

## A Comparative Study of Arabic Language Education in Indonesia, Thailand, China, and South Korea

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### **Abstract**

Arabic language education in Asia exhibits significant variation shaped by historical, religious, socio-political, and economic factors. This comparative study examines Arabic language teaching in Indonesia, Thailand, China, and South Korea, focusing on four key dimensions: historical evolution, institutional frameworks, pedagogical methodologies, and prevailing challenges. Employing a qualitative comparative research design, the study synthesizes policy documents, academic literature, and institutional reports to elucidate national approaches and educational outcomes. Findings reveal that Indonesia and Thailand emphasize religious motivations with Arabic instruction embedded primarily in Islamic educational settings, whereas China and South Korea adopt a more secular and pragmatic orientation, linking Arabic proficiency to diplomatic, economic, and academic objectives. Despite divergent contexts, all countries face challenges, including shortages of qualified instructors, limited curricular standardization, and insufficient exposure to native Arabic language environments. The study underscores the need for curriculum development balancing classical and modern Arabic, enhanced teacher training, and expanded international collaboration. This research contributes to understanding Arabic language education in diverse Asian contexts and offers recommendations to support effective pedagogical strategies and policy reforms.

**Keywords:** *Arabic Language Education; Comparative Study; Pedagogy; Language Policy*

### **Introduction**

Arabic is a language of profound historical, religious, cultural, and geopolitical significance. As the sacred language of Islam, it serves as the liturgical medium for approximately 1.9 billion Muslims worldwide (World Population Review, 2025). Beyond its religious function, Arabic is one of the six official languages of the United Nations and a critical language in global diplomacy, trade, and international relations. In the Asian context, Arabic education assumes multifaceted roles shaped by

complex socio-cultural, historical, and political factors. Asia hosts roughly 62% of the global Muslim population (Mukhtar, 2025), making studying Arabic language instruction in this region especially pertinent for understanding the interplay between language, religion, identity, and international engagement (Al Shlowiy, 2022; Hackett & McClendon, 2017).

Despite the centrality of Arabic to Muslim communities, approaches to Arabic language education vary widely across Asian countries, influenced by each nation's unique historical trajectories, demographic compositions, political systems, and educational policies. Such variation presents fertile ground for comparative linguistic and educational research. However, existing literature remains fragmented, often focusing on individual countries without systematically addressing cross-national differences and commonalities in pedagogy, institutional frameworks, and challenges.

Indonesia, home to the world's largest Muslim-majority population exceeding 230 million (Purwanti, 2024), exemplifies a rich and multifaceted Arabic educational landscape. Arabic instruction in Indonesia is deeply interwoven with Islamic religious traditions and educational institutions, notably the *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools) and *madrasahs* (Islamic day schools). The *pesantren* system, which predates modern schooling, prioritizes Qur'anic memorization and the study of classical Islamic texts, with Arabic as a sacred language for religious literacy. Over the twentieth century and following independence, Indonesia institutionalized Arabic education further by integrating it into national curricula under the supervision of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, alongside secular public school programs that offer Arabic as an elective (Hefner, 2009). This dual structure reflects Indonesia's pluralistic approach to Arabic instruction, balancing traditional religious education with modern linguistic and communicative competencies.

In Thailand, Arabic education is largely concentrated in the southern provinces of Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat, regions with predominantly Malay-Muslim populations. Arabic teaching occurs predominantly within Islamic educational institutions such as *pondoks*—informal boarding schools—and *madrasahs*. The educational focus remains primarily religious, centered on enabling students to read and understand the Qur'an and classical Islamic scholarship (Berglund & Gent, 2019; Liow, 2010). While formal public education rarely incorporates Arabic, private Islamic schools and universities offer some programs, albeit with limited governmental support and resources. The political and social tensions in southern Thailand add complexity to educational access and continuity for Muslim minorities, affecting the stability and development of Arabic instruction in these areas.

China's Arabic language education system starkly contrasts Indonesia and Thailand. Arabic teaching is primarily secular and strategically oriented, embedded within state-sponsored university programs emphasizing language proficiency for diplomatic, commercial, and academic purposes (Zhao, 2016). Chinese Arabic programs, such as those at Beijing Foreign Studies University and Northwest University for Nationalities, reflect national priorities linked to the Belt and Road Initiative and China's expanding engagement with the Arab world. Given the state's regulatory environment concerning religion, Arabic education in China is characterized by government funding, formal curricula, and standardized language proficiency frameworks, with less emphasis on religious content. Additionally, the country's sizeable Hui Muslim population maintains religious Arabic instruction in mosques and religious schools, creating a dual educational track analogous to Indonesia but with a much smaller scale and differing government oversight.

In South Korea, Arabic language education is relatively nascent but growing steadily, driven by economic and diplomatic ties with Middle Eastern countries. Universities such as Hankuk University of Foreign Studies have established Arabic language and Middle Eastern studies programs primarily focused on equipping students for careers in international relations, business, and energy sectors (Kim & Piper, 2019). South Korea's approach to Arabic education is distinctly academic and professional, with a pedagogical emphasis on Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) and communicative competence. Unlike

Indonesia or Thailand, Arabic is not linked to a significant Muslim population or religious education system, and thus, its institutional presence is limited to a few universities, often supported by government and private-sector scholarships and exchange programs.

While the contextual motivations for Arabic instruction diverge significantly across these countries—from religious literacy in Indonesia and Thailand to strategic diplomacy and commerce in China and South Korea—common pedagogical and institutional challenges emerge. These include a chronic shortage of qualified teachers, particularly native or near-native Arabic speakers trained in modern pedagogical methods; fragmented and inconsistent curricula that inadequately balance classical and modern Arabic; limited exposure to immersive language environments; and insufficient integration of technology and digital resources to enhance learning outcomes. Moreover, sociopolitical factors, such as minority status, language policy priorities, and regional security issues, affect the reach and efficacy of Arabic education programs, especially in Thailand and China.

Previous research tends to address Arabic education within national silos, often emphasizing religious or linguistic aspects without a comparative framework that situates country-specific phenomena within broader regional and global trends (Alwasilah, 2013; Kim & Piper, 2019). This gap limits the capacity to derive generalizable insights or policy recommendations applicable across diverse Asian contexts. Given Arabic-speaking countries' increasing geopolitical and economic importance in global affairs, a systematic comparative study is timely and necessary to inform effective language policy, curriculum development, and pedagogical innovation.

This study aims to fill this gap by comprehensively analyzing Arabic language education in Indonesia, Thailand, China, and South Korea. The objectives are to (1) trace the historical evolution of Arabic language instruction in each country; (2) examine the institutional structures and educational policies underpinning Arabic teaching; (3) analyze prevalent pedagogical approaches and teacher qualifications; and (4) identify shared and unique challenges impacting Arabic education. Utilizing qualitative comparative methodology grounded in document analysis, literature review, and institutional case studies, this research synthesizes multidisciplinary perspectives to enhance understanding of Arabic language education's role in Asia's complex socio-cultural and political landscape.

By elucidating patterns of convergence and divergence, this study seeks to contribute to the fields of language education, comparative education, and sociolinguistics while offering practical recommendations for policymakers, educators, and stakeholders invested in advancing Arabic language proficiency across Asia.

## **Methods**

This study employs a qualitative comparative research design to systematically analyze and contrast Arabic language education across four Asian countries: Indonesia, Thailand, China, and South Korea. The qualitative approach is appropriate for exploring complex socio-cultural, institutional, and pedagogical phenomena, allowing for an in-depth understanding of context-specific factors and cross-national comparisons (Bray et al., 2014).

A comparative framework underpins this study, facilitating the identification of convergent and divergent patterns in Arabic language teaching practices, policies, and challenges within diverse national contexts. This framework is informed by theories of comparative education and second language acquisition (SLA), which emphasize the influence of macro-level factors such as cultural norms, political systems, and educational infrastructures on language learning outcomes (Bray et al., 2014; Ellis, 2008).

Data were collected through a multi-source document analysis and an extensive literature review. First, policy and curriculum documents, including official educational policies, curricula, and guidelines about Arabic language instruction, were sourced from each country's ministries of education, religious affairs, and institutional websites. These documents provided foundational insights into the formal structures and intended pedagogical frameworks. Second, academic literature that includes peer-reviewed journal articles, books, and conference proceedings relevant to Arabic language education in Indonesia, Thailand, China, and South Korea were reviewed. The literature encompassed historical analyses, empirical studies on pedagogy, and evaluations of institutional capacity. Third, institutional reports and case studies, including reports from educational institutions, NGOs, and international organizations, were analyzed to capture contemporary programmatic details, teacher qualifications, student demographics, and resource availability.

Following Braun and Clarke's (2019) methodology, thematic analysis was employed to interpret the collected data. The process involved familiarization with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes for coherence and distinction, defining and naming themes, and producing a final synthesis. This approach allowed for inductive identification of key themes such as historical development, institutional structures, pedagogical approaches, teacher qualifications, and challenges.

Data triangulation was applied by cross-verifying information across multiple document types and sources to enhance the credibility and reliability of findings. Peer debriefing was also conducted with subject matter experts to validate interpretations and thematic categorizations.

## Results and Discussion

This section presents the findings from the comparative analysis of Arabic language education in Indonesia, Thailand, China, and South Korea, organized around five thematic areas: historical evolution, institutional structures, teaching methodologies, teacher qualifications, and challenges. Each subsection offers descriptive insights followed by analytical discussion grounded in relevant educational and sociolinguistic theories.

### 1. Institutional Contexts and National Policy Frameworks

The institutional contexts and national policy frameworks governing Arabic language education in Indonesia, Thailand, China, and South Korea are deeply influenced by each country's unique historical development, socio-cultural environment, and state policy priorities. These factors contribute to significant variation in institutional arrangements, state oversight, and the roles assigned to Arabic language education within national education systems. See Table 1 for a comparative summary.

Table 1: Institutional Features of Arabic Language Education

Feature	Indonesia	Thailand	China	South Korea
<b>Main Institutions</b>	Pesantren, Madrasah, UIN/IAIN/STAIN, public schools	Pondok, Madrasah, private Islamic schools, select universities	National universities, Islamic colleges	Elite universities (HUFS, Busan UFS)
<b>Government Oversight</b>	Strong (MORA & MOE)	Limited, localized	Strong, centralized	Moderate, university-driven
<b>Standardization</b>	High in madrasah, variable in pesantren	Low, fragmented	High, state-designed	High within the university, not the national

<b>Number of Providers</b>	~27,000 pesantren, 37,000 madrasah, 58 Islamic universities	~1,800 pondok/madrasah, ~10 universities	>30 universities	<10 universities
<b>Funding</b>	State, private, religious, foreign	Private, religious, and foreign donors	Strong state funding	University, government grants
<b>Integration Level</b>	National, dual-track	Regional (south), niche	National (strategic), Hui regions	University only

In Indonesia, Arabic language education benefits from extensive institutionalization and robust state involvement, resulting in Asia's largest and most complex system. The Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) exercises considerable authority, directly overseeing more than 27,000 pesantren (Islamic boarding schools), 37,000 madrasahs, and 58 State Islamic Universities (UIN/IAIN/STAIN) (Azra, 2004; MoRA, 2022; PPIM UIN Jakarta, 2021). Arabic is mandated as a compulsory subject across all levels of madrasah, while pesantren retain greater curricular autonomy, often blending the traditional grammar-translation approach with elements of communicative language teaching. Indonesia's dual-track system—where Arabic is integrated within both religious and general educational streams—has facilitated the development of nationwide teacher training programs, ongoing curricular reforms, and the establishing of a national proficiency testing regime (UKBA: Uji Kompetensi Bahasa Arab, 2022). However, persistent disparities remain between urban and rural areas and between the relatively standardized madrasah and the more independent pesantren. These gaps highlight ongoing challenges in achieving equitable quality and access across Indonesia's diverse Arabic education landscape.

Thailand presents a markedly different scenario, characterized by institutional fragmentation and localized administration. Arabic language education is primarily concentrated in the southern, Muslim-majority provinces and delivered through Pondok and madrasah schools. Unlike Indonesia, state oversight is minimal; most programs are managed by local Islamic councils private religious foundations, or are supported by foreign donors. While some public universities, such as Prince of Songkla University and Chulalongkorn University, offer Arabic within Islamic Studies or Humanities faculties—often in collaboration with Middle Eastern institutions—the overall system is highly decentralized (Hayisama-Ae et al., 2016). The absence of standardized national curricula and comprehensive state regulation leads to considerable variability in instructional quality, teacher preparation, and student achievement (Aminullahi, 2021; Liow, 2010). As a result, educational outcomes are heavily dependent on local initiatives and the capacity of individual institutions, perpetuating uneven standards across the country.

Centralized state policy and strategic investment distinguish China's approach to Arabic language education. Arabic is positioned as a key foreign language within the national higher education agenda, with over 30 public universities—including Beijing Foreign Studies University and Shanghai International Studies University—offering Arabic programs geared towards translation, commerce, and diplomacy (He-bin et al., 2021; Zhao, 2016). In addition, minority-region Islamic colleges serve the Hui community by providing Arabic instruction closely aligned with state objectives. The Chinese government ensures high standardization by producing national curricula, state-approved textbooks, and substantial financial support. These measures are closely linked to China's broader foreign policy and economic interests, particularly as part of the Belt and Road Initiative, underscoring the instrumental role of Arabic language education in China's global strategy.

South Korea's Arabic language education operates on a much smaller, elite university-driven model. The discipline is concentrated in several prestigious institutions, particularly Hankuk University of Foreign Studies (HUFS) and Busan University. While the Ministry of Education provides some



institutional backing, program development and management are largely under the purview of these universities. Arabic language offerings in South Korea are focused primarily on translation, international relations, and global business, reflecting academic and market demand (Kim & Piper, 2019). Unlike Indonesia or China, Arabic is not part of the primary or secondary school curricula, and the scale of Arabic language education is closely linked to the evolving interests of higher education institutions and the broader economic environment.

The landscape of Arabic language education across these four countries is defined by varied degrees of state involvement, institutional diversity, and strategic orientation. Indonesia exemplifies comprehensive state regulation and system-wide integration, Thailand is characterized by localized administration and variability, China demonstrates centralized standardization and strategic investment, and South Korea represents a niche, university-based approach driven by academic and economic imperatives. These differences reflect broader national priorities and sociopolitical contexts, shaping each country's present and future directions of Arabic language education.

## 2. Curriculum Design, Pedagogical Approaches, and Teacher Training

Curricular choices, teaching methodologies, and teacher qualifications shape the effectiveness of Arabic language teaching in each context. As in Table 2, the comparative analysis reveals varying degrees of curriculum standardization, pedagogical innovation, and investment in teacher training.

*Curriculum design.* In Indonesia, Madrasah follow a nationally standardized curriculum emphasizing Qur'anic Arabic, basic grammar, and communicative skills at higher levels (Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA), 2020). Pesantren relies on classical texts (e.g., *Alfiyah ibn Malik*, *Jurumiyyah*) and traditional methods such as *sorogan* and *bandongan* (Bruinessen, 1990). Universities use contemporary materials, digital resources, and assessment tools like the UKBA Arabic proficiency exam. However, resource and material quality varies sharply, particularly in rural and underfunded institutions.

The religious goals of each institution typically shape the curriculum in Thailand (Muslih & Kholis, 2021). Pondok and madrasah use classical Islamic texts and grammar translation, with little adaptation to modern communicative approaches (Aminullahi, 2021). Recent efforts by some private and university programs to introduce Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) and communicative methods remain the exception.

In China, government-designed curricula incorporate MSA and translation skills, and four skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking) are integrated into instruction. Major universities' language labs, digital tools, and regular curriculum updates are standard (He-bin et al., 2021). Textbooks are produced by state publishing houses and tailored to the needs of Chinese learners, reflecting a pragmatic and modern approach.

In South Korea, universities adopt task-based and communicative methods, using a mix of locally developed and imported materials, including video modules and online resources. The curriculum is closely aligned with professional and business Arabic, with elective courses in translation, regional studies, and international relations (Kim & Piper, 2019).

Table 2. Curriculum, Pedagogy, and Teacher Training

Aspect	Indonesia	Thailand	China	South Korea
<b>Curriculum</b>	Standardized in madrasah, classical in pesantren, modern in universities	Fragmented, mostly religious/traditional	State-designed, MSA, translation focus	Modern, task-based, tech-driven
<b>Main Texts/Materials</b>	Classical Islamic texts, government/modern textbooks, digital resources	Qur'anic/Islamic texts, imported texts	State-published Arabic textbooks, labs	Mixed local/imported online modules
<b>Teaching Method</b>	Grammar-translation, CLT in higher ed	Grammar-translation, rote learning	CLT, translation, technology integration	CLT, task-based, multimedia
<b>Teacher Training</b>	Variable: 19% pesantren, 54% madrasah, 78% public schools trained	Low; most lack formal pedagogy training	High: graduate degrees, exchanges	High: university, some overseas
<b>Native Speakers</b>	Few, mostly at universities	Very few	Some, mainly at elite universities	Few native speakers

*Pedagogical approaches.* Teaching methodologies in Arabic language education across Indonesia, Thailand, China, and South Korea demonstrate a clear spectrum, ranging from traditional rote-based instruction to more progressive, communicative approaches. In Pesantren, Pondok, and many religious schools in Indonesia and Thailand, the grammar-translation method and rote memorization remain the prevailing instructional models. These methods prioritize mastering grammatical rules and vocabulary, often at the expense of communicative competence. In contrast, there has been a noticeable shift towards communicative language teaching (CLT) and task-based language teaching in higher education, particularly within Indonesian and Chinese universities and South Korean institutions. This shift aligns with widely recognized second language acquisition (SLA) theories, which emphasize meaningful communication and the use of language in authentic contexts (Ellis, 2008). Adopting these methods reflects an ongoing effort to move beyond the passive transmission of knowledge toward fostering interactive and student-centered learning environments. Moreover, technology integration into language teaching is increasingly evident in China and South Korea, where e-learning platforms and language laboratories are becoming more widespread. However, such technological advancements have not been uniformly adopted; in rural areas of Indonesia and Thailand, limited resources and infrastructural challenges often hinder the implementation of digital tools, resulting in persistent reliance on conventional teaching methods.

*Teacher training.* Teacher qualifications also vary significantly across these countries, influencing the quality and consistency of Arabic language instruction. In Indonesia, teacher quality is notably heterogeneous. While public schools and universities typically require formal training and teacher certification, data indicate that only 19% of teachers in pesantren and 54% in madrasahs have completed official pedagogy training, which raises concerns about instructional effectiveness and student outcomes (PPIM UIN Jakarta, 2021). Furthermore, opportunities for study-abroad experiences, such as attending universities in Egypt, Yemen, or Saudi Arabia, tend to be concentrated among select faculty in urban centers, leaving rural teachers with fewer professional development opportunities.

In Thailand, the situation is characterized by a reliance on religious scholars as Arabic instructors, many of whom lack formal education in language pedagogy. Native speakers are a rarity, and structured in-service professional development is infrequent, contributing to inconsistencies in instructional quality.

By contrast, most university instructors in China possess graduate-level qualifications in Arabic, often obtained through study in the Middle East. State-supported training and international exchange programs are crucial in maintaining teaching standards; however, faculty shortages continue to pose challenges, especially in less prestigious institutions. In South Korea, university-level Arabic instructors frequently hold international degrees or have undergone overseas training. Nonetheless, the relatively small scale of Arabic studies in the country restricts faculty diversity and limits the availability of native speakers, which can affect the depth and authenticity of language instruction. These variations in teaching methodologies and teacher qualifications collectively shape the landscape of Arabic language education, underscoring the need for systemic reforms and greater investment in teacher training across the region.

### 3. Teaching Objectives, Student Demographics, and Key Challenges

The teaching objectives, student demographics, and persistent challenges in Arabic language education across Indonesia, Thailand, China, and South Korea reveal how structural and cultural factors shape the scope and impact of these programs (see Table 3).

Teaching objectives differ markedly by national context and institutional type. In Indonesia, Arabic instruction is deeply rooted in fostering religious literacy, primarily to facilitate the study of the Qur'an, Hadith, and Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh). However, there is growing recognition—especially within universities—of the importance of Arabic for academic and professional purposes, including translation, teaching, and international diplomacy (Purwanti, 2024). This dual emphasis is gradually broadening the function of Arabic education from a purely religious domain to a more multidimensional, career-oriented pursuit. In Thailand, the overriding objective remains preserving Islamic knowledge and identity among Muslim youth, particularly in the southern provinces. Secular or professional applications of Arabic receive little emphasis, as the language is closely tied to religious education and community cohesion (Aminullahi, 2021). By contrast, China's Arabic education is strategically oriented toward international diplomacy, trade, and foreign policy. The curriculum is designed to produce translators, diplomats, and professionals who can serve China's global economic and political interests (Zhao, 2016). In South Korea, Arabic is taught mainly as an academic and professional tool, with students motivated by opportunities in translation, international business, and Middle Eastern studies. Unlike Indonesia or Thailand, Arabic is not linked to religious identity but to pragmatic academic and economic goals (Kim & Piper, 2019).

Table 3. Objectives, Demographics, and Challenges

Aspect	Indonesia	Thailand	China	South Korea
<b>Main Objectives</b>	Religious, academic, professional	Religious (Islamic identity)	Diplomatic, economic, academic	Academic, business, international
<b>Student Base</b>	Muslim students (all levels)	Muslim youth (south)	University, Hui minority	University students
<b>Major Challenges</b>	Teacher quality, curriculum gaps, urban-rural divide, digital access	Teacher training, fragmented curricula, limited career paths	Native speakers, faculty shortage in non-elite universities	Low demand, lack of native instructors, niche status
<b>Assessment</b>	National exams (UKBA), variable	Institution-based, informal	State-run, standardized	University/International

The student demographics reflect these divergent teaching objectives and the broader socio-cultural landscape. In Indonesia, the spectrum is exceptionally broad, encompassing children in pesantren and madrasah as well as adult learners at the university level, with students overwhelmingly coming from



Muslim backgrounds. Thailand's Arabic education is similarly concentrated among Muslim youth in the country's southern provinces, reinforcing the language's role in religious identity and community continuity. In China, Arabic students are primarily university-level learners, including both Han Chinese who are interested in international careers and Hui minority students who have religious or cultural motivations. The professional dimension is particularly salient, as many students aspire to roles in diplomacy, translation, or global commerce. South Korea's Arabic learners are almost exclusively university students preparing for specialized careers in translation, international business, or academia, reflecting the academic and professional orientation of the field.

Key challenges persist across these diverse contexts, often constraining the effectiveness and reach of Arabic language education. Teacher shortages remain a critical issue, particularly acute in rural Indonesia, Thailand, and certain provinces in China, where attracting and retaining qualified instructors is difficult. Curriculum fragmentation is another widespread problem, especially in Thailand—where the absence of standardized frameworks leads to inconsistent outcomes—and in Indonesia's pesantren sector, which operates with substantial curricular autonomy. Resource gaps, including shortages of up-to-date textbooks, limited access to digital learning tools, and insufficient opportunities for language immersion, further impede progress. Assessment is also a notable concern; while China and Indonesia have made strides in developing national proficiency standards, most other contexts lack unified systems for evaluating language competence, leading to wide variability in student achievement. Finally, issues related to the perceived value of Arabic language education undermine its broader uptake and impact. In Thailand, limited career prospects outside the religious sector diminish student motivation; in South Korea, low public awareness restricts enrollment to a small academic elite; and in parts of Indonesia, Arabic is still viewed narrowly as a religious language, hampering its integration into broader academic and professional domains.

These intersecting objectives, demographic realities, and persistent obstacles underscore the need for context-sensitive policy interventions and sustained investment in teacher development, curriculum modernization, resource provision, and public advocacy to enhance the status and outcomes of Arabic language education across the region.

## ***Conclusion***

This comparative study has examined the institutional contexts, curriculum design, pedagogical approaches, teacher qualifications, and systemic challenges of Arabic language education in Indonesia, Thailand, China, and South Korea. The findings demonstrate that historical legacies, national policies, religious demographics, and the perceived economic or strategic value of Arabic in each country fundamentally shape the diversity of Arabic teaching across Asia.

Indonesia stands out for its dual-track, large-scale integration of Arabic into religious and public education, supported by comprehensive government oversight through the Ministry of Religious Affairs. This condition has produced the region's most extensive network of Arabic learners and teachers, yet persistent disparities remain between urban and rural institutions, traditional pesantren, and modern madrasahs. China, by contrast, demonstrates how central policy and strategic investment can modernize language pedagogy, integrate technology, and align language learning with national foreign policy objectives—though this model also faces challenges in expanding immersion opportunities and attracting native-speaking instructors.

Thailand's fragmented, localized approach—shaped by religious and community-driven priorities in the Muslim-majority southern provinces—results in significant curricular and teacher training variability. South Korea's elite university model shows the potential for rapid modernization and internationalization of Arabic teaching when prioritizing academic and economic motivations. However,

it also exposes the limitations of a niche, university-centric approach regarding societal reach and language immersion.

Across all contexts, common challenges persist: shortages of qualified and pedagogically trained teachers, uneven access to modern teaching resources, gaps in assessment and curriculum standardization, and structural barriers to language immersion. However, there are also shared opportunities—especially in leveraging digital platforms, developing unified proficiency frameworks, and fostering regional collaboration through teacher exchanges and joint curriculum development.

Arabic language education in Asia is marked by dynamic adaptation yet faces enduring issues of equity, quality, and policy coherence. Addressing these will require national reform and sustained cross-country cooperation, investment in teacher professionalization, and alignment with the region's evolving linguistic and economic realities. Future research should pursue longitudinal studies of pedagogical reforms, the role of technology in rural outreach, and the impact of Arabic proficiency on graduates' career trajectories in an increasingly interconnected Asia.

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