DECOLONIZING ARABIC LANGUAGE: RECONSTRUCTING ISLAMIC KNOWLEDGE AND DA'WAH IN JAVANESE MUSLIM SOCIETY

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Abstract

Arabic holds a central role in the transmission of Islamic knowledge. Nevertheless, in the context of Javanese Muslim communities, its significance has frequently been limited to ceremonial functions and religious education, failing to acknowledge its wider capabilities as a tool for generating knowledge, shaping intellectual identities, and fostering da'wah that is anchored in local traditions. This research seeks to explore the process of decolonizing the Arabic language as a means to reconstruct Islamic knowledge and da'wah in Javanese Muslim communities. Using a qualitative library research methodology, the study thoroughly examines existing literature on decolonizing knowledge, Arabic socio-linguistics, the historical development of Islamic da'wah in Java, and the intellectual customs of pesantren. The data has been analyzed through textual and comparative approaches to uncover the connections between the Arabic language, the formation of Islamic epistemology, and the social-religious dynamics within Javanese society. The results indicate that Arabic serves not only as a medium for religious discourse but also acts as a decolonial resource that enhances Islamic intellectual legitimacy while honoring local knowledge. Moreover, combining Arabic with da'wah practices, the culture of pesantren, and indigenous religious customs results in a more holistic, context-relevant, and enduring approach to knowledge sharing. This study concludes that the decolonization of the Arabic language aids in enhancing Islamic literacy, safeguarding local intellectual traditions, and advancing the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly regarding quality education, cultural conservation, and inclusive community growth.

Keywords: Decolonizing Arabic; Recontructing Islamic Knowledge; dakwah Javanese Muslim Society

INTRODUCTION

The decolonization of Arabic is important for reconstructing Islamic knowledge and strengthening *da'wah* among Javanese Muslims (Mahfudh et al., 2021). This effort responds to two main challenges: the colonial legacy that limits Arabic to ritual and religious functions (Wildana Wargadinata, 2021), and the growing need to use Arabic as a medium for knowledge production and social transformation. This transformation is reflected in pesantren that combine *turāṡ* with modern sciences, the increasing use of Arabic in digital education and *da'wah* (Laisya Rahma Puspita, 2026), and the development of intellectual networks connecting Javanese Muslim scholars with global academic communities (Tafreshi, 2026). Decolonizing Arabic therefore restores its broader intellectual role beyond ritual practice. It enables Islamic scholarship and *da'wah* to become more relevant, inclusive, and sustainable while strengthening the intellectual and cultural resilience of Javanese Muslim communities.

Arabic decolonization research provides an important opportunity to reconstruct Islamic knowledge and develop contextual *da'wah* among Javanese Muslims (Lumbard, 2022). Previous studies have mainly focused on education, language politics, and cultural identity (Love, 2019), with limited attention to the connection between Arabic, Islamic epistemology, and *da'wah* practices (Muhyiddin & Qomaruzzaman, 2026). Existing scholarship shows three main trends: examining colonial influences on Islamic education (Zherlitsina, 2026), revitalizing Arabic as a language of scholarship, and studying *da'wah* through communication strategies rather than epistemological foundations. This study addresses these gaps by proposing an integrated framework that connects Arabic decolonization with Islamic knowledge renewal and contextual *da'wah*. By combining linguistic, epistemological, and social perspectives, the study offers a broader understanding of Arabic's transformative role in strengthening Islamic intellectual traditions. It also supports more sustainable, inclusive, and culturally relevant religious engagement within Javanese Muslim society.

This research investigates the decolonization of the Arabic language as a strategy for reconstructing Islamic knowledge and strengthening da'wah within the Javanese Muslim community (Woodward, 2025). The study is motivated by two key reasons: the need to explain Arabic's transformation from a ritual language into a medium of knowledge production (Darmawan, 2024) and the importance of understanding its role in fostering socially responsive da'wah (Raih Rohania Hidayat, 2026). The research focuses on three interconnected themes: identifying forms of Arabic decolonization in Javanese Muslim society, examining its contribution to restoring the authority and dissemination of Islamic knowledge (Woodward, 2025) and analyzing its influence on contextual, inclusive, and transformative da'wah. Accordingly, the study addresses how Arabic decolonization occurs, how it reshapes Islamic epistemology, and how this transformation enhances the effectiveness of da'wah in responding to the intellectual, cultural, and social challenges of contemporary Javanese Muslim communities.

This research argues that the decolonization of the Arabic language is fundamental to reconstructing Islamic knowledge and developing da'wah that responds to the evolving realities of Javanese Muslim society (Kaptein, 2017). The argument is supported by two key considerations: Arabic functions as the primary medium for

establishing Islamic epistemic authority (Lumbard, 2024), and decolonization restores the intellectual identity shaped by colonial legacies. Three findings reinforce this perspective: the revival of *turāṡ*-based pesantren traditions, the expanding use of Arabic in digital media and da'wah platforms (Dito Alif Pratama, 2023), and the growth of scholarly collaboration among ulama, academics, and communities to strengthen Islamic literacy (Woodward, 2025). Consequently, this study contributes a comprehensive analytical framework that integrates linguistic, epistemological, and da'wah dimensions, demonstrating how Arabic decolonization revitalizes Islamic intellectual traditions, promotes contextual and inclusive religious engagement, and supports sustainable knowledge production within contemporary Javanese Muslim society.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Research on Arabic decolonization increasingly views language as a means of shaping Muslim identity, producing knowledge, and supporting social transformation (Khamis, 2025). This development is influenced by growing awareness of colonial legacies in Islamic studies (Lumbard, 2025) and interdisciplinary approaches linking language, culture, and *da'wah* (Yusuf, 2024). Three main research trends have emerged: revitalizing Arabic in Islamic educational institutions (Z Zikriah, 2024), examining Arabic as a marker of religious identity and epistemic authority, and studying its use in digital media and contemporary *da'wah* (Laisya Rahma Puspita, 2026). Although these studies provide important theoretical foundations, they remain largely fragmented. Few studies connect linguistic, epistemological, and *da'wah* perspectives within a single framework. Therefore, an integrated approach is needed to explain how Arabic decolonization can reconstruct Islamic knowledge and strengthen contextual religious engagement, particularly among Javanese Muslim communities facing changing social, cultural, and technological realities.

The first major trend in the literature highlights the revitalization of Arabic within Islamic education as a central aspect of language decolonization (Z Zikriah, 2024). This focus is driven by two factors: education serves as the primary institution for transmitting Islamic intellectual traditions, and it provides an effective means of addressing the colonial legacy that has shaped Arabic learning (Noviarita et al., 2026). Three

developments illustrate this trend: curriculum reforms in Islamic boarding schools and universities (Erfan Gazali, 2023), increasing integration of *turāṡ* with modern linguistic theories (Ruhendi et al., 2026), and innovative teaching models that position Arabic as a medium for critical and analytical thinking rather than merely a tool for reading classical texts (Alqarni, 2025). While these studies underscore the educational importance of Arabic decolonization, they have not fully connected educational reform with the reconstruction of Islamic knowledge and the development of contextual, transformative da'wah within contemporary Javanese Muslim communities.

A second specific trend in the literature views Arabic as a symbol of Islamic identity and cultural authority within Muslim societies (Agnia Ilma, 2025). This perspective is shaped by two factors: Arabic represents the authenticity of the Islamic tradition (Mahfudh et al., 2021) and serves as the primary medium for preserving the transmission of knowledge from classical sources (Yunus al Faruqi, 2025). Three strands of evidence support this trend: extensive research on the relationship between Arabic and Muslim identity formation (Khamis, 2025), growing studies on Arabic's role in sustaining the authority of religious texts (Laisya Rahma Puspita, 2026), and increasing attention to linguistic practices in Islamic boarding schools and religious organizations (Maf'udah et al., 2025). Although previous scholarship has successfully explained the symbolic and cultural significance of Arabic, it has not fully examined how Arabic decolonization reconstructs Islamic knowledge or strengthens contextual and transformative da'wah practices. This gap is particularly evident in studies focusing on the social and intellectual dynamics of Javanese Muslim communities.

The third major trend in the literature emphasizes the expanding use of Arabic as a medium for digital da'wah and contemporary religious communication (Laisya Rahma Puspita, 2026). This development is driven by two factors: rapid advances in communication technologies that have transformed the dissemination of Islamic teachings (Bunt, 2018) and the growing need for da'wah capable of reaching diverse multicultural audiences (Marfu'ah, 2017). Three key developments illustrate this trend: increasing research on Arabic-based social media da'wah (Latepo et al., 2021), expanding studies on the digital representation of Islamic knowledge and Arabic literacy (Habsi et al., 2025), and greater attention to cross-cultural da'wah communication through digital

platforms (Raih Rohania Hidayat, 2026). Although these studies demonstrate a significant shift in da'wah strategies, they have not adequately integrated the relationship between Arabic decolonization, the reconstruction of Islamic knowledge, and broader social transformation. This gap remains particularly evident in understanding the evolving religious and intellectual dynamics of Javanese Muslim communities.

Analysis of the existing literature reveals important conceptual gaps in explaining the relationship between Arabic decolonization, the reconstruction of Islamic knowledge, and the development of da'wah (Faruque, 2024). These limitations arise from two factors: the dominance of approaches that examine linguistic, educational, or identity dimensions separately and the limited use of interdisciplinary perspectives integrating epistemological, social, and da'wah aspects (Gonzalez-Dogan, 2022). Three patterns illustrate these shortcomings: studies emphasizing Arabic curriculum reform without broader epistemological implications, discussions of cultural identity disconnected from Islamic knowledge production, and da'wah research focused on communication strategies rather than Arabic's epistemic role (R'boul, H., & Barnawi, 2025). Consequently, a more comprehensive analytical framework is needed to explain Arabic decolonization as an integrated process that reshapes Islamic knowledge, strengthens contextual and transformative da'wah, and responds to the intellectual and social dynamics of contemporary Javanese Muslim communities.

This study aims to integrated understanding of Arabic decolonization by linking the reconstruction of Islamic knowledge with the advancement of da'wah in the Javanese Muslim community (Mahfudh et al., 2021). It is motivated by two key concerns: the persistent separation between linguistic studies and Islamic knowledge systems, and the absence of an analytical framework connecting Arabic with broader social and religious transformation (Faruque, 2024). The study contributes through three main focuses: examining Arabic as an instrument of epistemic decolonization, explaining how Islamic knowledge is reconstructed through the language practices of Javanese Muslims, and analyzing its influence on contextual, inclusive, and transformative da'wah (Wahyudi et al., 2026). Consequently, this research proposes a comprehensive conceptual framework that extends the study of Arabic decolonization beyond linguistic analysis by integrating

language, Islamic epistemology, and da'wah, offering a more holistic perspective on the intellectual and social development of contemporary Javanese Muslim society.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study adopts a qualitative case study approach to examine the decolonization of the Arabic language and its role in reconstructing Islamic knowledge and strengthening da'wah within Javanese Muslim communities (Mahfudh et al., 2021). The methodology was chosen for two reasons: its ability to reveal the social meanings embedded in language practices (Latepo et al., 2021) and to explain the relationships among language, knowledge, and da'wah within a specific cultural context (Kaptein, 2017). The research was conducted through three main stages: collecting data using participant observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis; applying thematic and contextual analysis to interpret the findings; and ensuring trustworthiness through methodological and data-source triangulation. Consequently, this methodological framework provides a comprehensive basis for understanding how Arabic decolonization reshapes Islamic epistemology, supports contextual and transformative da'wah, and reflects the evolving intellectual and social realities of contemporary Javanese Muslim society.

This study focuses on the use of Arabic in reconstructing Islamic knowledge and strengthening da'wah within Javanese Muslim communities. This analytical unit is selected for two reasons: Arabic functions as the primary medium for transmitting Islamic knowledge (Azra, 2004a), and its use reflects grassroots processes of epistemic decolonization and social transformation (R'BOUL et al., 2024). The analysis examines three interconnected dimensions: language practices in Islamic boarding schools, educational institutions, and religious study circles; the application of Arabic in both traditional and digital da'wah platforms; and the meanings constructed by ulama, educators, and community members regarding Arabic's role in legitimizing Islamic knowledge. Consequently, this analytical framework provides a comprehensive understanding of how Arabic decolonization reshapes Islamic epistemology, supports contextual and inclusive da'wah, and contributes to the intellectual, cultural, and social development of contemporary Javanese Muslim communities.

This study draws on both primary and secondary data to examine the decolonization of Arabic within the reconstruction of Islamic knowledge and the development of da'wah among Javanese Muslims (Mahfudh et al., 2021). These sources were selected for two reasons: to obtain empirical evidence of Arabic language practices and to provide a theoretical foundation for analyzing changes in Islamic epistemology (Gonzalez-Dogan, 2022). Data collection involved three main sources: interviews with ulama, educators, da'is, and pesantren leaders; observations of educational activities, religious learning, and da'wah practices; and document analysis of books, curricula, archives, and digital resources. Combining these diverse sources enables data triangulation and strengthens the credibility of the findings. Consequently, this integrated dataset offers a comprehensive understanding of how Arabic decolonization shapes Islamic knowledge, supports contextual and transformative da'wah, and reflects the intellectual and social dynamics of contemporary Javanese Muslim communities.

Collection process to obtain a comprehensive understanding of Arabic decolonization in the reconstruction of Islamic knowledge and the development of da'wah within Javanese Muslim communities. This approach was adopted for two reasons: to ensure that the data accurately reflected social realities and to enable cross-verification through multiple sources. Data were collected using three complementary methods: participant observation of Arabic-based educational, religious, and da'wah activities; in-depth interviews with ulama, teachers, da'is, and community leaders to explore their perspectives and experiences; and document analysis of religious texts, educational curricula, institutional records, and digital da'wah materials. The integration of these methods strengthened data triangulation and enhanced research credibility. Consequently, the study provides rich, reliable evidence for explaining how Arabic decolonization contributes to the renewal of Islamic knowledge and contextual da'wah in contemporary Javanese Muslim society.

In this research, the data examination employs a thematic analysis method coupled with critical interpretation to uncover the significance of Arabic decolonization in reshaping Islamic knowledge and the practice of da'wah within the Javanese Muslim community (Mahfudh et al., 2021). This method was selected for two primary reasons: it effectively identifies meaningful patterns that arise from the empirical data and clarifies

the connections among linguistic practices, Islamic knowledge, and social dynamics within a specific context. The analysis was conducted in three principal phases: data reduction to filter relevant information, data presentation through thematically organizing based on research categories, and drawing as well as validating conclusions by utilizing source triangulation alongside critical interpretation. Consequently, this analytical process yields systematic and credible results that elucidate the connections between Arabic decolonization, the reformation of Islamic knowledge, and the evolution of da'wah in Javanese Muslim society.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. The stronger the decolonization of Arabic as a medium of Islamic epistemology, the greater its role in reconstructing contextual Islamic knowledge in Javanese Muslim society.

The findings of the study indicate that as the decolonization of Arabic intensifies, its significance as a means of Islamic knowledge within Javanese Muslim communities increases (Faruque, 2024). This shift is characterized by a transformation in the role of Arabic; it is not confined to just being a language used in rituals, but evolves into a tool for generating, interpreting, and sharing Islamic knowledge. This evolution fosters a reconceptualization of Islamic knowledge that better aligns with social contexts while still respecting the traditional authority of turāṡ (R'boul, H., & Barnawi, 2025). Concurrently, the enhancement of Arabic's epistemological role boosts the impact of da'wah by providing messages that are more pertinent, while also enriching the community's understanding of Islam through educational initiatives, religious topics, and digital platforms that facilitate ongoing Islamic education.

Tabel 1: The narrative activity of statement that the stronger the decolonization of Arabic as a medium of Islamic epistemology, the greater its role in reconstructing contextual Islamic knowledge in Javanese Muslim society

No	Data	Activity Narration
1	Transformation of the function of Arabic as a medium of epistemology	The process of decolonizing Arabic changes its role from a religious language to a means of knowledge that links the riches of traditional Islam to the

		requirements of modern Javanese Muslim communities
2	Contextual reconstruction of Islamic knowledge	The process of decolonizing Arabic involves reinterpreting Islamic knowledge in a way that is relevant to contemporary contexts by blending Islamic and Javanese cultural heritage, resulting in understandings that reflect the changing aspects of today's society
3	Strengthening Islamic preaching and literacy in society	Enhancing the knowledge-based role of Arabic boosts effective communication in preaching, reinforces Islamic education, supports the customs of Islamic boarding schools, respects local wisdom, and fosters the growth of a lasting Muslim community in Java

Tabel 2: Examples of activities: The stronger the decolonization of Arabic as a medium of Islamic epistemology, the greater its role in reconstructing contextual Islamic knowledge in Javanese Muslim society

No	Data	Example Activities
1	Transformation of the function of Arabic as a medium of epistemology	Islamic boarding schools instruct in Arabic to comprehend cultural history and contemporary issues.
2	Contextual reconstruction of Islamic knowledge	The Bahtsul Masail event in Islamic boarding schools blends traditional values, Javanese customs, and modern-day societal issues
3	Strengthening Islamic preaching and literacy in society	Islamic boarding schools foster Arabic literacy to strengthen communities through sustainable inclusive preaching.

Tabel 3: The images of the activity shows that the stronger the decolonization of Arabic as a medium of Islamic epistemology, the greater its role in reconstructing contextual Islamic knowledge in Javanese Muslim society

No	Data	Activity Images
1	Transformation of the function of Arabic as a medium of epistemology	

2	Contextual reconstruction of Islamic knowledge	
3	Strengthening Islamic preaching and literacy in society	

The findings presented in Tables 1–3 demonstrate that the decolonization of Arabic strengthens the reconstruction of Islamic knowledge and reshapes Islamic understanding within Javanese Muslim communities (Faruque, 2024). This transformation is driven by two factors: the shift of Arabic from a ritual language to a medium for knowledge production, expanding access to *turāṯ* and encouraging contemporary Islamic discourse (R'boul, H., & Barnawi, 2025), and the integration of Arabic with Javanese cultural and social contexts while preserving the authority of the Qur'an and Sunnah (Daifallah, 2019). Three findings support this conclusion: the development of *Baḥṯ al-Masāʾil* forums grounded in *turāṯ*, the contextual reinterpretation of classical texts to address community issues, and the expansion of interactive literacy-based da'wah initiatives. Consequently, Arabic decolonization enhances Islamic epistemology, promotes inclusive and contextual religious engagement, and strengthens sustainable Islamic literacy and da'wah within contemporary Javanese Muslim society.

From the rephrasing above, it can be inferred that the decolonization of Arabic serves as a vital approach in reshaping contextual Islamic knowledge within Javanese Muslim communities (Faruque, 2024). The evolution of Arabic from being solely a ceremonial language to an epistemological instrument enhances its role as a facilitator for producing, sharing, and cultivating turāṯ-based knowledge that is pertinent to modern-day issues (R'boul, H., & Barnawi, 2025). The amalgamation of classical Islamic heritage with local customs bolsters the intellectual identity of the society, preserves the legacy of

the Islamic pesantren scholarly tradition, and fosters more engaging, inclusive, and participatory practices of da'wah. Therefore, the decolonization of Arabic plays a significant role in enhancing Islamic literacy, empowering communities, and developing da'wah methodologies that bolster sustainable social and educational progress.

This viewpoint is reinforced by the ideas of three Islamic scholars and educators. M. Saifudin contends that: "*reclaiming Arabic from colonial influences reinstates its significance as a knowledge-bearing language, allowing unmediated access to the Qur'an, Hadith, and turāth while maintaining the integrity of Islamic doctrines*". Nurul Haq points out that: "*Arabic education should not only focus on grammatical expertise but also serve as a platform for analytical thought and situational problem-solving, aiding in the redevelopment of Islamic understanding pertinent to Javanese culture*". Similarly, Nurul Hikmah underscores: "*mastering Arabic enhances Islamic knowledge systems by promoting interaction with original texts and fostering critical, balanced, and contextual interpretations of Islam. Together, these perspectives illustrate that the decolonization of Arabic redefines the language as an essential tool for reconstructing Islamic understanding, enhancing da'wah, and tackling the educational, social, and cultural issues faced by modern Javanese Muslim communities".*

2. The integration of Arabic with local Javanese cultural values results in more inclusive, adaptive, and effective da'wah practices without reducing the authority of Islamic teachings

The result of the research reveal that the fusion of Arabic with local Javanese cultural norms fosters more inclusive, adaptable, and impactful da'wah practices, while still preserving the integrity of Islamic teachings (Hamidah, 2024). This insight is reflected in religious studies conducted in the Javanese language, which enhance comprehension of Islamic principles among diverse age demographics through a more engaging approach (Abdullah, 2014). Furthermore, Islamic boarding schools weave turāṡ into local customs during the educational process, making Islamic values more relatable (Widodo et al., 2026). Conversely, da'is meld Arabic terminology and concepts with Javanese cultural nuances, ensuring that da'wah messages resonate more deeply, bolster

Islamic literacy, and cultivate a harmonious connection between Islamic teachings and community culture (Agnia Ilma, 2025).

Tabel 4: Narrative Activities Integrating Arabic with local Javanese cultural values results in more inclusive, adaptive, and effective da'wah practices without reducing the authority of Islamic teachings

No	Data	Activity Narration
1	Javanese linguistic religious exploration enhances comprehension of Islamic principles throughout the various eras of the community.	The exploration of Javanese linguistic spiritual teachings promotes the dissemination of Islamic principles, enhances intergenerational comprehension, bolsters community involvement, and preserves the ongoing legacy of contextual and inclusive da'wah customs.
2	Islamic boarding schools integrate heritage with local traditions in contextual da'wah learning	Islamic boarding institutions blend legacy with regional customs to foster contextual da'wah education, enhance the significance of Islamic principles, and safeguard the cultural insights of the Javanese community.
3	The preacher combines Arabic and Javanese culture to strengthen the community's acceptance of preaching.	The preacher combines Arabic and Javanese culture so that his preaching is more communicative, easily accepted by the community, strengthens Islamic understanding, and increases socio-religious participation in a sustainable manner.

Tabel 5:Examples of activities: The integrating of Arabic with local Javanese cultural values results in more inclusive, adaptive, and effective da'wah practices without reducing the authority of Islamic teachings

No	Data	Examples of activities
1	Javanese linguistic religious exploration enhances comprehension of Islamic principles throughout the various eras of the community.	Daily/weekly/selapanan religious studies in the mosque or prayer room and the application of the bandongan yellow book method with the meaning of Javanese Pegon
2	Islamic boarding schools integrate heritage with local traditions in contextual da'wah learning	Da'wah through local religious traditions such as: selapanan, maulid, haul, nyadran
3	The preacher combines Arabic and Javanese culture to strengthen the community's acceptance of preaching.	Arabic-Javanese Based Al-Qur'an Learning Center

Tabel 6: Images of Activities: The integrating of Arabic with local Javanese cultural values results in more inclusive, adaptive, and effective da'wah practices without reducing the authority of Islamic teachings

No	Data	Images of Activities
1	Javanese linguistic religious exploration enhances comprehension of Islamic principles throughout the various eras of the community.	
2	Islamic boarding schools integrate heritage with local traditions in contextual da'wah learning	
3	The preacher combines Arabic and Javanese culture to strengthen the community's acceptance of preaching	

The findings in Tables 4–6 show that integrating Arabic with Javanese cultural values creates a more inclusive, adaptive, and effective model of da'wah while preserving the authority of Islamic teachings (Hamidah, 2024). This outcome is supported by two factors: the use of local language and cultural expressions improves public understanding of Islamic messages (Abdullah, 2014), and the combination maintains Arabic as the authoritative source of the Qur'an, hadith, and *turāṯ*, while Javanese culture provides a contextual medium for communication (Widodo et al., 2026). Three findings reinforce this conclusion: Javanese-language religious studies enhance intergenerational understanding of Islam, Islamic boarding schools integrate *turāṯ* with local traditions in contextual learning, and da'is combine Arabic with Javanese cultural practices to increase

public acceptance of da'wah (Agnia Ilma, 2025). Consequently, this collaboration produces a relevant, engaging, and socially responsive da'wah model that strengthens Islamic literacy without diminishing the authenticity of Islamic teachings

The restatement results above indicates that merging Arabic with local Javanese cultural values serves as a strategic method for fostering inclusive, adaptive, and effective da'wah (Woodward, 2025). Arabic retains its role as a primary source of Islamic teachings, while Javanese culture acts as a contextual medium for delivering religious messages in a more engaging manner (Mahfudh et al., 2021). This collaboration enhances the comprehension of Islam across generations through Javanese-language religious studies, promoting turāṯ-based education in Islamic boarding schools, and boosting community acceptance of da'wah. (Widodo et al., 2026). Therefore, the blending of language and culture does not undermine the authority of Islamic teachings; rather, it reinforces Islamic literacy, the conservation of local wisdom, and the continuity of da'wah within Javanese Muslim society.

This is supported by Saifudin's remark: "*Study sessions centered on religion conducted in Javanese simplify the comprehension of the Qur'an's message for both the youth and the elderly while retaining the core of Islam"*. Nurul Haq added: "*In Islamic boarding schools (pesantren), traditional texts (kitab turāṯ) are clarified through examples from Javanese culture, which helps students relate their education to their community's life*". At the same time, Nurul Hikmat stated: "*Speakers combine Arabic vocabulary with Javanese traditions, allowing the community to accept the message more readily without undermining the integrity of Islamic teachings*".

3. The decolonization of Arabic encouraged the transformation of the language's function from merely a ritual language to an instrument for producing knowledge, strengthening intellectual identity, and empowering Javanese Muslim society

Tabel 7: Activities narration of The decolonization of Arabic encouraged the transformation of the language's function from merely a ritual language to an instrument for producing knowledge, strengthening intellectual identity, and empowering Javanese Muslim society

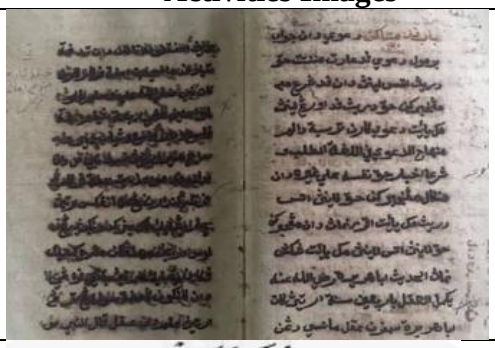
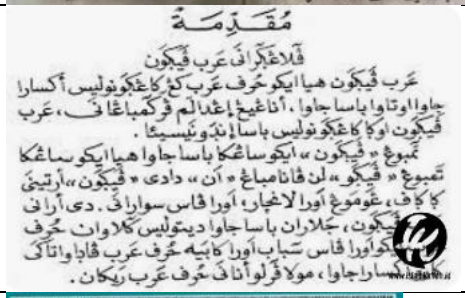
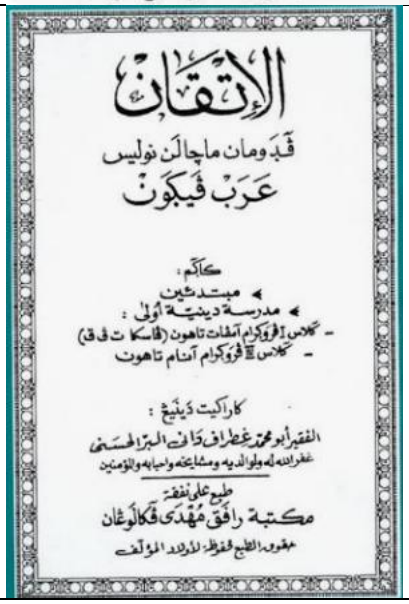
No	Data	Activities Narration

1	The transformation of Arabic as an instrument of knowledge production	The decolonization of Arabic transforms learning from a ritual language into a means of knowledge production, access to turāṯ, development of Islamic studies, and contextual scientific discourse.
2	Strengthening the intellectual identity of Javanese Muslim society	Reinforcing the epistemological role of Arabic shapes the cognitive identity of Javanese Muslims, bolsters the customs of Islamic boarding schools, enhances Islamic literacy, and harmonizes local religious and cultural skills.
3	Community empowerment through knowledge-based preaching	The transformation of the role of Arabic promotes inclusive, interactive, and relevant knowledge-driven da'wah, strengthening communities through learning, literacy, and enduring solutions to social challenges.

Tabel 8: Examples of activities the decolonization of Arabic encouraged the transformation of the language's function from merely a ritual language to an instrument for producing knowledge, strengthening intellectual identity, and empowering Javanese Muslim society

No	Data	Example of Activities
1	The transformation of Arabic as an instrument of knowledge production	Turāṯ Translation and Studies Program
2	Strengthening the intellectual identity of Javanese Muslim society	Pegon Training and Study of Javanese Islamic Manuscripts
3	Community empowerment through knowledge-based preaching	Digital literacy and media ethics training based on Islamic values

Tabel 9: Activities Images of the decolonization of Arabic encouraged the transformation of the language's function from merely a ritual language to an instrument for producing knowledge, strengthening intellectual identity, and empowering Javanese Muslim society

No	Data	Activities Images
1	The transformation of Arabic as an instrument of knowledge production	
2	Strengthening the intellectual identity of Javanese Muslim society	
3	Community empowerment through knowledge-based preaching	

The findings in Tables 7–9 demonstrate that the decolonization of Arabic has transformed its role from a ritual language into a medium for knowledge production, intellectual identity formation, and community empowerment within Javanese Muslim society (Khamis, 2025). This transformation is supported by two key factors: Arabic learning has shifted toward generating knowledge by expanding access to *turāṯ* and promoting locally relevant Islamic scholarship, while its strengthened epistemological function enables communities to integrate the authority of Islamic texts with Javanese cultural values (Mahfudh et al., 2021). Three findings reinforce this conclusion: the

development of Arabic as a vehicle for knowledge production, the strengthening of intellectual identity through pesantren traditions, and the empowerment of communities through participatory, communicative, and context-based knowledge-oriented da'wah. Consequently, Arabic decolonization enhances the Islamic intellectual ecosystem, fosters sustainable Islamic literacy, and strengthens the intellectual capacity and social autonomy of contemporary Javanese Muslim communities.

This study reveals that the decolonization of Arabic shifted the language's role from a ceremonial tool to a strategic asset in knowledge creation, the development of intellectual identity, and the empowerment of Javanese Muslim communities (Mahfudh et al., 2021). Enhancing the epistemological role of Arabic expanded access to turāṯ, promoted the rise of contextual Islamic studies, and fortified the scholarly legacy of Islamic boarding schools (Widodo et al., 2026). This evolution also led to a model of knowledge-driven da'wah that was more inclusive, communicative, and attuned to the community's needs (Wahyudi et al., 2026). Therefore, the decolonization of Arabic not only bolstered the legitimacy of Islamic scholarship but also fostered increased literacy, reinforced cultural-religious identity, and supported the sustainable progress of Javanese Muslim communities.

Saifudin highlighted this aspect by mentioning: "*Arabic serves not just for religious practices but also for examining literature, partaking in dialogues, and broadening our comprehension of Islam*". "In this context, Nurul Haq noted: "*Grasping Arabic enhances our assurance in accessing Islamic materials directly, which in turn fortifies our academic identity and encourages self-reliance*". At the same time, Nurul Hikmat strongly declared: "*Engagement informed by a knowledge of Arabic supports the community in tackling life's difficulties by utilizing Islamic sources that are more precise and relevant*".

The discussion demonstrates that the decolonization of Arabic is fundamental to reconstructing Islamic knowledge and strengthening contextual da'wah within Javanese Muslim communities (Woodward, 2025). This transformation is supported by two key arguments: Arabic has evolved from a ritual language into a medium of Islamic epistemology, and it can be integrated with local culture without compromising the authenticity of Islamic teachings. Three findings reinforce this conclusion: the

development of pesantren educational models that connect *turāṯ* with contemporary realities, the increased effectiveness of religious education and da'wah through the integration of Arabic and Javanese, and the expansion of Islamic literacy through digital platforms using Arabic as an authoritative reference. Consequently, Arabic decolonization restores the language's epistemic function while fostering a more inclusive, adaptive, transformative, and sustainable model of Islamic scholarship and da'wah that responds to the intellectual, cultural, and social dynamics of contemporary Javanese Muslim society.

Cultural contextualization demonstrates that the decolonization of Arabic strengthens the reconstruction of Islamic knowledge through meaningful engagement with Javanese Muslim traditions (Woodward, 2025). This process is driven by two factors: Javanese culture provides adaptive mechanisms for integrating Islamic values, and the use of local language enhances community understanding of Arabic concepts. Three findings illustrate this relationship: religious study circles combine Arabic explanations with Javanese interpretations to improve intergenerational comprehension, pesantren traditions integrate *turāṯ* learning with local wisdom (Azra, 2004b) and ulama incorporate Javanese symbols, ethics, and cultural practices into da'wah to increase public acceptance. Consequently, cultural contextualization confirms that Arabic decolonization preserves the authority of Islamic teachings while making da'wah more inclusive, adaptive, and socially relevant. This integration promotes deeper Islamic literacy, strengthens cultural identity, and supports sustainable religious engagement within contemporary Javanese Muslim communities.

Theoretical analysis suggests that Arabic decolonization represents a process of epistemic emancipation that restores the language as a medium for producing, transmitting, and legitimizing Islamic knowledge (Woodward, 2025). This perspective is supported by two arguments: language functions not only as a means of communication but also as the foundation of knowledge systems and collective identity (Gee, 2015), while decolonization enables a contextual reconstruction of Islamic epistemology without abandoning the classical scholarly tradition. Three findings reinforce this view: the transformation of Arabic from a ritual symbol into an intellectual instrument, the integration of *turāṯ* with Javanese social realities (Azra, 2004b), and the emergence of

inclusive and participatory language-based da'wah practices (Woodward, 2017). Consequently, this study advances the theory of language decolonization by integrating linguistic, epistemological, and socio-religious dimensions into a comprehensive framework that explains the reconstruction of Islamic knowledge and contextual da'wah within contemporary Javanese Muslim society.

The central finding of this study is that the decolonization of Arabic extends beyond language revitalization to become a process of cultivating Islamic wisdom that connects the authority of Islamic teachings with Javanese cultural traditions (Woodward, 2025). This insight is supported by two key arguments: Arabic functions as a fundamental medium for shaping Islamic thought, and engagement with local culture enhances understanding of Islamic values without compromising doctrinal authenticity (Woodward, 2011). Three findings illustrate this process: the development of religious study traditions integrating Arabic and Javanese, the strengthening of *turāṯ* learning in response to contemporary social needs (Bruinessen, 1998), and the expansion of Islamic literacy through interactive and inclusive da'wah. Consequently, Arabic decolonization provides a model of Islamic development that is rooted in scholarly tradition, adaptable to social change, and oriented toward community empowerment, intellectual renewal, and sustainable religious engagement within contemporary Javanese Muslim society (Woodward, 2025).

A comparison with earlier studies indicates that this research enhances the comprehension of Arabic decolonization through an educational lens, emphasizing the revival of Islamic knowledge and the fortification of da'wah within the Javanese Muslim community. This enhancement is propelled by two main factors: a predominant focus in earlier studies on Arabic language acquisition or linguistic politics, while the interconnectedness of language, Islamic knowledge, and da'wah practices remains underexplored in a cohesive manner. This distinction is highlighted by three key pieces of evidence: this research treats Arabic as a conduit for Islamic knowledge, assimilates the turāṡ tradition with Javanese culture in the decolonization discourse (Widodo et al., 2026), and articulates its effects on a more inclusive and transformative da'wah framework. Therefore, this study enriches existing literature with an integrative analytical

approach that thoroughly links linguistic, epistemological, cultural, and da'wah aspects (Kasdi, 2017).

The findings of this study underscore the necessity to enhance the decolonization of Arabic as a tactic for cultivating Islamic knowledge and da'wah pertinent to the Javanese Muslim community (Jen Hanssen, 2018). This suggestion is founded on two main points: Arabic must be rejuvenated as a fruitful medium for Islamic epistemology, and da'wah needs a method that can embrace local cultural dynamics while preserving the integrity of Islamic teachings (Woodward, 2025). Execution can be achieved through three principal steps: crafting an Arabic language curriculum that merges turāṡ with local contexts (Mahfudh et al., 2021), support the capabilities of da'wah (preachers) and educators in intertwining Arabic with Javanese cultural communication (Woodward, 2011), and broadening the application of digital media to enhance Islamic literacy grounded in authentic Arabic sources. Hence, these measures are anticipated to fortify an inclusive, contextual, and sustainable education and da'wah ecosystem for the Javanese Muslim community.

CONCLUSIONS

The study finds that the decolonization of Arabic provides a strategic foundation for reconstructing Islamic knowledge (Woodward, 2025) and strengthening da'wah within Javanese Muslim communities. This conclusion rests on two key reasons. First, Arabic functions as an epistemological medium that revitalizes the Islamic intellectual tradition. Second, its integration with Javanese culture expands the acceptance of Islamic values while preserving the authority of Islamic teachings. These arguments are supported by three main evidences: the transformation of Arabic from a ritual language into an instrument of knowledge production, the contextualization of *turāṡ* learning through Javanese cultural practices, and the enhanced effectiveness of da'wah and Islamic literacy by combining Arabic, Javanese, and digital media. Overall, the study concludes that sustaining Islamic civilization requires a contextual, inclusive, and socially oriented approach to strengthening Arabic as a living language of knowledge and religious engagement.

This study makes a significant theoretical contribution by developing Arabic decolonization as an integrative framework that links language, Islamic epistemology, and da'wah in Javanese Muslim society (Faruque, 2024). It addresses two important gaps: previous decolonization studies have focused mainly on identity and education, while the role of language in reconstructing Islamic knowledge has received limited attention (Faruque, 2024); faffurthermore, an interdisciplinary perspective is essential for understanding complex socio-religious dynamics. The research strengthens this contribution through three methodological approaches: a qualitative design that captures contextual linguistic practices, data triangulation that enhances the credibility of findings (Creswell & Poth, 2018), and thematic-critical analysis integrating linguistic, cultural, and da'wah perspectives. Overall, the study provides a comprehensive conceptual and methodological foundation for advancing Arabic decolonization research across diverse Muslim contexts, supporting future investigations into language, knowledge production, cultural integration, and the transformation of Islamic scholarship and religious engagement.

This study has several limitations in explaining the dynamics of Arabic decolonization across Indonesia's diverse Muslim communities. These limitations arise from two main reasons: its focus on Javanese Muslim society and the use of a qualitative approach emphasizing in-depth analysis rather than broad generalization (Creswell & Poth, 2018). crec Three aspects reflect these constraints: the absence of comparisons with Muslim communities in other regions, limited analysis of the influence of national language and Islamic education policies, and insufficient attention to the roles of digital technology and artificial intelligence in Arabic decolonization. Accordingly, future research should adopt comparative (Flyvbjerg, 2006) and mixed-methods (Creswell & Poth, 2018) approaches with broader regional coverage to develop a more comprehensive and generalizable model of Arabic decolonization. Such studies would provide deeper insights into the interaction between language, culture, technology, and Islamic knowledge across diverse Muslim contexts (Yin, 2018).

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