

RECONSTRUCTING THE EPISTEMOLOGY OF MUQADDIMAH ILM AL-LUGHAH AL-'ARABIYYAH: INTEGRATING PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE, CLASSICAL ARABIC LINGUISTICS, AND MODERN LINGUISTICS FOR ARABIC LANGUAGE EDUCATION

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Abstract

This study aims to reconstruct the epistemology of Muqaddimah Ilm al-Lughah al-'Arabiyyah by integrating the philosophy of language, classical Arabic linguistic scholarship, and modern linguistic theories to establish a comprehensive conceptual foundation for Arabic language education. Employing a qualitative library research design, the study critically analyzes classical works of Arabic linguists alongside contemporary literature on linguistics, language philosophy, and Arabic language pedagogy. The findings reveal that Muqaddimah Ilm al-Lughah al-'Arabiyyah has traditionally been presented as an introductory discipline emphasizing linguistic definitions and historical development, with limited attention to its broader epistemological significance. This study proposes a reconstructed framework consisting of five interrelated dimensions: philosophical foundations of language, classical Arabic linguistic heritage, modern linguistic perspectives, communicative language competence, and pedagogical application. The integration of these dimensions bridges the intellectual legacy of classical Arabic scholarship with contemporary approaches to language education, enabling a more holistic understanding of Arabic as both a scientific discipline and a medium of communication. The proposed framework contributes theoretically to Arabic linguistics and practically to curriculum development, instructional innovation, and competency-based Arabic language learning in higher education.

INTRODUCTION

Arabic is one of the world's major languages and occupies a distinctive position as the language of the Qur'an, Islamic intellectual tradition, and a rich literary civilization. Consequently, Arabic language education is expected to develop not only learners' linguistic proficiency but also their understanding of the scientific, cultural, and philosophical dimensions of the language (Harifah & Sofa, 2025). Within Arabic Language Education programs, *Muqaddimah Ilm al-Lughah al-'Arabiyyah* functions as a foundational course that introduces students to the nature of language, the development

of Arabic linguistics, and the major branches of linguistic inquiry. As an introductory discipline, it establishes the conceptual basis for advanced studies in phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics, and sociolinguistics, making it indispensable for prospective Arabic language educators and researchers (Sholeha & Sofa, 2025).

Despite its strategic role, the teaching of *Muqaddimah Ilm al-Lughah al-'Arabiyyah* frequently remains descriptive and historical in orientation. Learning activities often emphasize the memorization of linguistic concepts, terminology, and the historical evolution of Arabic linguistics, while providing limited opportunities for students to critically examine the epistemological foundations of the discipline. This approach reduces the course to a preliminary overview rather than positioning it as a framework for understanding how linguistic knowledge is constructed, validated, and applied in Arabic language education. As a result, students may struggle to connect classical linguistic theories with contemporary issues such as communicative competence, language acquisition, curriculum design, and innovative teaching practices (F. Mardiyah & Sofa, 2025).

The rapid development of modern linguistics has expanded the study of language beyond structural analysis to include philosophical, cognitive, social, psychological, and functional perspectives. Theories from structural linguistics, functional linguistics, sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, pragmatics, and applied linguistics have significantly influenced contemporary language education by emphasizing language as a dynamic system shaped by communication and social interaction. At the same time, the intellectual heritage of classical Arabic linguists including Sibawayh, Ibn Jinnī, Al-Jurjānī, and Ibn Fāris continues to offer profound insights into the structure, meaning, and philosophy of the Arabic language. Integrating these classical contributions with modern linguistic theories creates opportunities to reconstruct *Muqaddimah Ilm al-Lughah al-'Arabiyyah* into a more comprehensive epistemological framework that is relevant to twenty-first-century Arabic language education (Shalawati & Sofa, 2025).

Although previous studies have explored Arabic linguistics, philosophy of language, and Arabic language pedagogy separately, relatively few have examined *Muqaddimah Ilm al-Lughah al-'Arabiyyah* as an epistemological bridge between classical linguistic heritage and contemporary linguistic thought. Existing research has generally concentrated on individual branches of linguistics or classroom methodologies without proposing an integrated conceptual model that connects philosophy of language, classical Arabic linguistics, and modern linguistic theories. Therefore, this study seeks to reconstruct the epistemology of *Muqaddimah Ilm al-Lughah al-'Arabiyyah* by integrating these three intellectual traditions into a unified framework for Arabic language education. The proposed reconstruction is expected to enrich the theoretical foundations of Arabic linguistics while providing practical implications for curriculum development, instructional design, and competency-based Arabic language learning in higher education.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Muqaddimah Ilm al-Lughah al-'Arabiyyah represents the foundational discipline of Arabic linguistics, introducing learners to the essential concepts, scope, and scientific development of language studies before they engage with more specialized linguistic branches. The discipline encompasses discussions on the nature of language, language functions, language origin, linguistic characteristics, language change, and the

relationship between language and society. Within Arabic Language Education programs, this introductory course serves as the epistemological gateway to advanced fields such as phonology (*‘ilm al-aṣwāt*), morphology (*ṣarf*), syntax (*naḥw*), semantics (*dalālah*), pragmatics, sociolinguistics, and applied linguistics. Therefore, its role extends beyond introductory knowledge, providing a conceptual framework that supports comprehensive understanding of Arabic as both a linguistic system and a medium of communication (Sofa, 2026).

The philosophical foundation of language has long occupied a central position in both classical Islamic scholarship and modern linguistic inquiry. Classical scholars such as **Sibawayh**, **Ibn Jinnī**, **Ibn Fāris**, and **Al-Jurjānī** viewed language as a structured system governed by linguistic principles while simultaneously serving as a vehicle for preserving knowledge, culture, and religious teachings. Ibn Jinnī, in particular, emphasized the relationship between sound, meaning, and human cognition, whereas Al-Jurjānī highlighted the semantic and rhetorical dimensions of language through his theory of *naẓm*. Contemporary philosophy of language has broadened these perspectives by examining meaning, communication, context, and language use through the works of scholars such as Ferdinand de Saussure, Noam Chomsky, Michael Halliday, and Ludwig Wittgenstein. These developments indicate that language should be understood not merely as a grammatical structure but also as a dynamic system shaped by cognitive, social, and cultural interactions (Nadia & Sofa, 2025).

Modern linguistic theories have significantly influenced the development of Arabic language education by shifting instructional emphasis from grammatical accuracy toward communicative competence and meaningful language use. **Structural linguistics** explains language as an interconnected system of linguistic units, while **generative linguistics** focuses on the innate capacity for language acquisition. **Functional linguistics** emphasizes the communicative functions of language within social contexts, whereas **sociolinguistics** and **psycholinguistics** explore the interaction between language, society, culture, and cognitive processes. These theoretical perspectives underpin contemporary approaches such as **Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)**, competency-based education, and constructivist learning, all of which encourage learners to actively construct knowledge through authentic communication and contextual learning. Consequently, Arabic language education requires a theoretical foundation that integrates these modern paradigms with the rich intellectual heritage of Arabic linguistics (A. Mardiyah & Sofa, 2025).

Although previous studies have examined Arabic linguistics, philosophy of language, and Arabic language pedagogy independently, relatively limited research has reconstructed *Muqaddimah Ilm al-Lughah al-‘Arabiyyah* as an integrated epistemological framework. Most existing studies remain fragmented, concentrating either on classical linguistic theories or on contemporary instructional methodologies without establishing a conceptual bridge between them. This study addresses that gap by proposing an epistemological reconstruction that integrates **philosophy of language**, **classical Arabic linguistic scholarship**, and **modern linguistic theories** into a unified framework for Arabic language education. Such integration is expected to strengthen the theoretical foundation of Arabic Language Education programs while providing a contemporary conceptual basis for curriculum development, instructional innovation, competency-based learning, and future research in Arabic linguistics (Sa’diya et al., 2026).

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a **qualitative library research** design to reconstruct the epistemology of *Muqaddimah Ilm al-Lughah al-'Arabiyyah* through the integration of philosophy of language, classical Arabic linguistics, and modern linguistic theories. A library research approach was selected because it facilitates an in-depth and systematic examination of foundational concepts, theoretical developments, and scholarly discourse concerning Arabic linguistics and language education. Rather than generating field-based data, the study synthesized conceptual evidence from authoritative literature to formulate a contemporary epistemological framework for Arabic language education (Sa'diya et al., 2026).

The data sources consisted of both **primary** and **secondary** references. Primary sources included classical works of Arabic linguistic scholars such as **Sibawayh**, **Ibn Jinnī**, **Ibn Fāris**, and **Al-Jurjānī**, whose contributions have shaped the foundations of Arabic linguistic thought. Secondary sources comprised peer-reviewed journal articles, academic books, conference proceedings, curriculum documents, and recent studies on philosophy of language, modern linguistics, applied linguistics, and Arabic language pedagogy. Preference was given to recent international publications to ensure that the proposed framework reflects current developments in linguistics while remaining grounded in the classical intellectual tradition (Firdausiyah & Sofa, 2025).

The collected data were analyzed using **qualitative content analysis** based on the interactive model of **Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña**, which includes **data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification**. The analysis focused on identifying major epistemological themes, conceptual relationships, and pedagogical implications emerging from both classical and contemporary literature. To enhance the credibility and consistency of the findings, **source triangulation** was conducted by comparing arguments and concepts across multiple classical texts and modern linguistic studies (Mh et al., 2026). The outcome of this analytical process was the formulation of a reconstructed epistemological framework that integrates philosophy of language, classical Arabic linguistics, and modern linguistic theories as a comprehensive foundation for contemporary Arabic language education.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis demonstrates that *Muqaddimah Ilm al-Lughah al-'Arabiyyah* should be understood not merely as an introductory course to Arabic linguistics but as an epistemological foundation that explains the essence, functions, and scientific structure of the Arabic language. Classical Arabic linguistic scholarship consistently portrays language as a systematic and meaningful phenomenon that connects sound, structure, meaning, and communication. **Sibawayh** established the grammatical framework of Arabic through systematic analyses of syntax and morphology, while **Ibn Jinnī** emphasized that language is a human phenomenon characterized by organized sounds used to convey meaning. Furthermore, **Ibn Fāris** highlighted the historical and semantic development of lexical roots, and **Al-Jurjānī** developed the theory of *naẓm*, demonstrating that meaning is constructed through the relationship among linguistic elements within discourse. These perspectives indicate that Arabic linguistics has long possessed a comprehensive epistemological foundation extending beyond grammatical description toward philosophical reflection on language itself (Mh et al., 2026).

The literature further reveals that the philosophy of language enriches the epistemological reconstruction of *Muqaddimah Ilm al-Lughah al-'Arabiyyah*. Classical Islamic scholars viewed language as a divine blessing and an intellectual instrument for preserving revelation, transmitting knowledge, and shaping civilization. Contemporary philosophy of language broadens this perspective by examining how meaning is produced through interaction, context, and social practice. Structural linguistics explains language as an interconnected system of signs, whereas functional linguistics emphasizes language as a tool for communication within particular social contexts. Likewise, sociolinguistics and pragmatics demonstrate that language cannot be separated from cultural, historical, and interpersonal dimensions. Consequently, the study argues that *Muqaddimah Ilm al-Lughah al-'Arabiyyah* should integrate these philosophical perspectives so that students understand Arabic not only as a grammatical system but also as a dynamic medium of communication, knowledge production, and cultural identity (Hasanah & Sofa, 2025).

Based on the synthesis of classical and contemporary literature, this study proposes a reconstructed epistemological framework comprising **five interconnected dimensions**. The first dimension is **the philosophy of language**, which explores the nature, origin, purpose, and functions of language as the conceptual basis of Arabic linguistic studies. The second dimension is **classical Arabic linguistic heritage**, encompassing the contributions of scholars such as Sibawayh, Ibn Jinnī, Ibn Fāris, and Al-Jurjānī in phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and rhetoric. The third dimension is **modern linguistic theories**, integrating structural linguistics, generative linguistics, functional linguistics, sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, and applied linguistics to explain the multidimensional nature of language. The fourth dimension is **communicative competence**, which positions Arabic as a living language developed through listening, speaking, reading, and writing in authentic contexts. The fifth dimension is **pedagogical application**, where linguistic theories are translated into curriculum development, instructional design, learning assessment, and innovative classroom practices (Amelia & Sofa, 2025). Together, these dimensions transform *Muqaddimah Ilm al-Lughah al-'Arabiyyah* into a coherent conceptual framework for contemporary Arabic language education.

The reconstructed framework contributes both theoretically and pedagogically to the advancement of Arabic language studies. Theoretically, it bridges the gap between classical Arabic linguistic scholarship and modern linguistic theories by demonstrating their complementary roles in explaining the nature of language and language learning. Pedagogically, it provides lecturers and curriculum developers with a systematic foundation for designing Arabic language instruction that promotes conceptual understanding, communicative competence, critical thinking, and contextual language use. Rather than treating *Muqaddimah Ilm al-Lughah al-'Arabiyyah* as a preliminary theoretical subject, the proposed model positions it as the central epistemological framework underpinning all branches of Arabic linguistics and Arabic language education. This reconstruction therefore supports the development of a more relevant, competency-oriented, and intellectually grounded curriculum capable of addressing the educational challenges of the twenty-first century.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that *Muqaddimah Ilm al-Lughah al-'Arabiyyah* should be repositioned as the epistemological foundation of Arabic language education rather than

merely an introductory course to Arabic linguistics. The synthesis of classical Arabic linguistic scholarship and contemporary linguistic theories demonstrates that the discipline provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the nature, structure, function, and development of the Arabic language. By integrating the philosophy of language, the intellectual legacy of classical scholars such as Sibawayh, Ibn Jinnī, Ibn Fāris, and Al-Jurjānī, and modern perspectives from structural, functional, sociolinguistic, and applied linguistics, the reconstructed framework bridges traditional scholarship with the demands of contemporary Arabic language education.

The proposed epistemological reconstruction comprises five interconnected dimensions: **philosophy of language, classical Arabic linguistic heritage, modern linguistic theories, communicative competence, and pedagogical application**. This integrated framework contributes theoretically by expanding the conceptual scope of *Muqaddimah Ilm al-Lughah al-'Arabiyyah* and contributes practically by providing a foundation for curriculum development, instructional design, and competency-based Arabic language learning. Future research is recommended to empirically validate this framework in Arabic Language Education programs and to explore its implementation within digital learning environments, thereby strengthening the relevance and sustainability of Arabic linguistic studies in higher education.

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