



Integrating Arabic Curriculum and *Pesantren* Cultural Identity in the Arabic Education Program of UNSIQ

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ENGLISH ABSTRACT

The Arabic language curriculum of the Arabic Language Education Program at *pesantren*-based universities has not fully accommodated the cultural values of *pesantren* as a local identity embedded within the learning process. Consequently, a dilemma arises between the effort to strengthen Arabic language proficiency in the academic sphere and the preservation of *pesantren* cultural traditions, which are the soul of education in this environment. This study aims to explore the relationship between the Arabic language curriculum and *pesantren* cultural identity within higher education, focusing on the Arabic Language Education Program (PBA) at Universitas Sains dan Al-Qur'an (UNSIQ). Employing an educational anthropology approach, this research analyzes how the curriculum shapes the habit, cultural capital, and identity of students with *pesantren* backgrounds. Utilizing qualitative methods, data were gathered through participatory observations, in-depth interviews, and document studies involving lecturers, students, and curriculum developers. The findings reveal that the curriculum emphasizes not only linguistic but also pedagogical aspects, and it integrates Islamic and socio-cultural values of *pesantren*. The Arabic curriculum at PBA UNSIQ serves as a cultural reproduction mechanism that reinforces student identity through the use of the yellow book-based learning method, traditional *pesantren* evaluation systems, and socio-religious approaches in lectures. However, challenges remain, particularly in accommodating non-*pesantren* students who must adapt to the *pesantren*-based academic traditions. To foster a more inclusive learning environment, PBA UNSIQ integrates modern learning methods, technological utilization, and mentoring programs for students with diverse educational backgrounds.

Keywords: Arabic Curriculum, *Pesantren* Cultural Identity, Cultural Reproduction

INDONESIAN ABSTRACT

Kurikulum bahasa Arab Prodi Pendidikan Bahasa Arab di Universitas berbasis Pesantren belum sepenuhnya mengakomodasi nilai-nilai budaya pesantren sebagai identitas lokal yang melekat dalam proses perkuliahan. Akibatnya, terdapat dilema antara upaya penguatan kompetensi bahasa Arab berbasis akademik dengan pelestarian tradisi budaya pesantren yang menjadi ruh pendidikan di lingkungan tersebut. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menyelidiki keterkaitan antara kurikulum Bahasa Arab dan identitas budaya pesantren dalam konteks pendidikan tinggi, dengan fokus pada Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Arab (PBA) Universitas Sains dan Al-Qur'an (UNSIQ). Melalui pendekatan antropologi pendidikan, penelitian ini menganalisis bagaimana kurikulum berperan dalam membentuk habitus, modal budaya, dan identitas mahasiswa yang berasal dari latar belakang pesantren. Dengan menggunakan metode kualitatif, data dikumpulkan melalui observasi partisipatif, wawancara mendalam, dan studi dokumentasi terhadap dosen, mahasiswa, serta pengembang kurikulum prodi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kurikulum tersebut tidak hanya menekankan pada aspek linguistik dan pedagogik, tetapi juga mengintegrasikan nilai-nilai keislaman dan sosial-budaya pesantren. Kurikulum Bahasa Arab tersebut berperan sebagai mekanisme reproduksi budaya yang memperkuat identitas mahasiswa melalui metode pembelajaran berbasis kitab kuning, sistem evaluasi khas pesantren, dan pendekatan sosio-religius dalam perkuliahan. Namun, tantangan tetap ada, terutama dalam mengakomodasi mahasiswa non-pesantren yang perlu menyesuaikan diri dengan tradisi akademik berbasis pesantren. Untuk menciptakan lingkungan belajar yang lebih inklusif, PBA UNSIQ mengintegrasikan metode pembelajaran modern, pemanfaatan teknologi, serta program mentoring bagi mahasiswa dengan latar belakang pendidikan yang berbeda.

Kata Kunci: *Kurikulum Bahasa Arab, Identitas Budaya Pesantren, Reproduksi Budaya*

Introduction

The Arabic language curriculum holds a crucial role within the context of education in Indonesia, considering Arabic's position as the liturgical language of Islam and as a bridge to understanding various aspects of culture and knowledge. In efforts to improve educational quality, the curriculum functions as a system composed of interrelated components, including objectives, learning materials, methods, and evaluation (Huda, 2017). Therefore, the development of the Arabic language curriculum must be grounded in strong philosophical, epistemological, and axiological foundations to meet national education needs and remain relevant to contemporary developments (Nuha & Faedurrohman, 2022).

Arabic language education in Indonesia does not focus solely on language mastery as a communication skill but also serves to internalize cultural values and national character (Triyanto et al., 2019). This fact aligns with the broader goals of education, namely, to shape a generation capable of actively contributing across various

sectors, including diplomacy and international relations, where Arabic proficiency becomes a highly valuable asset (Huda & Afrita, 2023). Thus, an effective Arabic language curriculum should facilitate students in developing proficient language skills while also understanding broader social and cultural contexts (Khitom & Taufik, 2023).

Meanwhile, cultural identity refers to the characteristics and values that distinguish a group or individual from others, which holds significant relevance in higher education contexts. In a multicultural society such as Indonesia, cultural identity is a foundation for understanding social dynamics and interactions among diverse groups (Fadhilah, 2024). Higher education, as one of the main pillars in shaping national character and identity, is responsible for integrating local cultural values into the curriculum so that students can comprehend and appreciate their cultural heritage (Hakim & Darajat, 2023). This is particularly important in facing globalization challenges that may threaten the existence of local cultural identities (Dewantara et al., 2023).

Higher education also plays a vital role in fostering awareness of the importance of cultural identity among students. Through inclusive and multicultural educational approaches, students are encouraged to explore and celebrate the cultural diversity of Indonesia (Sarjito, 2024). Consequently, they become not only academically educated individuals but also possess a deep understanding of their cultural identity and how it contributes to societal development (Tambunan, 2023). The integration of local wisdom values into higher education learning processes can strengthen national character and create a generation capable of adapting to change without losing their cultural identity (Astari et al., 2024).

Furthermore, cultural identity in higher education also serves as a tool for fostering solidarity and social cohesion among students from diverse backgrounds (Haerulloh et al., 2021). Students can build better relationships and create a harmonious learning environment when they understand and respect others' cultural identities. Therefore, higher education institutions need to develop curricula focusing on academic aspects and integrate cultural values to enrich students' learning experiences (Fitria et al., 2024).

However, the orientation of Arabic language education in higher education, particularly its curriculum, becomes complex given that each institution possesses its own cultural foundation and spirit, which are reflected in its vision and mission.

Although government curriculum policies and association guidelines provide standardized learning outcomes, each university prioritizes different focuses and learning orientations, especially *pesantren*-based institutions. In this context, 'pesantren-based institutions' refer to universities or study programs rooted in the traditions, values, and educational systems of *pesantren*. These institutions often integrate the *pesantren* emphasis on classical Islamic texts (*kutub turats*), moral character formation (*akhlak*), and traditional learning methods (such as *bandongan* and *sorogan*) into their formal academic curricula. As a result, Arabic language education in these institutions tends to reflect not only Arabic language proficiency but also religious literacy, cultural transmission, and identity formation aligned with the norms and epistemology of the *pesantren*.

The Arabic Language Education Program (PBA) at UNSIQ, with its motto "*kuliah plus ngaji*" (lectures plus religious study), has a unique advantage by incorporating *pesantren* culture into its curriculum. PBA UNSIQ possesses notable strengths, such as surveys of incoming students showing that the majority of PBA students have educational backgrounds as alumni of both modern and traditional *pesantren* across Java Island, and they have already acquired basic Arabic competencies from their *pesantren* education (PBA, n.d.). As a result, PBA UNSIQ has succeeded in producing graduates with competencies relevant to their fields, such as Arabic language teachers in schools, madrasahs, and *pesantren* within Islamic educational institutions. Becoming an Arabic teacher is the primary career profile for PBA graduates.

This study aims to examine the relationship between the Arabic language curriculum and *pesantren* cultural identity in the Arabic Language Education Program (PBA) at Universitas Sains and Al-Qur'an (UNSIQ). The significance of educational anthropology in understanding *pesantren* cultural dynamics within the PBA curriculum is essential, particularly in the context of higher education. Educational anthropology provides a framework for analyzing how cultural values, practices, and social norms influence learning processes and curriculum development. Understanding the cultural context in which education occurs allows educators to design more relevant and responsive to student needs. Moreover, this study contributes to identifying ways in which cultural identity can be preserved and strengthened through education, so students become not only academically educated individuals but also have a deep

understanding of their cultural identity. Therefore, this research is expected to offer significant contributions to the development of more inclusive curricula focused on strengthening cultural identity within higher education.

Previous literature shows that Arabic language curricula in Indonesia have been the focus of diverse studies, particularly regarding the integration of cultural values and character education. Huda emphasizes the importance of structured and interconnected curriculum development to improve educational quality. Istanti, 2019 describes the dynamics of curriculum policy, which often lacks direction, thereby affecting Arabic language instruction. Additionally, Kusumawati and Nurfuadi investigate the integration of *pesantren* curricula with national curricula, showing that *pesantren* education has the potential to develop a strong cultural identity. However, despite these studies, there remains a gap in exploring how Arabic language curricula specifically shape and reinforce cultural identity within *pesantren* environments, particularly in the study program. The state of the art of this study lies in its application of educational anthropology to understand the interaction between study program curricula and *pesantren* cultural identity. This research not only focuses on the academic aspects of the curriculum but also explores how local cultural values are integrated into Arabic language learning and how this affects student identity.

Methods

This study employs a qualitative approach with an educational anthropology perspective, aiming to understand how the Arabic language curriculum in *pesantren*-based institutions shapes and preserves the cultural identity of *santri* (Islamic boarding school students). The focus of this research is the curriculum implemented in the Arabic Language Education Program (PBA) at Universitas Sains Al-Qur'an (UNSIQ) and how this curriculum interacts with the scholarly traditions of *pesantren*.

This research was conducted in the academic environment of UNSIQ and several partner *pesantrens* involved in the development of the Arabic language curriculum at the university. The research subjects included lecturers, *santri* students, and curriculum developers responsible for designing the instructional materials. To obtain comprehensive data, this study employed multiple complementary techniques. *First*, the researcher engaged in participatory observation by directly observing Arabic language

learning processes in both classroom and *pesantren* environments, allowing for an immersive understanding of instructional dynamics and student engagement. *In addition*, in-depth interviews were conducted with lecturers, santri students, and curriculum developers to explore their perspectives on Arabic language teaching and its relationship to *pesantren* cultural identity, thus capturing a range of insider insights. A total of 8 informants were purposively selected, consisting of 3 Arabic language lecturers, 4 *santri students* from various semesters, and 1 curriculum developer involved in the design of the Arabic language education curriculum at UNSIQ. The selection criteria included: (1) active involvement in Arabic language teaching and learning activities; (2) a background in *pesantren* education (for both lecturers and students); and (3) a significant role in curriculum design and implementation (for curriculum developers). This purposive selection aims to ensure that informants have sufficient experience and insights relevant to the research focus. *Finally*, a thorough document study was undertaken, during which curriculum documents, syllabi, and teaching materials used in Arabic language instruction were systematically analyzed to identify thematic patterns and alignment with *pesantren* values. By integrating these methods, the study ensured a rich, triangulated dataset that reflects both practice and policy in Arabic language education.

The collected data were analyzed through thematic analysis, in which findings from observations, interviews, and document studies were categorized based on emerging patterns concerning the relationship between the Arabic language curriculum and *pesantren* cultural identity. The analysis process involved data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion drawing to provide an in-depth understanding of the interconnection between these two aspects.

The Arabic Language Curriculum at PBA UNSIQ from the Perspective of Educational Anthropology

The Arabic language curriculum in the Arabic Language Education Program (PBA) plays a crucial role in shaping the cultural identity of its students. This identity is not limited to linguistic aspects but is also deeply connected to the cultural values embedded in the Arabic language, which carries religious, historical, and social dimensions. From the educational anthropology perspective, the curriculum functions as

an agent of cultural transmission, shaping students' ways of thinking, behaving, and identifying themselves within a particular community.

The Arabic language curriculum at PBA UNSIQ and its representation of *pesantren* culture include several aspects:

- Linguistic Aspects: such as Arabic Phonology (*'Ilm al-Ashwat*), Morphology (*Sharf*), Syntax (*Nahwu*), Lexicology, Sociolinguistics, Psycholinguistics, Arabic Semantics (*Fiqh Lughah*), and Rhetoric (*Balaghah*).
- Language Proficiency Aspects: including Listening Skills (*Maharah Istima*), Speaking Skills (*Maharah Kalam*), Reading Skills (*Maharah Qiraah*), Writing Skills (*Maharah Kitabah*), Conversation and Public Speaking (*Muhadatsah-Khitobah*), Dictation and Composition (*Imla'-Insya*), Reading Comprehension and Memorization (*Muthala'ah-Mahfudzat*), Translation (*Tarjamah*), Arabic Correspondence (*Murasalah 'Arabiyyah*), Presentation (*Taqdim al-Maqalah*), Debate (*Munadharah*), and Arabic for Specific Purposes (*al-Arabiyyah li Aghradl Khasshah*).
- Pedagogical Aspects: including Arabic Language Teaching Methodology, Curriculum Development and Review, Arabic Language Instructional Design, Learning Media and Resources, Arabic Language Learning Technologies, Evaluation Systems, Learning Psychology, and Arabic Language Educational Research Methods.
- Islamic Studies Aspects: including Qur'anic Sciences (*Ulumul Qur'an*), Jurisprudence and its Principles (*Fiqh wa Ushuluhu*), Educational Tafsir (*Tafsir Tarbawi*), Qur'an Recitation and Articulation (*Tajwid and Tahsin al-Qur'an*), and Hadith Studies (*'Ulumul Hadits*).
- Socio-Cultural Aspects (Integration of Islamic and UNSIQ Values): including Qur'an and Science, *Aswaja Nahdliyyah*, Qur'anic Rhetoric (*Balaghatul Qur'an*), Qur'an Syntax (*I'rab al-Qur'an*), Qur'anic Calligraphy, Qur'anic Semantic Studies (*Ilmu Ma'anil Qur'an*), Applied Grammar for Tafsir (*Tathbiq al-Qawaid littafsir*), Reading and Debate (*Mutholaah and Munadharah*), *Pesantren* Studies, Arabic Language Teaching in *Pesantren*, History of Arabic Language and Culture, Logic (*Ilm Manthiq*), Qur'an Memorization (*Tahfidz al-Qur'an*), and Qur'anic Chanting (*Naghom al-Qur'an*).

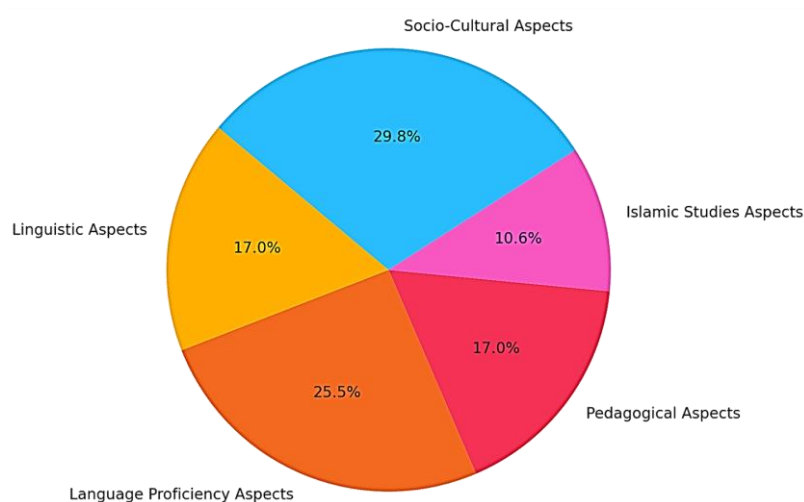


Figure 1. Arabic Curriculum at PBA UNSIQ that represents *Pesantren* Culture

Table 1. Curriculum Distribution

Category	Number of Sub-Aspects	Percentage (%)
Linguistic Aspects	8	17.02%
Language Proficiency	12	25.53%
Pedagogical Aspects	8	17.02%
Islamic Studies	5	10.64%
Socio-Cultural	14	29.79%

The structure of the curriculum reflects a balanced distribution of courses designed to produce graduates with strong Arabic language competencies, both theoretically and practically. Students are equipped with in-depth knowledge of linguistic aspects and language skills, enabling them to use Arabic effectively in various communication contexts. Additionally, the curriculum emphasizes pedagogical mastery, ensuring that graduates are not only proficient in Arabic but also skilled in designing, managing, and evaluating Arabic language teaching professionally.

Moreover, strengthening Islamic insights serves as a vital foundation in shaping graduates with strong moral character, understanding the values of the Qur'an and Hadith, and possessing a solid foundation in Islamic scholarship. Equally important, the curriculum is designed with *pesantren* cultural and local integration, enabling graduates to preserve, develop, and apply *pesantren* traditions in their academic, social, and professional lives. Thus, the PBA program aims to produce competent Arabic language educators with Islamic insight and *pesantren* spirit.

The curriculum represents Arabic culture closely linked to Islam, encouraging students to build cultural identities that reflect either global Islamic culture (pan-Islamism) or a hybrid of local *pesantren* culture and Arabic culture. The formation of students' cultural identities within this higher education context rooted in Arabic and Islamic culture can be analyzed through three main processes: enculturation, socialization, and adaptation and acculturation. These processes interact and contribute to forming complex and hybrid student identities.

Higher education curricula that integrate Arabic language and culture promote student engagement with Islamic values and practices, facilitating enculturation whereby students absorb and internalize cultural norms (Muassomah, 2023). The significant influence of Arab culture on educational settings highlights the need for cultural inclusion, recognizing the diverse backgrounds of students while integrating Arabic heritage into learning experiences (Tovar-Gálvez, 2021). Furthermore, the socialization process is critical as students interact within culturally pluralistic environments, validating various cultural contributions and fostering a hybrid identity. The concept of adaptation illustrates how students negotiate their identities, balancing local practices with global Islamic values

Enculturation

Enculturation refers to the process by which individuals internalize specific cultural values and norms. For PBA UNSIQ students, this process involves learning Arabic not just as a communication tool but also as a medium for understanding and embodying the cultural values it carries. For example, the frequent use of expressions like "*jazakallahu khairan*" and "*assalamu'alaikum*" reflects deeply rooted Islamic values and becomes part of their identity as individuals connected to Arab-Islamic culture. Research has shown that integrating local *pesantren* culture into the curriculum enhances appreciation for cultural heritage, which applies equally to Arabic language learning contexts (Sendana et al., 2024). In this regard, the teaching materials used in the classroom also reflect these cultural values. Textbooks and learning modules often incorporate religious texts such as hadith, Quranic verses, and classical Arabic literature (*kutub turats*), which are closely tied to *pesantren* tradition. Furthermore, examples and dialogues in instructional materials are typically contextualized with Islamic greetings,

ethical expressions, and scenarios related to daily life in *pesantren*, thereby reinforcing cultural and religious identity alongside language acquisition

Socialization

Academic socialization also plays a significant role in shaping students' cultural identity. Through interactions in academic forums and extracurricular activities, PBA UNSIQ students learn to communicate and engage using Arabic. Activities such as *kitab kuning* discussions and Arabic speech competitions not only enhance their language skills but also reinforce their cultural identities as individuals closely linked to *pesantren* culture. Studies have shown that incorporating local wisdom into religious education can holistically enhance students' understanding of both religious and cultural values (Haluti et al., 2024).

Adaptation and Acculturation

Adaptation and acculturation involve students not only passively accepting Arabic culture but also integrating it with their local cultures. This results in a unique hybrid identity combining Arabic and local values. Research shows that integrative education strengthens local cultural identities while preparing young generations to navigate globalization wisely (Astari et al., 2024). Thus, students develop identities reflecting this blend, enriching their learning experiences (Istianah et al., 2024).

Cultural Reproduction in the Implementation of the Arabic Language Curriculum at PBA UNSIQ

From the perspective of educational anthropology, the Arabic language curriculum at PBA UNSIQ can be analyzed through the lens of Pierre Bourdieu's **Theory of Cultural Reproduction**, as this curriculum fosters a specific habitus that leads students to internalize *pesantren* norms and values as part of their academic and social identity. Bourdieu's theory provides a conceptual framework to explain how social and cultural structures interact to sustain and reproduce inequalities within society. The Arabic language curriculum at PBA UNSIQ is designed not only to teach language but also to internalize *pesantren* culture as a core element of students' academic and social formation.

Through Bourdieu's perspective, this curriculum can be analyzed across several key dimensions that reflect the interplay of social and cultural structures shaping student experiences. Bourdieu introduced essential concepts such as **habitus**, **cultural capital**, and **field**, which together form the framework through which individuals engage with their social environments and gain access to cultural resources.

Habitus

Habitus refers to systems of dispositions shaped by an individual's social context, encompassing internalized ways of thinking, acting, and feeling based on one's background. Research has shown that student habitus is significantly influenced by family capital, including education, social status, and economic resources (Jæger & Breen, 2016; Moll et al., 2023). In the context of the PBA UNSIQ curriculum, student habitus is formed through lectures based on *kitab kuning* (classical Islamic texts), memorization of Arabic grammatical rules, *pesantren*-specific teaching methodologies, and *pesantren* ethics. Through this process, students unconsciously internalize values such as discipline, modesty, respect for lecturers, and reverence for knowledge. These values reflect the long-standing cultural structure of *pesantren* within Indonesia's Islamic tradition. For instance, learning methods such as *sorogan* and *bandongan* in courses like *Muthala'ah* and *Munadharah*, as well as group deliberation methods in courses like *Tathbiq al-Qawaid*, exemplify *pesantren* learning styles that cultivate respect for academic hierarchy and scholarly transmission (*sanad*).

Cultural Capital

Cultural capital refers to the knowledge, skills, and education that provide individuals with advantages within educational and social contexts (Edgerton & Roberts, 2014; Liu, 2019). Often inherited across generations, this capital perpetuates cycles of inequality (Anastasia, 2023). The PBA UNSIQ curriculum reproduces cultural capital by transmitting valued knowledge, skills, and practices. Students not only acquire Arabic linguistic proficiency and pedagogical expertise but also internalize Islamic traditions rooted in *pesantren* culture, which become vital components of their competencies.

Cultural capital, particularly in the context of Islamic education, manifests in three primary forms that collectively contribute to an individual's status within this sphere. *Firstly*, embodied cultural capital is characterized by a person's ability to engage

with classical Islamic texts, notably the *kitab kuning*, which are traditionally read without vowel marks. This proficiency is indicative not just of literacy, but also of an advanced rhetorical skill set utilized in Islamic discourse, often employing logic as derived from *Ilm Manthiq*, and a deep comprehension of classical Arabic texts. Such competencies are developed through rigorous education and personal effort, reflecting the cultural practices and intellectual heritage of the Islamic tradition. *Secondly*, institutionalized cultural capital is formalized through certifications that signify one's mastery of religious knowledge, such as Qur'an memorization, known as *Tahfidz al-Qur'an*. These credentials are not merely symbolic but serve as validated indicators of expertise, often substantiated by academic degrees awarded by recognized institutions. *Lastly*, objectified cultural capital is evident in the availability and accessibility of a variety of resources, including both classical and contemporary Arabic texts, specialized dictionaries, and various distinctive *pesantren* Islamic resources. These resources can exist in physical forms, such as printed books, as well as in digital formats, thus expanding access to knowledge and promoting an enriched understanding of Islamic teachings. Together, these forms of cultural capital not only enhance the educational experience of students within the *pesantren* system but also play a crucial role in establishing their credibility and authority in the religious domain.

Field

Bourdieu's concept of **field** refers to social arenas where individuals compete for cultural and social capital. Each field has its own rules and norms that shape participation and success. In the field of Islamic education, students from more privileged backgrounds often have greater access to educational resources, such as tutoring and social networks, which support academic success (Mills, 2008). Research indicates that disparities in access contribute to educational outcome differences across social classes (Akom, 2008; Fatjerin & Budirahayu, 2021). PBA UNSIQ operates within the academic field of Islamic scholarship, with its norms and standards. Within this field, students compete to gain recognition through Arabic language proficiency and mastery of classical texts. PBA graduates also have opportunities to enter professions such as Arabic teachers, translators, and religious scholars (*ulama*), though competition is shaped by their accumulated cultural capital.

While Bourdieu's theory acknowledges that cultural reproduction can reinforce inequality, it also recognizes the potential for transformation. Students from less privileged backgrounds can leverage education to elevate their social status, though challenges persist (Azaola, 2012; Steinmetz, 2011). Studies show that by utilizing their cultural capital, individuals can shift their social position (Yosso, 2005).

Although the PBA curriculum functions to reproduce *pesantren* cultural values, it also opens pathways for social mobility and transformation. Students with *pesantren* backgrounds have an advantage in adapting to familiar learning systems. The *pesantren*-based curriculum structure, rooted in Islamic traditions since the program's founding in 1994, tends to maintain conservative values. However, it also offers opportunities for students without *pesantren* backgrounds to develop and achieve social mobility through Arabic language mastery.

Moreover, the integration of technology and modern learning methods into the curriculum creates space for innovative approaches to Arabic language education that are more inclusive and adaptive to contemporary developments.

The conceptual mapping of cultural reproduction theory within the analysis of the PBA UNSIQ curriculum is thus critical for understanding how educational structures reproduce or transform social and cultural identities within the academic context of Islamic higher education.

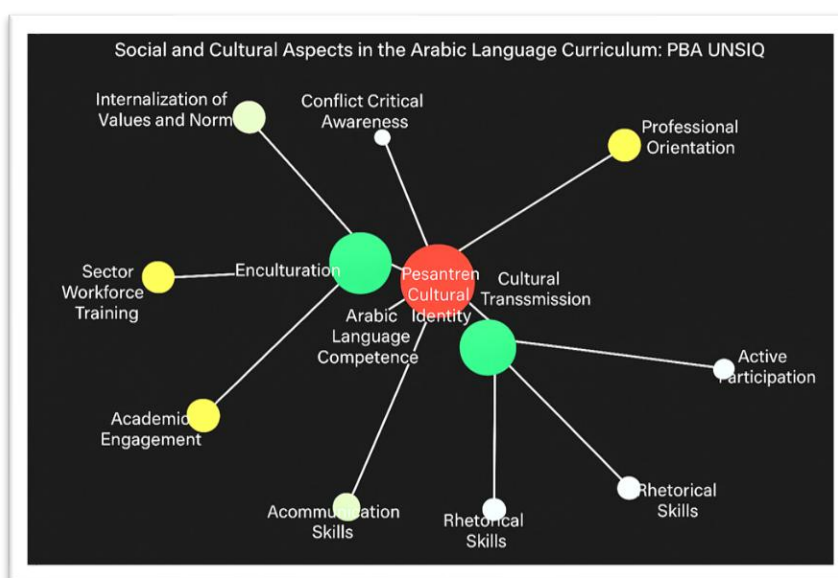


Figure 2. Social and Cultural Aspects in the Arabic Language Curriculum of PBA UNSIQ

The Impact of Pesantren Cultural Identity on Arabic Language Learning at UNSIQ

The educational background of *pesantren* students significantly influences how they engage with course materials, particularly in mastering the Arabic language.

First, PBA students from *pesantren* backgrounds generally possess strong foundational knowledge in Arabic, especially in grammar (*nahwu*) and vocabulary. Previous studies have shown that *pesantren* alumni tend to grasp and apply Arabic more effectively in academic settings than students from general education backgrounds (Keysha et al., 2023). This advantage arises from the *pesantren* curriculum's emphasis on intensive Arabic instruction, providing students with substantial cultural capital to practice the language during their university studies (Anisah & Abidin, 2024).

Second, student motivation in Arabic courses at PBA UNSIQ is heavily influenced by the religious values instilled during their *pesantren* education. These values, including discipline and religious commitment, enhance students' learning ethos (Solekhah, 2022). Research similarly indicates that students from *pesantren* backgrounds are more motivated to learn Arabic, viewing it as a religious obligation and an expression of their cultural identity (Keysha et al., 2023). This finding aligns with other studies suggesting that *pesantren* education positively contributes to students' motivation to study Arabic (Selmia et al., 2022).

Third, the presence of *pesantren*-background students in Arabic courses also shapes classroom dynamics. Several notable impacts include:

- **Dominance in Religious Discussions:** *Pesantren* students are often more active during discussions of classical Islamic texts, as they possess broader references and stronger textual familiarity. However, in some cases at PBA UNSIQ, this dominance can cause students from non-*pesantren* backgrounds to feel insecure or less confident participating in class.
- **Perceived Authority:** *Pesantren* students are often regarded as authorities in Islamic subjects, earning them higher respect from peers. This dynamic can create a social hierarchy within the classroom, where non-*pesantren* students may feel they lack sufficient cultural capital to contribute meaningfully.
- **Social Grouping:** *Pesantren* students tend to form tight-knit groups, which can limit interactions with peers from general educational backgrounds. As a result,

the exchange of diverse learning approaches may be hindered, even though student diversity is one of PBA's greatest strengths in Arabic language learning.

Despite these strengths, PBA UNSIQ students from *pesantren* backgrounds also face certain challenges. They may struggle to adapt to modern, technology-based instructional methods commonly used in higher education (Anwar et al., 2023; Khasanah & Tantowi, 2023). Additionally, diverse educational backgrounds within the same classroom can lead to differences in comprehension and receptiveness to course materials, posing challenges for lecturers in delivering effective instruction (Lestari et al., 2024; Selmia et al., 2022).

Moreover, while *pesantren*-background students excel in Arabic language mastery, they sometimes encounter difficulties in adjusting to the analytical and critical thinking approaches required in university-level academic discourse. Accustomed to memorization and textual understanding, these students may struggle to develop deeper argumentation skills and critical analysis of Arabic texts. Additionally, while they are familiar with reading and understanding texts, academic writing in Arabic, such as composing essays or research reports, remains a significant challenge for many.

Another common obstacle involves the integration of technology into learning. Many *pesantren*-background students are less accustomed to digital tools, such as linguistic applications, online journals, multimedia-based instruction, and AI-supported platforms. These students are more familiar with traditional face-to-face learning methods, often requiring additional time to adapt to technology-enhanced learning environments.

Within this research context, lecturers and academic leaders at PBA UNSIQ need to design instructional methods that accommodate students' diverse educational backgrounds. Implementing interactive, experience-based teaching strategies can bridge the gap between *pesantren* and non-*pesantren* students (Ilmiani et al., 2020; Wahdah et al., 2022).

To foster a more inclusive learning environment in the Arabic Language Education Program at Universitas Sains Al-Qur'an (UNSIQ), several strategic initiatives have been adopted. *Firstly*, there is an integration of modern learning methods which combines classical *pesantren* approaches with contemporary analytical academic

techniques. For instance, in courses such as *Muthala'ah* and *Munadharah*, traditional pedagogical methods like *sorogan* (a technique involving one-on-one instruction) and *bandongan* (a group learning approach) have been enhanced with critical discussion-based learning. This dual approach encourages *pesantren* students to transcend rote memorization and engage in reflective and argumentative discourse concerning classical Arabic texts, thereby fostering a deeper understanding and application of the language as well as the underlying cultural and scholarly contexts.

Secondly, special provisions have been made to support non-*pesantren* students, who may face challenges in adapting to the curricular demands of the program. To address this issue, dedicated mentoring programs and supplementary classes have been established to assist these students in developing essential skills necessary for reading and comprehending *Kitab Kuning*, an integral component of the curriculum that encompasses classical Islamic texts. These supportive sessions, conducted by knowledgeable lecturers and senior students, create an environment where these learners can gain confidence and proficiency in navigating the complexities of classical Arabic structures and their corresponding Islamic contexts.

Then, the program has embraced technology integration as a means of enhancing the educational experience. Digital tools such as e-learning platforms, AI-powered language applications, and various multimedia resources have been introduced, aiming to create a more interactive and flexible learning atmosphere. These technological advancements allow students to access a wealth of resources, including digital dictionaries, AI-assisted grammar exercises, and instructional videos that leverage multimedia elements. This not only improves comprehension but also significantly increases student engagement with the material.

By combining traditional methodologies, adaptive mentoring, and technology integration, the learning environment at PBA UNSIQ has become increasingly inclusive, dynamic, and responsive to contemporary developments. This comprehensive approach ensures that all students, whether from *pesantren* or general educational backgrounds, have equal opportunities to thrive in their Arabic language studies.

Conclusion

This study concludes that the Arabic language curriculum in the Arabic Language Education Program (PBA) at UNSIQ functions not merely as an academic instrument but also as a powerful mechanism for the cultural reproduction of *pesantren* values. The curriculum effectively shapes students' habits, cultural capital, and identity through kitab kuning-based learning approaches, the application of *pesantren*-specific pedagogies, and the internalization of Islamic values throughout the teaching and learning process. By integrating *pesantren* intellectual traditions into the formal structure of higher education curricula, students not only gain proficiency in the Arabic language but also become embedded within a *pesantren* cultural ecosystem that influences their academic perspectives, attitudes, and behaviors in both academic and social settings.

The primary contribution of this research lies in offering theoretical and practical insights into how *pesantren*-based curricula can serve as models for fostering students' cultural identities in higher education environments. Theoretically, this study enriches educational anthropology by demonstrating that curriculum dynamics cannot be separated from the cultural constructions of institutions, particularly *pesantren*. Practically, this research encourages the development of curricula that are more adaptive and flexible, integrating traditional *pesantren* methods with modern academic approaches. Additionally, the incorporation of Arabic language learning technologies and the reinforcement of mentoring programs for non-*pesantren* students are key recommendations to ensure that the learning process is inclusive and responsive to the diverse backgrounds of students.

Nevertheless, this study acknowledges several limitations. Its focus on a single study program within one *pesantren*-based institution means that its findings cannot be fully generalized to other *pesantren*-based higher education institutions with different characteristics. Furthermore, the study has yet to explore in depth the influence of national curriculum policies on the sustainability of *pesantren*-based curricula at the higher education level. Future research is therefore recommended to conduct comparative studies across various *pesantren*-based universities and to analyze more broadly how *pesantren*-specific curricula can be harmonized with global demands without losing the local cultural values that define their identity.

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