a participatory learning culture. In addition, the existence of a conducive Arabic-speaking environment has been proven to increase students' courage and communication skills (Jihadiy & Yusuf, 2022). Thus, the practical implications of these findings require teachers and educational institutions to design learning that is contextual, communicative, and responsive to students' psychological and social needs.

Furthermore, sociological factors also have implications for the construction of meaning and the social image of Arabic. The perception of Arabic as being overly attached to religious symbols and considered exclusive has an impact on low interest and engagement in learning (Yahya et al., 2020), and has a psychological effect on students' attitudes and courage in using language. Social interactions, such as bilingualism and code-switching, also indicate that the social dynamics of the learning community shape language practices. The overall implication of these SLR findings is the importance of a holistic, integrative, and inclusive approach to Arabic language learning, combining psychological support, strengthening the social environment, and reconstructing the image of Arabic as a living and relevant language of communication

DISCUSSION

مناقشة

The results of this study confirm that the success of Arabic language learning among foreign

speakers in Indonesia cannot be explained by a single factor, but rather by the dynamic interaction of psychological and sociological factors. The findings of the dominance of speaking anxiety, learning motivation, and self-efficacy are in line with previous studies Albab, (2019) This places intrinsic motivation as the primary determinant of success in foreign language acquisition. However, this study extends these findings by showing that intrinsic motivation in the Indonesian context does not develop autonomously but is strongly influenced by the social structure of learning, institutional culture, and patterns of interaction between teachers and students.

These findings are strongly consistent with the conceptual framework Hasan, (2024) This highlights the relationship between individual potential and environmental influences in educational achievement. However, this study deepens the argument by showing that the learning environment not only functions as a supporting factor but also as an agent that shapes learners' psychological conditions. Supportive interaction patterns, egalitarian teacher-student relationships, and a participatory learning culture contribute to building linguistic courage and learning resilience. In the context of Arabic language learning, this social dimension plays a vital role in facilitating the transition from passive learners to more active communicative participation.

From a theoretical perspective, the results of this study reinforce the relevance of the socio-educational model Gardner, (1985) By placing attitude, motivation, and social context as integral components in second language acquisition. However, this study also complements the model through a sociocultural perspective (Vygotsky, 1978), particularly in understanding the role of social interaction as a medium for language internalization. A learning environment that allows for collaboration, repeated practice, and gradual support creates a space for linguistic development that cannot be achieved through an individualistic approach. Therefore, Arabic language learning needs to be positioned as a social activity mediated by collective relationships and practices.

Variations in institutional contexts also reveal how psychological and sociological configurations work differently. Each educational institution has its own pedagogical logic and learning culture that shapes students' experiences in learning Arabic. Administrative pressures and evaluative orientations tend to limit linguistic exploration, while environments that normalize language use in everyday life encourage the formation of communicative habits. At the higher education level, despite greater learning autonomy, limited direct interaction often hinders the formation of a robust language-learning community. This indicates that the design of the learning environment plays a strategic role in shaping the quality of the language-learning experience.

In this context, future Arabic language learning strategies should be oriented toward an integrative approach that balances psychological and social dimensions. Pedagogical practices should shift from an emphasis on linguistic accuracy toward creating a safe space for language experimentation. Teachers serve as social mediators who foster self-confidence, facilitate authentic interactions, and manage classroom dynamics empathetically. In addition, technology can serve as an alternative means of social interaction that supports language courage. With this approach, Arabic language learning is expected to build communicative competence that is not only academically effective but also psychologically and socially sustainable.

At the micro level, these findings highlight the importance of Arabic teacher training that emphasizes affective scaffolding, empathetic feedback, and psychologically safe learning environments. Teachers should reduce performative pressure, normalize errors as part of

learning, and encourage meaningful communicative interaction. At the macro level, Arabic language education policies should align with the Merdeka Belajar framework by integrating communicative competence, learner autonomy, and socio-affective dimensions into curriculum design. Repositioning Arabic as a global language rather than solely a religious language may enhance inclusivity and learner participation.

CONCLUSSION | خاتمة

This systematic literature review provides the first integrated frameworks for understanding Arabic language learning in Indonesia as a socio-affective process, offering empirical grounding for humanistic pedagogy. The study's results indicate that learning Arabic among foreign speakers in Indonesia is a complex process significantly shaped by interactions among psychological and sociological factors. Psychological factors such as speaking anxiety, learning motivation, and self-efficacy have been proven to be the main determinants of learning success, with language anxiety emerging as the most dominant obstacle. However, these psychological conditions do not develop individually. Still, they are shaped and mediated by the social context of learning, including teacher-student interaction patterns, peer support, and a communicative and supportive classroom climate. These findings confirm that Arabic language learning oriented solely towards cognitive aspects is not effective if it ignores the affective and relational dimensions of learners.

From a sociological perspective, the learning environment, social support, and social construction of Arabic play a strategic role in shaping meaningful learning experiences. A conducive language environment, such as *bi'ah lughawiyah*, has been proven to reduce anxiety, increase linguistic courage, and strengthen learners' motivation and active participation. Thus, Arabic language learning should be guided by an integrative, humanistic approach that combines psychological support with the maintenance of the learning ecosystem. Further research is recommended to empirically examine the relationship between psychological and sociological factors using mixed-methods designs or longitudinal studies across diverse educational institutions, to deepen understanding of the dynamics of sustainable Arabic language learning.

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