# Teaching the Arabic Language between the Challenges of Globalization and the Enhancement of National Identity

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# **Abstract**

The focus of this research is to examine the duality of language and identity within contemporary Arab culture, particularly in terms of their civilizational interrelation and their influence by emerging social and cultural phenomena. This analysis is situated within a global context where cultural boundaries between societies have become increasingly blurred. Although the history of the Arabic language demonstrates its effective dialogue with surrounding elements and its capacity to assimilate various scientific and intellectual activities over an extended period, including the Abbasid and Andalusian eras, observations indicate that contemporary Arabic is no longer capable of meeting the cognitive needs of its speakers. This is especially evident in its diminished role in scientific advancement and its reduced prevalence in everyday speech. Numerous indicators highlight this trend, such as the declining presence of Arabic in academic research, the widespread use of colloquial dialects, and their strong competition with Modern Standard Arabic (Fusha) in fields like art and education. Considering that the Arabic language, like other languages, serves as a vessel for elements of Arab identity, there is no doubt that the decline of its presence in the domains of communication and scientific research has a direct impact on the formation of that identity. This situation urgently calls for careful management of our relationship with our language. In this regard, what we observe is the necessity to enhance the presence of Arabic in our daily and scientific lives. This is achievable by diversifying Arabic teaching methodologies for both native and non-native speakers to ensure that it keeps pace with all current and future scientific developments.

**Keywords:** Language, Identity, Globalization, Education, Civilization.

### Introduction

Research Objectives

Examine the historical aspect of studying the Arabic language and its effectiveness in assimilating various sciences, such as mathematics, philosophy, astronomy, and other fields of knowledge, thereby refuting the claim of its inability to keep pace with the sciences of its time.

Reveal the capacity of the Arabic language to extend beyond the boundaries of the Arabian Peninsula and its openness to numerous civilizations through a cultural movement that resulted in a vast body of Arabic literature authored in many scientific disciplines.

the significance of the translation movement and its achievements in promoting the Arabic language during the Abbasid era, as well as the role played by the translation movement in Al-Andalus in fostering cultural exchange between the East and the West.

Determine methods to safeguard the Arabic language from declining due to the influx of global cultures that do not respect the particularities of peoples.

Explore the discourse on identity and modernity by examining cultural coexistence among different societies.

Investigate new approaches that contribute to the civilizational advancement of Arab peoples by leveraging the expressive capacities of the Arabic language through the development of its teaching curricula and emphasizing the role and effectiveness of teachers in enhancing Arab identity among the youth.

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# Research Problem

Undoubtedly, the duality of the Arabic language and identity is a multifaceted intellectual and civilizational issue. It raises a fundamental question about the Arabic language's ability to confront the challenges of globalization, its capacity to assimilate the sciences of its era, and its role in preserving elements of Arab identity.

To address this problem, the research will employ two methodologies: the historical method and the analytical method, in accordance with the research needs. The work will be divided into two main sections:

This section will showcase the pivotal role that the Arabic language has played in various historical periods, highlighting its contributions to the development and sustenance of Arab-Islamic civilization.

This section will uncover how the education and teaching of the Arabic language contribute to the reinforcement and establishment of national identity among Arabic-speaking populations.

Chapter One

The Civilizational Role of the Arabic Language

The Translation Movement in the Abbasid Era and Its Role in Enhancing the Arabic Language

No one denies the functions of language in people's lives, as it serves as their means of general and emotional communication and their way of existing in the world. Not to mention, it facilitates their individual and collective memory with the ideas and images it carries, and the transformation of elements of reality into symbols and sounds. () Therefore, language was, from the outset, one of the most crucial factors in establishing Arab identity, spreading their religion, enabling them to comprehend others' thoughts, and stimulating cultural exchange.

Although the Arab-Islamic civilization witnessed its zenith of brilliance during the Abbasid era, reaching unprecedented heights and experiencing a new, diverse cultural turning point considered the most advanced among Islamic eras, its prosperity was aided by the extensive geographical expansion of the Islamic Arab state and the diversity of its peoples. Additionally, the flexibility of its religion and its ability to assimilate other cultures encouraged Muslims to accept the other and translate their ideas and culture, as evidenced by the Translation Movement. As expressed, "Open countries witnessed the birth of ancient civilizations, and Arab culture enriched itself with contributions from Persia, India, Syria, and Egypt... The Arab-Islamic civilization, thanks to this intellectual blending, experienced a golden age. This blending was achieved through a significant Translation Movement." ()

During this period, the Arabic language asserted its dominance, resulting from this civilizational and cultural fusion. Arabs were able to produce genuine scientific output, flourishing in authorship, and transferring sciences from foreign languages to Arabic. Arabs, "while interacting with the civilizations of India, Persia, and China, occasionally encountered scattered remnants of Greek or Alexandrian civilizations. However, none of the remnants of those great civilizations satisfied their thirst. They tasted the sweetness of knowledge, increasing their longing for research, and they no longer settled for anything less than knowledge and research."With the shift from a nomadic lifestyle to civilization, the cultural exchange between the Arab-Islamic civilization and other civilizations became active, leading to the emergence of numerous sciences either out of necessity or as a consequence of other knowledge fields. Among the sciences necessitated by governance, accounting was translated into Arabic to organize financial matters and taxation. Medical books and contemporary sciences were also translated. Consequently, the Arabic language had to respond to its tasks by expanding its verbal capacity beyond poetry and prose to become the language of religion, politics, law, commerce, and administration, managing state affairs and overseeing its institutions without losing its spirit and original beauty. This was "due to the antiquity of the language, its widespread use, the Arabs' appreciation and pride in it, and the fact that it is fundamental to the new

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Islamic religion as the language of the Holy Quran, the language of Islamic obligations, and the language of the Prophet. Thus, it became a powerful force in unifying the society of the new state." ().

The Translation Movement during the Abbasid era benefited from various sources, especially the Greek heritage, which influenced most of the prevalent knowledge at that time, both in methodology and terminology, primarily through diversifying sources of knowledge. "A vast number of scientific and philosophical works from Greek were translated into Arabic, and this Greek legacy was assimilated and integrated into the Arab-Islamic civilization to become one of its foundations." ()

The Translation Movement in the Andalusian Era and Its Role in the Spread of the Arabic Language

Andalusia represents a significant cultural and civilizational bridge in the history of Arab-Islamic civilization, thanks to the role played by the Translation Movement, which facilitated the transmission of knowledge to Christian Europe. This achievement resulted from the convergence of several factors that contributed to the activation of the Translation Movement, the foremost of which was religious tolerance. The Muslim lands provided a conducive environment for religious diversity and intellectual exchange, "and furthermore, relationships with translators were strengthened, who benefited from their services and were among the Mustrabihin (educated Christians in Al-Andalus), Jews, or occasionally Muslims with extensive and direct knowledge of the Islamic world." ()

The second factor was the multiplicity of cultural centers in Andalusia, with Córdoba occupying a pivotal position as a cultural hub to which scholars and literati turned. "Andalusia reached a high level of science and knowledge, characterized by elevated standards, deep foundations, and extensive growth among both men and women, indicating that they must have employed successful educational methods, teaching styles, and dissemination techniques."

The Andalusian environment served as the third factor contributing to the dissemination of knowledge through the role of scholarly families. Andalusia produced numerous families who pursued knowledge with great zeal, writing across all fields of science, thereby fostering a society "loving of knowledge and its practitioners, and its sons being inherently inclined toward it (...). Consequently, knowledge was widespread in Andalusia (...), enjoying a significant role in education. Knowledge and understanding in all their aspects (teaching, instruction, education, and authorship) were flourishing and widespread, serving as a source of pride and esteem for the Andalusian society." ()

In this context, the role of Andalusia and its contribution to cultural expansion become evident, as it had a profound impact on transferring Islamic scientific heritage to Europe. The scientific movement represented one of the major gateways for Muslims entering Europe, translating a vast number of works and bringing Islamic civilization to its zenith during that era. "It was not that the Arabs preserved cultures merely to store them in museums and vaults (...); everything they saved from oblivion and decay was resurrected with new life and made accessible to all interested parties through translation. They translated it (...) into a living language everywhere, which at that time was the language of the Quran" ().

Andalusians adhered to Arabic, extending its use to churches, which served as the primary scientific centers. Arabic became the language of knowledge in its various forms, including medicine, philosophy, and logic..., acquiring robustness and flexibility. With the widespread use of the Arabic language, it became imperative for the Andalusian environment to learn it.

The Arabic language was disseminated throughout Andalusia and became prevalent across different social strata, asserting its dominance over other languages, which experienced decline under the supremacy of Arabic, until Arabic became the official language of the Andalusian state. In this context, "it must be acknowledged that Classical Arabic was always the primary language; it was the language of science and literature (...), as well as the language of official matters and all serious state affairs. Colloquial Arabic followed in status, relying on and branching from Classical Arabic and maintaining its proximity. As for those (Romance) colloquial, they naturally occupied the lowest position." (), Among the most effective

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means for learning Arabic in Andalusia were the European missions to this land, which served as intellectual arenas at the time, becoming hubs of knowledge that attracted astute students from France and Italy. ()

Teaching the Arabic Language in Europe and Its Ability to Keep Pace with the Era

The Arabic language has served as a tool for civilizational communication through the translation of books and their dissemination to distant populations starting from the Umayyad era and extending to the Andalusian period, during which the scientific movement reached its pinnacle. The Arab intellect succeeded in accessing various sciences and translating them into Arabic, even advancing most of them. Europeans began "amassing in their repositories what the Arabs had authored in medicine, philosophy, mathematics, natural sciences, chemistry, astronomy, literature, and language, and they began translating them into their own languages (...). They would purchase the Eastern manuscripts that caught their eyes, considering them as ancient, strange, and unknown relics in their countries." ()

The teaching of the Arabic language continued in some European countries with the aim of exploring the culture of Arab-Islamic civilization. Significant efforts were made to care for the Arabic language, as Orientalists gathered Arab and Islamic heritage and delved into it. They then investigated the origins of the Arabic language, its grammar, morphology, and dictionaries. These Orientalist efforts contributed to serving the Arabic language, as Westerners dedicated departments in their universities to teaching Arabic. Additionally, their governments supported their endeavors by establishing institutes for Oriental studies in the majority of Western countries.(), Furthermore, they focused on translating the Holy Quran, which became the subject of various studies. "Westerners began studying the Arabic language in monasteries, and the first and most important work in the field of translation from Arabic that they dedicated time and effort to, was the Holy Quran. They began translating it, creating indexes of its terms, and producing countless studies about it." ()

The Arabic language has remained resilient through the ages, capable of solidifying its identity, preserving it, and participating in the creation of human civilization. One of the means that significantly contributed to the maintenance of this language is the Holy Quran, which is considered the primary reason for its protection. Muslims were keen on teaching the Quran and the sciences that branched from it, especially since they understood that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) encouraged them to memorize and study the Quran. Thus, they eagerly pursued its learning without hesitation, () granting considerable prestige to those who learned and taught the Quran.

In recent centuries, the Arabic language has experienced significant decline. Nevertheless, it has remained steadfast and capable of assimilating certain knowledge, with its speakers increasingly aware of its importance in reinforcing national identity and its ability to keep pace with the era and interact with the new knowledge society. This is despite the competition from global languages, particularly those that laid the foundation for modern sciences, such as English, which "has acquired tens and hundreds of millions of speakers and learners on every continent and in every major nation of the world (...) This means, in any case, that exchanges in English occur much more frequently among multilingual individuals in non-Western countries, and in many developing countries, English is viewed as a necessary path to achieving professional opportunities, economic advancement, and popular culture."

The Arabic language has also maintained its aspiration for expansion, richness, and ability to renew itself. Its lexicon has grown in recent years to include many technical terms, scientific vocabulary, and has responded to the Arabization movement and the reception of foreign languages and various forms of modern thought. Additionally, it has adapted to the requirements of the present reality with new concepts, as "if Arab culture is the product of Arab history, then the language is the expressive tool of this culture, a key landmark, and one of the active and influential social realities within the context of social existence and its continuity." ()

It is important to note that the seeds of a new cultural movement began to emerge at the end of the nineteenth century; aiming to restore the status and effectiveness of the Arabic language. This was manifested in the efforts of a select group of intellectuals who sought to advance the Arabic language by

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enhancing its role in translation, developing printing, encouraging cultural exchange and interaction with the Western other, and taking care of education. However, these attempts and those that followed ranged from limited success to setbacks imposed by the teaching of most contemporary sciences in foreign languages.

Chapter Two

Teaching the Arabic Language and Its Role in Enhancing National Identity

The Concept of Identity

The term "identity" is relatively modern, presenting researchers with significant challenges in defining it linguistically with precision. Although it has ancient roots in usage, its philosophical definition remains elusive. Moreover, the derivative concept of identity scarcely aligns with the modern connotations of the term, as it fails to provide a comprehensive and conclusive definition that meets the demands of contemporary thought. Ibn Manzur defined it by stating: "Identity is a diminutive of essence, and some have said: Identity is a deep well." () The term "identity" has sparked considerable debate in the intellectual arena and is among the issues that have attracted the attention of researchers from various disciplines. "Nevertheless, the word 'identity' itself has been established as a philosophical term indicating what a thing is in itself. Al-Farabi defines it by saying: the identity of a thing, its essence, its differentiation, its uniqueness, and its singular existence belong to each individual." ()

John Locke highlights that identity in living beings does not rely on the mass of certain particles but on something else entirely. He explains this by stating: "In the case of living creatures, changing parts, even if they are large portions of material, does not alter the identity: an oak grows from a small branch into a large tree, and when pruned, it remains always the same oak. A young colt becomes a horse, which can gain weight at times and lose weight at others, yet it remains the same horse, despite significant changes in the parts that constitute it; in reality, neither of them has the same mass of material, even though one is indeed the same oak, and the other is indeed the same horse. The reason for this is that in the case of a mass of material and in the case of a living body, the concept of identity does not apply to the thing itself." ()

Locke further explains this "something else" that ensures the identity of entities by stating: "It is simply the continuous participation in the same life, supported by an ongoing flow of material particles, which alternately enter into a vital unity with the organizing body itself." (). Through this, we understand that the term "identity" refers to subjectivity and differentiation from others, rather than merely the conformity of a thing with itself despite some changes in its conditions, as indicated by the "principle of identity," which represents one of the foundational laws in traditional logic. ()

Teaching the Arabic Language and the Challenges of Globalization (The Need for Civilizational Rooting)

In our contemporary reality, the Arabic language has encountered numerous existential and communicative issues, particularly with the encroachment of globalization. One manifestation of this is its intense competition with other languages as it strives to meet the demands of the current cognitive landscape. This situation is attributed to the prominent presence of many foreign languages among the Arabic-speaking populations, leading to the emergence of numerous questions attempting to diagnose the crisis of Arabic and the mechanisms for its development. , For instance, how can a language that has managed to permeate the world and shape its history for several centuries experience estrangement in our present era? Is it not incumbent upon Arab researchers to establish innovative mechanisms for the use of the Arabic language to align it with the necessities of the cognitive reality? To what extent have educational programs in Arab countries succeeded in developing their curricula in a manner that accommodates the demands of modern cognitive advancements while harmonizing the deep-rooted national identity of Arabic-speaking peoples with the requirements of contemporary cognitive reality, not to mention the necessity of civilizational communication with the other?

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Those interested in Arabic language issues attribute this decline to several factors, including the diminishing academic role of the Arabic language within universities, the reliance on foreign languages for teaching advanced sciences, the notable dominance of local dialects, , and the beginning spread of social communication languages that blend Arabic and Latin letters within the same word, known as hybrid languages. Additionally, other objective reasons have prompted the consideration of new mechanisms to enable the Arabic language to rejuvenate and develop. Among the most prominent of these mechanisms are:

Developing Arabic Language Educational Curricula, This involves embodying the role of the teacher and their ability to instill the language in the learner's mind. The Arabic teacher is considered an ambassador of their language and culture, thus bearing numerous responsibilities. They must overcome the challenges they face, whether related to communicative challenges that require cooperation, flexibility, and tolerance towards the student, or cognitive challenges that necessitate a deep understanding of the intricacies of Arabic.()

Innovating New Creative Ideas for Teaching Materials, This aims to facilitate the learner's reception of the material, relying on the educational program developers' ability to envision educational pathways and frameworks that reinforce the bond between the learner and their language.

Creating New Methods for Teaching Arabic, These methods should help learners stimulate their communicative motivations in Arabic and enhance their inclination to use Modern Standard Arabic (Fusha).

Encouraging a scientific mindset is crucial for the effective learning and use of the Arabic language.

In recent years, the question of identity has been reintroduced into the Arab environment. The history of the Arabic language has celebrated the conquests and advancements of the Arabs, as documented in history books and various sciences. Arabs were not initially in need of posing this question; however, after the Arab world's decline across all levels of modern life, the awareness of the value of Arab identity began to haunt its peoples, creating anxiety about the threat of cultural globalization to their civilizational entity.

Cultural identity is a term that has been overshadowed by multiple meanings in the field of social sciences. It has sparked extensive debate in political arenas and has been the subject of ideological conflicts. Additionally, it has not been absent from academic studies. This concept has acquired a symbolic dimension, especially after the political transformations that have occurred worldwide, significantly influencing the awareness of national identity, which represents "cultural uniqueness encompassing all that culture entails, including customs, patterns, behaviors, tendencies, values, and perspectives on the universe and life." (), Arab societies have not been exempt from the systems of defending their identity in various forms.

The Role of the Arabic Language in Protecting National Identity from the Influx of Globalization

Language occupies a paramount position in an individual's life and is one of the most important pillars in the formation of nations. It represents the cultural face and the historical depth of national identity. Consequently, language serves as a primary guarantee in safeguarding the homeland and maintaining its strength and unity. While the Arabic language has played a civilizational role in uniting its people and positively interacting with historical movements, it has experienced a significant decline in our current reality, especially with the advent of the digital age in the knowledge society. This decline has led young people to turn to learning foreign languages such as English, hoping to reach Western homelands, which have become the ideal model of intellectual modernity and a refuge for economic security.

This situation has made the search for ways to protect national identity from the dangers of globalization an urgent matter. It has become imperative for Arabs to seek methods that align their language with the nature and challenges of the globalization era. One of the essential conditions serving as a robust barrier against the erosion of national identity is the enhancement of the role of education and its effectiveness in deepening cultural and social awareness. As stated, "The importance of education is no longer a matter of

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debate in any region of the world today. Contemporary international experiences have unequivocally proven that the beginning of real progress, indeed the only progress, is education." () If this educational effort is achieved in the Arabic language, it becomes possible to assert that it has regained its civilizational status.

Furthermore, it can be added that one of the most important methods to restore the civilizational role of this language—after establishing it as the language for teaching new sciences and enabling future generations to master it—is to work on developing its teaching curricula and innovating new teaching methods. Numerous efforts have been proposed for this purpose, including learning Arabic through theater. For instance, "when someone portrays a role in a play, they see themselves in it and feel their value as an entity in that moment when all eyes are on them. At that time, their level of tension decreases, their suppressed emotions breathe out, their shyness dissolves, and a deep moment of happiness renews their love for the language that carried them, their thoughts, and their imagination (...). In those pivotal moments, linguistic knowledge becomes deeply ingrained and strongly utilized because it is linked to a moment of existential birth." ()Theater is one of the methods for teaching the language, but it is not the only method. There are various activities and alternatives that fulfill the need and serve the purpose effectively.

Accordingly, the role of learning the Arabic language in enhancing national identity is realized through the development of the roles of educational actors, such as:

Firstly: Developing the role of the educator who leads the learning process and contributes to fostering the learner's sense of pride in their language. This is achieved by equipping them with a culture related to their civilizational history and precise knowledge connected to the Arabic language's history and grammar, in addition to supplementing their theoretical formation with training programs specifically related to teaching Arabic during their work.

Secondly: Developing the role of the educational system by enhancing curricula that align with the conditions of globalization and benefit from its positive aspects. Observing the pathways of civilizational progress reveals that attention to education, the development of knowledge acquisition methods and curricula, and the teaching of languages, including foreign ones, have been the main pillars for the flourishing, excellence, and pride of peoples in their identity.

Thirdly: Developing educational programs for the Arabic language, enriching educational and learning resources, and spreading Arabic culture to encompass all aspects of individual and social life. This ensures that its speakers feel its ability to express all their real needs and to keep pace with the era of globalization.

It is noteworthy that researchers in Arab countries have sought to develop the Arabic language through updates to educational programs, allowing it to establish a cognitive foundation that opens up to various civilizations without being confined to Arab nations. This approach serves as a means to strengthen the sense of belonging to the national identity closely linked to it.

#### Conclusion

The Arabic language has undergone significant developments throughout the ages, managing to serve as a cornerstone for Arab-Islamic civilization and as an eloquent language used extensively over long periods. However, it has faced a notable decline in its communicative effectiveness in recent centuries, reflecting the impact of globalization on the Arab cognitive and cultural environment. This decline, deepened by the culture of globalization, necessitates the urgent need for concerted efforts to restore the Arabic language to the forefront of human civilization, preserving our civilizational uniqueness and protecting our national identity, while enhancing our ability to engage positively with modern knowledge societies.

The importance of this research lies in highlighting the duality of language and identity in contemporary Arab culture, examining their civilizational relationship and their influence by contemporary social and cultural phenomena within a global context where cultural boundaries between societies are increasingly blurred. Despite the rich history of the Arabic, language in engaging with its surroundings and assimilating

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various scientific and intellectual activities, the contemporary reality points to significant challenges facing the Arabic language in meeting the needs of modern Arab societies.

# **Findings**

The research concluded with a set of essential findings that reflect the reality of the Arabic language in facing the challenges of globalization and enhancing national identity, including:

The study revealed that the Arabic language is no longer capable of meeting the current cognitive needs of its speakers, leading to a decline in its use in scientific and academic fields and an increase in the prevalence of colloquial dialects competing with Modern Standard Arabic (Fusha) in areas such as art and education.

The study demonstrated that the Arabic language has played a pivotal civilizational role in its history, especially during the Abbasid and Andalusian eras, serving as a medium for exchanging knowledge and culture with other civilizations, thereby contributing to the flourishing of Arabic sciences and arts.

It was found that the culture of globalization and its advancement have led to a reduced presence of the Arabic language in Arabic-speaking communities, as young people increasingly turn to learning foreign languages like English to achieve better economic and social opportunities, thereby threatening national identity.

The findings emphasized that teaching the Arabic language plays a vital role in reinforcing national identity among emerging generations, enhancing individuals' connection to their culture and civilizational history.

The study showed that diversifying teaching curricula and developing educational methods could contribute to strengthening the presence of the Arabic language in daily and scientific life, thereby restoring its civilizational status.

The results confirm that the role of the teacher is crucial in instilling the Arabic language in students. An effective teacher, who possesses a deep knowledge of the Arabic language and the ability to convey it in engaging and innovative ways, can restore the prominence of Arab civilization and motivate students to use the language in their daily and academic lives.

The findings indicate that enhancing the presence of the Arabic language requires positive interaction with modern knowledge societies. This interaction includes leveraging modern educational technologies and developing digital educational resources that support the learning of the Arabic language and expand its use in scientific and technological fields.

The results affirm that preserving the Arabic language enhances the unique civilizational identity of Arabs, contributing to resisting the cultural globalization effects that might weaken societal cohesion. The Arabic language, as a means of expressing culture and heritage, forms a fundamental pillar for maintaining and strengthening national identity in the face of global challenges.

#### Recommendations

Based on the extracted findings, the research proposes a set of practical recommendations aimed at enhancing the role of the Arabic language in confronting the challenges of globalization and strengthening national identity, as follows:

Educational curricula should be updated to keep pace with scientific and cognitive developments, focusing on integrating modern civilizational content that enhances students' understanding of their history and culture.

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New teaching methods, such as using theater and interactive activities, should be developed to stimulate learners' communicative motivations and encourage the use of Modern Standard Arabic (Fusha) in their daily lives.

Advanced training programs should be provided for teachers to equip them with the necessary skills and knowledge to teach the Arabic language effectively, making them ambassadors of the Arabic language and culture in society.

The establishment and support of institutes and research centers dedicated to developing scientific research in the Arabic language are essential. Encouraging the publication of research and scientific works in Fusha is also recommended.

Educational awareness campaigns should be implemented to enhance the value of the Arabic language and its role in preserving national identity, encouraging individuals to use it in various aspects of life.

Civilizational communication with other societies should be strengthened through the exchange of experiences and knowledge, contributing to the enrichment and development of the Arabic language to meet contemporary demands.

Efforts should be made to integrate the Arabic language into technology and digitization fields, such as developing educational applications and computer programs that support the learning and use of Fusha.

Cultural and educational policies should be established to protect the Arabic language from the negative impacts of globalization, while enhancing its value and importance in Arab society.

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