



LANGUAGE AND POWER: CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF ARABIC TEXTBOOKS

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Abstract

Arabic holds an important position in the religious, cultural, and educational context of Indonesia, particularly within the madrasah environment. Mastery of Arabic functions not only as a means of communication but also as a medium for instilling Islamic values and social norms embedded in the madrasah education system. Therefore, the selection and use of language in Arabic textbooks need to be critically examined, especially with regard to implicit power relations within learning texts. This study aims to analyze the relationship between language and power in the Grade IX Arabic textbook published by the Directorate of KSKK Madrasah, Directorate of Islamic Education, Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia in 2020. The research employs a qualitative approach using critical discourse analysis to examine linguistic elements, text structure, and socio-cultural contexts. Data were obtained through textual analysis of the textbook to identify linguistic strategies used in constructing ideology and social norms. The findings indicate that the language used in the textbook supports institutional power and religious ideology through word choice, material organization, and narrative constructions that shape students' attitudes and understanding.

Keywords: Arabic language; power; textbook; critical discourse analysis

تجريد

اللغة العربية هي من اللغات التي لها مكانة مهمة في السياق الديني والثقافي والتعليمي في إندونيسيا، ولا سيما في بيئة المدارس الدينية (المدارس الإسلامية). وأن هذه اللغة وسيلة لغرس القيم الإسلامية والمعايير الاجتماعية المتأصلة في نظام التعليم بالمدارس الدينية. لذلك، فإن اختيار اللغة واستخدامها في كتب تعليم اللغة العربية يحتاجان إلى دراسة نقدية، خاصة فيما يتعلق بعلاقات السلطة الضمنية في نصوص التعلم. الهدف من هذا البحث هو تحليل التفاعل بين اللغة والسلطة في كتاب اللغة العربية للصف التاسع الصادر عن مديرية KSKK للمدارس الدينية، مديرية التعليم الإسلامي، وزارة الشؤون الدينية في جمهورية إندونيسيا عام ٢٠٢٠. استخدمت الدراسة المنهج النوعي بتحليل الخطاب النقدي، مع التركيز على العناصر اللغوية وبنية النص والسياق الاجتماعي والثقافي. النتائج من هذا البحث هي أن لغة الكتاب تعزز السلطة المؤسسية والأيدولوجيا الدينية باختيار الألفاظ وتنظيم المادة والبناء السرد الذي يوجّه مواقف المتعلمين وفهمهم وفق القيم التي تسعى المؤسسات التعليمية إلى ترسيخها.

الكلمات المفتوحة: اللغة العربية؛ السلطة؛ الكتاب الدراسي؛ تحليل الخطاب النقدي



INTRODUCTION

Arabic has an important role as a religious lingua franca in Indonesia, especially in the context of the spread and understanding of Islamic teachings. This language is the main language in worship, prayer, and teaching of religious knowledge in pesantren and madrasah which is the center of Islamic education. The existence of Arabic in Indonesia is not only a liturgical language, but also the main means of religious education that connects Muslims in the archipelago with Islamic scientific traditions in the international world.¹

Jonathan P Berkey (2007) says that Arabic operates as an epistemic instrument of power in the madrasa environment and a marker of religious status and authority. Therefore mastery of the sciences ('ilm) and the Arabic language had social and political power in the context of medieval Islamic education, where scholars who mastered the Arabic language and Islamic sciences often had high authority and were respected in society.²

The Arabic textbook for Class IX published by the Kskk Directorate of the Ministry of Religious Affairs in 2020 contains a language that functions doubly, namely as a means of communication and as an instrument of social power construction in the context of madrasahs. Arabic is taught not only as a grammatical and lexical system, but also as a medium to inculcate certain religious values and ideologies that strengthen the legitimacy of religious and social authority.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a qualitative analytical approach that serves to describe, interpret, and critically explain how discourse shapes, maintains, and legitimizes social inequality. The CDA proceeds from the assumption that the use of language is always purposive, whether consciously or unconsciously. Critical discourse analysis therefore not only examines linguistic structures, but also uncovers the ideological and social dimensions behind language practice. In its application, CDA combines various approaches and methods adapted to the research objectives and theoretical perspectives used.³

Nurochim, Royandi, E., Mauluddin, A., & Ngaisah, S. (2020) said AWK views text as a discursive practice as well as a social practice that is inseparable from the social, historical, cultural, economic, and political context that surrounds it. This analysis aims to reveal the principles, ideology, and meaning contained in the text of Islamic education textbooks, taking into account the three main dimensions of the text itself, discourse

¹ Ayu Wandira et al., "Jurnal Penelitian Nusantara Sejarah Bahasa Arab Dalam Penyebaran Agama Islam Di Indonesia Abad 20 Menulis : Jurnal Penelitian Nusantara" 1, no. April (2025): 1–5.

² Jonathan P Berkey, *Madrasah Medieval and Modern : Politics, Education and the Problem Muslim Identity*, Pertama (Princeton University Press, 2007).

³ Mohammad Afzal Hossain, Mawlana Bhashani Science, and Mawlana Bhashani Science, "Critical Discourse Analysis of Literary Texts of NCTB English for Today (Class II - Class VIII) Textbooks : A Qualitative Study" 9493, no. 9 (2022): 434–447

practices (the process of production and consumption of text), and socio-cultural practices that affect the production and meaning of the discourse.⁴

Sholeha, P. N., & Sofa, A. R. (2025) mentions that this is evident from the selection of texts and materials that contain messages of expressed and implied meaning, including ideas hidden in metaphors and analogies. Strategies such as opening paragraph identification, sentence structure analysis, contextual discussion, and Idea mapping are proven to improve students' critical thinking, literacy, and understanding of Arabic culture. In addition, the study recommends teacher training, textbook enrichment, as well as the integration of cultural values to support holistic and critical Arabic learning that explicitly strengthens positions of religious and moral authority.⁵ The book presents texts that affirm the importance of adherence to the rules of the madrasah as well as Islamic values through the use of formal and authoritative language, which serves to instill social norms and a firm hierarchy of power between the teacher as an authoritative figure and the student as the one who is obliged to submit and follow.

Furthermore, mastery of the Arabic language in this learning context is emphasized as the key to access to authentic sources of religious knowledge, so that socially and epistemically place learners in positions of cultural and intellectual power in the madrasah community. The Arabic language that is mastered becomes a symbol of social status and religious identity that is coveted in the environment. Thus, this book implicitly encourages the internalization of power relations through language, where learners are directed to make language an integral part of the identity and social position to be achieved.⁶

Overall, the language used in this textbook serves as an instrument of power that mediates social relations in madrasah institutions while asserting the authority of religious education institutions and the ideology they carry through the choice of material and style of language used.⁷

Habibi (2019) in his research on the development of an integrative Arabic curriculum in traditional and modern boarding schools at MAPK MAN 1 Surakarta shows the integration between the Arabic curriculum of morning schools, afternoon tutorials, and pesantren curricula, focusing on active and passive Arabic mastery both grammatically and in everyday conversation. This study confirms the importance of

⁴ Nurochim et al., "Kritis Terhadap Teks Dalam Buku Ajar Pendidikan Agama Islam Multiculturalism : Critical Discourse," 2020, 197–222.

⁵ Putri Nabilatus Sholeha et al., "Membedah Gagasan Dalam Teks Panjang Bahasa Arab Melalui Pendekatan Analisis Wacana Yang Mengungkapkan Makna Tersurat dan Tersirat di Sekolah MA Zaha," 2025, 114–24.

⁶ Zaki Ghufon et al., "Integration of Arabic Language Learning in the Formation of Social-Religious Identity in Madrasahs: A Systematic Study of Policy , Local Practices , and Digital Transformation" 5, no. 1 (2025): 133–45.

⁷ Ali Maksum and Nana Jumaha, "Kebijakan Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab Di Indonesia Dalam Kurikulum Madrasah" 2, no. 4 (2024): 147–56.



integration of learning materials and methods in the context of modern and traditional madrasah.⁸

The Model of Arabic curriculum development in madrasah is strongly influenced by the institution's ability to integrate Islamic values with a contextual and adaptive pedagogical approach to the Times. Various models such as national pesantren-integrative curriculum, functional approach (nadhariyyah al-wihdah), multiliteration, and technology-based models and ACTFL have been applied with varying results. The success of curriculum implementation is not only determined by its structural design, but supporting factors such as teacher competence, the appropriateness of the material to the socio-cultural context of the students, as well as the availability of learning means and technologies are of great importance.⁹

Most studies tend to focus on the interaction of power between teachers and students in general in the context of learning Indonesian or other languages, but there are still few who examine the specifics of power in learning Arabic, especially in the context of madrasahs or official textbooks of the Ministry of Religious Affairs. For example, research conducted by Bite Mujianto et al. considers that the power of teachers in the interaction of learning Indonesian is instrumental in shaping the dynamics of the class, both in terms of mastery of the material, setting rules, and management of student social interaction. Teachers use a variety of pragmatic strategies such as imperative instruction, repetition of commands, as well as the provision of strict structures to control the learning process.¹⁰ Similarly, research conducted by Sofyan (2014) considers that language has an important role as a symbol and tool in maintaining social and political power. Language not only reflects social status but more than that, it is used to legitimize and reinforce the dominance of power by elite or ruling groups.¹¹

According to Haryatmoko (2019) as quoted by Ahmad Suhaili (2025) in his book *Corpus Assisted Critical Discourse Analysis / Corpus assisted Critical Discourse Analysis* explains that Critical Discourse Analysis helps understand language in its use. Language was not just a means of communication, but also used as an instrument to do something or a means of implementing power strategies. Through language, people produce meaning in social life. Haryatmoko (2019). In line with that, according to Elya Munfarida (2014) in her article entitled *Critical Discourse Analysis in perspective* Norman Fairclough said Critical Discourse Analysis (AWK) is a multidisciplinary approach that views language as not just a means of communication, but also as a social practice that shapes, reproduces, and transforms social reality. In Norman Fairclough's perspective,

⁸ Burhan Yusuf Habibi, "Integrasi Kurikulum Bahasa Arab Pesantren Tradisional dan Modern Arabi : Journal of Arabic Studies" 4, no. 2 (2019): 151–67.

⁹ Erlina Erlina Astoya Saimulani, Agus Pahrudin, "Model Pengembangan Kurikulum Bahasa Arab Di Madrasah : Tinjauan Sistematis Atas Pendekatan, Teori, dan Temuan" 9, no. 2 (2025): 153–65.

¹⁰ Gigit Mujianto, Arif Setiawan, and Elen Inderasari, "Analisis Pragmatisme Kekuasaan Interaksi Guru-Siswa Dalam Pembelajaran Bahasa Indonesia" 21 (2025): 236–52.

¹¹ Nur Sofyan, "Bahasa Sebagai Simbolisasi Mempertahankan Kekuasaan," *Interaksi* III, no. 1 (2014): 75–84.

discourse not only reflects the social world, but constructs it dialectically, because discourse is influenced by social structures and plays a role in shaping these structures. Thus, discourse analysis must include linguistic, contextual, ideological and power dimensions.¹²

In line with that, according to Nabila Zalfa Nauroh and Rachmi Kurnia Siregar (2023) in their article entitled discourse on Gender equality in the family in the Film later we tell stories about today : A Critical Discourse Analysis of Norman Fairclough (Discourse in Gender Equality in the Family in the Film 'later we tell stories about today':Critical Discourse Analysis of Norman Fairclough) said that according to Fairclough (1995), discourse is understood as a form of social action that plays a role in shaping and being shaped by social structures. Language is not neutral, but rather reflects certain power relations and ideologies that operate in society. Therefore, critical discourse analysis aims to dismantle the relationship between language, power and ideology hidden in the text.¹³ Similarly, according to Nisa Halisa Hakim in his article entitled Critical Discourse Analysis Norman Fairclough on YouTube video Zulfan Lindan Unpacking Indonesia said that Critical Discourse Analysis (AWK) is a theory and method used to analyze discourse by highlighting the relationship between language, power, ideology, and socio-cultural context.¹⁴

Of the several studies above that examine more teacher-student verbal interactions in general or focus on power in the context of boarding schools in general, this study focuses on how power relations are represented and reproduced structurally through the language contained in the textbook material. In addition, this study integrates the study of language and power with aspects of the formation of religious identity and social position of learners as users of the Arabic language, as well as the ideological impact of language in shaping the paradigm of modern madrasah learning based on national and religious. It is expected to provide new insights into the mechanisms by which learning texts not only transfer language knowledge, but also shape learners ' social and religious identities through ideologically selected language structures. Furthermore, this research will offer a critical perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis (AWK) using Norman Fairclough's (1995) approach, textbooks differ from neutral texts because they present discursive products that symbolize certain ideologies. It can help curriculum developers and textbook compilers in designing materials based on awareness of the distribution of language power, so that Arabic learning in madrasas can run more inclusive and Democratic. Thus, this study can support efforts to reform madrasah Education through

¹² Peserta Elya Munfarida Program, Doktor Iers, and U G M Yogyakarta, "Analisis Wacana Kritis Dalam Perspektif Norman Fairclough" 8, no. 1 (1978): 1–19.

¹³ Nabila Zalfa Naurah and Rachmi Kurnia Siregar, "Wacana Kesetaraan Gender Dalam Keluarga Pada Film Nanti Kita Cerita Tentang Hari Ini : Analisis Wacana Kritis Norman Fairclough (Discourse in Gender Equality in the Family in the Film ' Nanti Kita Cerita Tentang Hari Ini ': Critical Discourse Analysis of" 3, no. 1 (2023): 19–35.

¹⁴ Nisa Halisa Hakim, "Analisis Wacana Kritis Norman Fairclough Pada Video YouTube Zulfan Lindan Unpacking Indonesia," 2025, 104–17.



innovation of learning materials that not only put forward linguistic aspects, but also socio-political aspects of power in language.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research methodology using a qualitative approach to the method of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) Norman Fairclough (1995). This approach is suitable for studying MTs Class IX Arabic textbooks because it is able to explore the linguistic dimension and socio-cultural context in depth. The CDA allows researchers to analyze texts more holistically, covering linguistic aspects (text structure) as well as the production, distribution and consumption practices of discourse related to social practice and power.

This study used text data from the 2020 edition of the MTs Class IX Arabic textbook published by the Ministry of Religious Affairs. This study was analyzed qualitatively with the approach of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) through three stages of text analysis, discourse practice, and socio-cultural practices in accordance with the model developed by Norman Fairclough (1995) to reveal how the language in the book builds institutional authority and instills certain ideologies in madrasah Education.

Data were collected using documentation techniques by collecting book material as the main source, then analyzed through the interpretation of text content, grammar studies, lexical choices, and relevant socio-cultural contexts as a framework for interpretation. Although this approach is subjective and interpretive, the study still tries to minimize bias by presenting systematic and in-depth linguistic evidence so that the results of the analysis are more valid and reliable. The process of description analysis is carried out to decipher the microstructure of the text linguistically, including vocabulary and grammar. Interpretations focus on the production and consumption practices of discourse (discursive practices). Explanation relates discourse to socio-cultural practices (macro context).

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Overview of MTs Arabic Textbook Class IX 1st Printing 2020 Edition

The 2020 edition of the MTs Class IX Arabic book published by the Ministry of Religious Affairs is a textbook designed to support the implementation of the PAI and Arabic curriculum in madrasas according to KMA number 183 of 2019. This book was developed as a living document that is always improved and adapted to the needs of the times to be relevant in the learning process in madrasah. The book material not only focuses on learning Arabic linguistically, but also integrates moderate Islamic religious values and national character according to Pancasila, while equipping students with communicative and analytical Arabic language skills.¹⁵

¹⁵ Andi Arif Pameessangi, "Buku Teks Bahasa Arab Berbasis Moderasi Beragama (Analisis Kritis Terhadap Wacana Buku Teks Bahasa Arab Kementerian Agama MTs. Kelas IX Tahun 2020)".

The structure of the book consists of several themes related to the context of religious and social life, such as the hijrah of the Prophet Muhammad, the commemoration of the Prophet's birthday, the descent of the Qur'an, the natural beauty of God's creation, to environmental preservation. Each theme begins with an introduction to relevant vocabulary, then continues with the presentation of a simple narrative text designed for students to understand the social function and structure of the text as well as linguistic elements such as sounds, words, meanings, and grammatical structure of the Arabic language. After that, students are given activities aimed at honing their text comprehension skills, idea analysis, and communication skills both orally and in writing.

This book also provides guidelines for Arabic transliteration into Indonesian according to official standards in order to make it easier for students to read Arabic text and learn Arabic phonetics properly. The learning approach is designed to be oriented towards the development of core competencies, including religious attitudes, language skills, and conceptual reasoning integrated in the learning context. With this interactive and thematic learning method, students are expected to be able to internalize moderate Islamic values, appreciate cultural differences, and have a strong personality and sufficient knowledge to actively participate in social and religious life in their environment. This book is also an important guide for teachers in implementing Arabic language learning in madrasahs, adjusting to national curriculum standards and the needs of students in the modern era.¹⁶

Language and Power in Arabic Textbooks Class IX

This book uses standard Arabic as a standard language for learning that simultaneously serves as a means of forwarding the values of the Islamic religion regulated by the official institution, the Ministry of Religious Affairs. It affirms Arabic as the language of epistemic and religious authority in the madrasah. The interaction of language and power in this book is found in various forms. Partly in linguistic texts and partly in the form of images. The following is an explanation of the interaction of language and power in the Arabic textbook Class IX 1st edition of the 2020 edition of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia.¹⁷

Figure 1: Cover of the Arabic Class IX Textbook 1st Printing 2020 Edition of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia



Arabic Language Book for MTs Grade IX 2020 edition consists of 6 main chapters that discuss themes as follows: Chapter I: رأس السنة الهجرية (the Beginning of the Year of the Hegira) Discuss about the warning of the new Hijri year, historical context and

¹⁶ Pamessangi (2024).

¹⁷ YM Mahmudah, *Bahasa Arab – Kelas IX*, ed. Muh Wahib Dariyadi, Cet. Ke-1 (Jakarta: Direktorat KSKK Madrasah, Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Islam, Kementerian Agama RI, 2020).

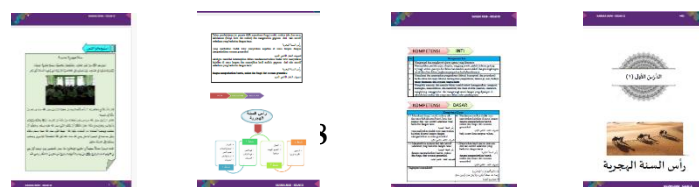


social meaning. Chapter II: الحفل بمولد الرسول ص (Commemoration of the Prophet Muhammad's birthday) themed commemoration of the birth of the Prophet Muhammad with text, activities, and language learning. Chapter III: نزول القرآن والعيديان (the Descent of the Qur'an and the Celebration of the Feast) Focus on the text that tells about the revelation of the Qur'an and the celebration of the day of Islam. Chapter IV: جمال الطبيعة (natural beauty) discusses the description of the natural beauty of God's creation and how the Arabic language is used to describe the phenomenon. Chapter V: خالق العالم (creator of the world) - the theme of the creation of the world and the appreciation of the existence of God as the creator. Chapter VI: الحفاظ على البيئة (Environmental Conservation) Discuss environmental issues and the importance of preserving nature with the phrases and vocabulary special.

Each chapter includes an introduction to vocabulary (المفردات), text comprehension, analysis of language structure, oral and written expression exercises, as well as thematic activities that adapt to the basic and core competencies of the PAI curriculum and Arabic for madrasas. This book is designed to provide a balance between communicative Arabic learning and integration of religious values and social culture of the madrasah. Each chapter has a theme and syntactic discussion as part of a different linguistic one as shown in the following table :

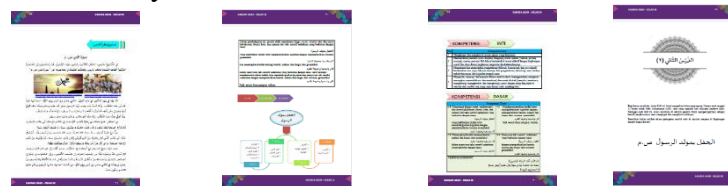
The Grade IX Arabic textbook (First Printing, 2020) published by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia presents an integrated coverage of thematic content and syntactic instruction. Chapter I, *Ra's al-Sanah al-Hijriyyah*, introduces moral reflections on the Hijri New Year within its historical and social context, with a grammatical focus on *fi 'l māḍī* and *fi 'l muḍārī* to distinguish past actions from present or future events. Chapter II, *al-Ḥafl bi-Mawlid al-Rasūl ṣallā Allāh 'alayhi wa sallam*, combines narrative texts and learning activities related to the Prophet's birthday, emphasizing the structure *kāna wa ismuhā wa khabaruhā al-mufrad* as a key nominal predicate construction. Chapter III, *Nuzūl al-Qur'ān wa al-Īdayn*, focuses on Qur'anic revelation and Islamic feasts, highlighting the use of *lām an-nāhiyah* for prohibition and *lām al-jazm* (e.g., *lam*) for past negation. Chapter IV, *Jamāl al-Ṭabī'ah*, addresses the theme of natural beauty through descriptive texts, with an emphasis on *fi 'l al-amr* and its conjugation to express commands and requests. Chapter V, *Khāliq al-Ālam*, explores theological reflections on creation and introduces *ism al-mawṣūl* (e.g., *alladhī, allatī*) to link clauses and construct complex sentences. Finally, Chapter VI, *al-Ḥifāz 'alā al-Bī'ah*, discusses environmental conservation, with a syntactic focus on *ism al-tafḍīl* in comparative and superlative constructions, typically following the *af'alu* pattern.

Figure 2: Chapter I Material and Critical Discourse Analysis of Norman Fairclough's theory and Transformation Solutions



From a Critical Discourse Analysis perspective, the Hijrah narrative in the textbook can be examined through the interrelated dimensions of text, discourse practice, and social practice. At the textual level, the dominant use of *fi 'l māḍī* frames Hijrah as a closed and distant historical event, positioning it primarily as an object of commemoration rather than critical reflection. As a transformative alternative, the integration of *istifhām* constructions with *fi 'l muḍāri* can recontextualize Hijrah as a living concept, prompting students to interrogate its contemporary relevance through questions such as *mādhā ta 'nī al-hijrah al-ān?* At the level of discourse practice, the text relies on an authoritative, monologic historical genre that casts students as passive consumers of a state-sanctioned collective memory, thereby reinforcing a nationalist–religious ideology. This practice can be reoriented by incorporating dialogic and critical genres, such as discussions or debates, in which learners actively relate Hijrah to current issues of migration, pluralism, and national cohesion. At the level of **social practice**, the discourse reproduces curricular hegemony over Islamic historical memory by institutionalizing particular narratives as legitimate and obligatory. Introducing alternative textual forms—such as reflective essays, opinion pieces, or poetic representations—can function as counter-discourses that destabilize this hegemony, enabling ideological contestation and fostering critical awareness rather than uncritical acceptance of a single dominant narrative.

Figure 3: Chapter II material and Critical Discourse Analysis of Norman Fairclough's theory and Transformation Solutions



Within a Critical Discourse Analysis framework, the treatment of *Maulid al-Nabī* in the textbook can be analyzed across the dimensions of text, discourse practice, and social practice. At the textual level, instruction on *kāna wa ismuhā* primarily serves to produce formally aesthetic and reverential sentences that idealize the Prophet, thereby legitimizing devotional and cultural practices associated with Maulid. As a transformative alternative, the same grammatical structure can be recontextualized to foreground the Prophet's historical, social, and ethical roles in a more critical manner, for instance through statements such as *Muḥammad kāna muntaqid al-ẓulm*, which shift emphasis from idealized praise to social engagement. At the level of discourse practice, the dominant genre of *madīh* and descriptive narration positions students as passive recipients of a fixed devotional discourse, limiting opportunities for critical or socio-historical analysis. This can be reoriented through dialogical genres, such as simulated interviews or reflective tasks, in which learners actively use *kāna* to articulate changes in their own



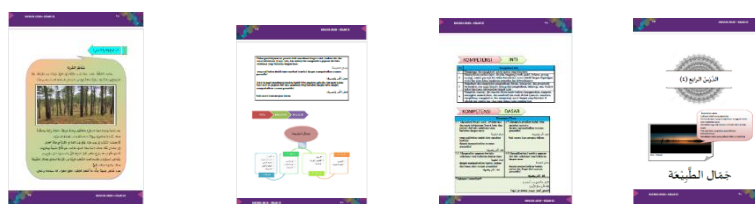
perspectives on Maulid (e.g., *kāna ra'yī qadīman...*). At the level of social practice, the discourse reinforces the authority of dominant Islamic traditions through the symbolic power of formal Arabic in defining what counts as legitimate or “proper” religious expression. Introducing comparative analyses of Maulid-related texts from diverse groups—traditionalist, modernist, and Salafī—can function as a counter-hegemonic strategy, revealing how grammatical and rhetorical choices index ideological contestation and enabling students to approach religious discourse as a socially situated and ideologically contested practice.

Figure 4: Chapter III material and Critical Discourse Analysis of Norman Fairclough's theory and Transformation Solutions



From a Critical Discourse Analysis perspective, the pedagogical use of *lām an-nāhiyah* can be examined across the dimensions of text, discourse practice, and social practice. At the textual level, the emphasis on *lām an-nāhiyah* as a marker of prohibition constructs language as a vehicle for discipline and behavioral control, embedding a normative legal ideology that frames learning as the internalization of obedience. As a transformative alternative, this prohibitive orientation can be complemented by *adawāt al-shart*, which introduce conditional “if-then” reasoning and enable students to conceptualize rules as contextual and negotiable rather than absolute. At the level of discourse practice, the dominant prescriptive genre positions learners as regulated subjects who consume authoritative norms. This can be reconfigured through negotiation-based genres, such as collaboratively formulating class rules, in which students actively employ *lām an-nāhiyah* to contest or revise regulations they deem unfair, thereby redistributing prohibitive authority. At the level of social practice, the discourse reproduces the dominance of *fiqh* as a regulatory framework governing social behavior, encouraging self-regulation and compliance. A counter-hegemonic approach involves critically examining who prohibits and who is prohibited, revealing how such grammatical forms often serve particular social interests and function ideologically within broader power relations.

Figure 5: Chapter IV material and Critical Discourse Analysis of Norman Fairclough's theory and Transformation Solutions



From a Critical Discourse Analysis perspective, the theme of natural beauty in the textbook can be examined across the dimensions of text, discourse practice, and social practice. At the textual level, the predominance of *fi'l al-amr* (e.g., *unzur*, *ta'ammal*) positions students as passive recipients directed to admire nature, framing environmental appreciation primarily as an act of theological obedience rather than critical inquiry. This imperative orientation can be productively complemented by *adawāt al-shart*, which introduce conditional reasoning and shift learners toward causal and analytical thinking, as illustrated by questions such as *idhā lam nuḥāfiẓ 'alā al-ṭabī'ah, fa-mādhā sayahduth?* At the level of discourse practice, the dominant genre of poetic and appreciative description presents nature as an uncontested aesthetic truth and reinforces the teacher's role as a spiritual guide. This can be transformed by adopting case-analysis genres that engage students with concrete environmental issues, enabling them to use *fi'l al-amr* to propose actionable solutions (e.g., *nazzif al-nahr*, *izra' al-shajarah*). At the level of social practice, the discourse reproduces a theocentric worldview that marginalizes scientific and socio-ecological perspectives, consolidating interpretive authority within religious institutions. A counter-hegemonic approach involves introducing texts from scientific and civic domains to foreground nature as a site of discursive contestation—scientific, political, and economic—rather than solely an object of religious contemplation.

Figure 6: Chapter V material and Critical Discourse Analysis of Norman Fairclough's theory and Transformation Solutions

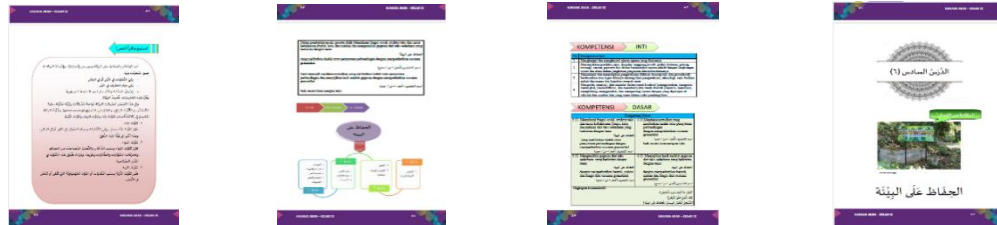


From a Critical Discourse Analysis perspective, the theme of *God as the Creator* (*Khāliq al-ʿĀlam*) can be examined across the dimensions of text, discourse practice, and social practice. At the textual level, the use of *ism al-mawṣūl* (e.g., *alladhī*, *allatī*) constructs definitive and conclusive attributive statements about God, presenting theological meanings as fixed and unquestionable. This grammatical pattern produces a dogmatic discourse that positions learners as passive recipients of doctrinal truth. As a transformative alternative, the same structure can be embedded in *istifhām* constructions to encourage philosophical inquiry, for example by asking how different communities describe the creator they worship, thereby shifting learning from acceptance to exploration. At the level of discourse practice, the dominant genre is proclamatory and creedal, operating in a monologic and unidirectional manner from institutional authority to students. This practice can be reoriented through comparative discourse genres that invite learners to examine diverse theological and philosophical perspectives using *ism al-mawṣūl* to connect ideas (e.g., *al-falāsifah alladhīna yaqūlūn...*). At the level of social practice, the discourse reinforces the authority of religious institutions as sole definers of truth, potentially limiting interfaith dialogue and independent philosophical reasoning.



Introducing plural theological and philosophical texts can function as a counter-hegemonic strategy, challenging the dominance of a single narrative and repositioning students as critical and reflective subjects within a more inclusive intellectual space.

Figure 7: Chapter VI material and Critical Discourse Analysis of Norman Fairclough's theory and Transformation Solutions



From a Critical Discourse Analysis perspective, the use of *ism al-tafḍīl* (اسم التفضيل) in environmental-themed lessons can be examined across the dimensions of text, discourse practice, and social practice. At the textual level (linguistic analysis), *ism al-tafḍīl* is primarily employed to construct moral hierarchies through comparative and superlative forms such as “better” or “most important.” Linguistically, this framing individualizes environmental responsibility by positioning ecological care as a matter of personal moral improvement—becoming a “better” person—rather than as a systemic or structural issue. The underlying ideology is thus moralistic and individual-centered. As a transformative strategy, *ism al-tafḍīl* can be recontextualized within a critical analytical discourse to expose relations of power and injustice. For example, questions such as *ayy al-duwal hiya al-akthar mas'ūliyyah 'an al-talawwuth?* (“Which countries are most responsible for pollution?”) shift the function of *ism al-tafḍīl* from moral evaluation to political and structural analysis.

At the level of discourse practice (production and consumption), the dominant genre is that of moral advice or exhortation, which positions students as individuals responsible for correcting their own behavior while obscuring the role of larger actors, such as corporations or government policies, in causing environmental degradation. In this configuration, students consume discourse that emphasizes personal virtue rather than collective action. To transform this practice, advocacy-based genres can be introduced by replacing moral appeals with tasks that involve civic engagement. Students may practice composing letters or statements addressed to policymakers or companies, using *ism al-tafḍīl* to critically evaluate environmental policies, for instance *hādhihi al-siyāsah afḍal lil-bī'ah* (“this policy is better for the environment”). Through such activities, learners are repositioned as agents of social change rather than passive recipients of moral instruction.

At the level of social practice (power relations), this discourse reproduces an apolitical view of environmental problems by assigning responsibility primarily to individuals. Such a perspective indirectly shields dominant power structures—corporations, industries, and political institutions—that contribute most significantly to ecological crises, leaving their power relations unchallenged. As a counter-hegemonic

solution, the curriculum can incorporate the concept of environmental justice (*al-‘adālah al-bī’iyyah*), emphasizing that the negative impacts of environmental damage are often disproportionately borne by poor and vulnerable communities. This approach challenges individualistic moral narratives and fosters critical socio-political awareness, enabling students to understand environmental issues as matters of justice, inequality, and power rather than solely of personal morality.

DISCUSSION

According to Afzal (2021), textbooks function as ideological instruments that are not neutral, but rather contain power discourses that seek to instill certain values in learners. Local textbooks in Pakistan explicitly defend religious and nationalistic ideologies, whereas international textbooks tend to internalize liberal and secular values sourced from Western discourse.¹⁸

Al Jumiah's (2016) research shows that in the context of Saudi Arabia, language textbooks display a close relationship between language, ideology, and state power. Language became a means of planting official Islamic ideology that strengthened the legitimacy of the state and religious institutions.¹⁹ This finding is in line with Alaoui's (2025) research which reveals that Arabic language policy in Morocco serves as a tool of cultural and social hegemony through the education system. In Arabic textbooks, texts and dialogues not only convey grammatical meaning, but also contain ideological messages that represent dominant values such as obedience, piety, and social loyalty.²⁰

Likewise, according to Said (2023) and El Moudden & Said (2025) reinforce the finding that textbooks function as instruments of ideological reproduction. Through the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach, both show that social representations in textbook texts play a role in the formation of national, religious, and gender identities that are controlled by dominant social structures.²¹ and ²² Similarly, Kadhim (2024) found that secondary school textbooks in Iraq describe gender roles and social authority through linguistic structures that favor the role of men as leaders and moral guides.²³ A similar phenomenon was also discovered by Hijjah, Insani, & Royani (2024) in Indonesia, who

¹⁸ Tahir Afzal et al., "A Comparative Analysis of Ideological Constructions Embedded In English Textbooks: A Critical Discourse Perspective" 9, no. 2 (2021): 487–98.

¹⁹ Abdullah Al Jumiah, "Language , Power , and Ideology in High School EFL Textbooks in Saudi Arabia," 2016.

²⁰ Sakina M Alaoui, "A Critical Discourse Analysis of Media Coverage on Moroccan Arabic in Textbooks and Arabic Language Acquisition in Morocco," *Discover Education*, 2025.

²¹ Khalid Said and Jeroen Van De Weijer, "Cogent Arts & Humanities Amazighs in Moroccan EFL Textbooks : An Integrated Critical Discourse Analysis Amazighs in Moroccan EFL Textbooks : An Integrated Critical Discourse Analysis," *Cogent Arts & Humanities* 10, no. 1 (2023).

²² Rachid El Moudden and Khalid Said, "Locating Critical Discourse Studies within School Textbook Research : A Systematic Literature Review of Research Articles," *Cogent Education* 12, no. 1 (2025).

²³ Ahmed Jalil Kadhim, "Gender , Ideology and Power : Critical Discourse Analysis of High School EFL Textbooks in Iraq .," *Midad Al-Adab* 30, no. 6 (2023): 2407–2426.



identified the construction of social and gender identity in the book *Al-‘Arabiyyah Li Al-Nâsyi’în*.²⁴

In line with that, the results of research Nurochim et al. (2023) affirm that Islamic religious education textbooks (PAI) and Arabic are social and discursive practices that are not free of value. The lexical choice, narrative structure and visual illustrations in it reflect the ideology of religious institutions and state policy.²⁵ Furthermore, these results were reinforced by Pamessangi (2024) who specifically analyzed the MTs Class IX Arabic book of the Ministry of religion (2020) and found that the concept of “religious moderation” was inserted through text and conversational exercises. The language serves to frame the image of a “moderate Muslim” who fits the country's policy of building a tolerant Islamic narrative.²⁶

Similarly, Elyas & Badawood (2017) explain that language education policy in Saudi Arabia also blends complex discourses of Islamization and modernization. This approach is used to control the representation of religious and national identity.²⁷ Something similar was found by Riaz, Iqbal, & Muhammad (2025) in Pakistan, where textbooks became a means of spreading cultural and religious ideology through the representation of moral discourse.²⁸

Language has a role not only as a means of communication, but also as a means of forming social and ideological reality. Fairclough (1989) views language as a social practice closely related to the production, distribution, and consumption of meaning in a social order. In the context of learning Arabic in madrasas, textbooks became an important platform for the formation of religious consciousness, morals, and even symbolic power instituted by the Islamic education authorities.

Bartlett (2014) in his book *Analyzing Power in Language* says how language plays a role in shaping and reflecting social power through discourse analysis. Bartlett positions text analysis as a gateway to discourse analysis, highlighting the relationship between the purpose of the discourse, the speaker's social position, the context of production, the intended audience, and selected linguistic features. This work adopts the systematic Functional Linguistics (SFL) approach developed by Halliday, emphasizing the three main metafunctions of language, namely experiential, interpersonal, and textual, which together form the social meaning in the text. This book explains that power does

²⁴ Shifany Maulida Hijjah et al., “Critical Discourse Analysis of Gender Representation in the Textbook *Al- ‘ Arabiyah Li Al - Nasyi ’ In*” 17, no. 1 (2024): 13–26.

²⁵ Nurochim et al., “Kritis Terhadap Teks Dalam Buku Ajar Pendidikan Agama Islam Multiculturalism : Critical Discourse.”

²⁶ Pamessangi, “Buku Teks Bahasa Arab Berbasis Moderasi Beragama (Analisis Kritis Terhadap Wacana Buku Teks Bahasa Arab Kementerian Agama MTs. Kelas IX Tahun 2020).”

²⁷ Tariq Elyas, King Abdul, and Omar Badawood, “English Language Educational Policy in Saudi Arabia Post 21st Century : Enacted Curriculum , Identity , and Modernisation : A Critical Discourse Analysis Approach English Language Educational Policy in Saudi Arabia Post 21st Century :” 3, no. 3 (2017).

²⁸ Mudassir Riaz and Zahid Iqbal, “Critical Discourse Analysis of Cultural Values and Beliefs In Society Through Textbooks” 8, no. 1 (2025): 713–25.

not lie in the language itself, but is realized through language, in a specific social context that gives it legitimacy and effect.²⁹

As explained by Ghufon and Alawiyyah (2025), mastery of Arabic in the context of madrasah not only serves as a linguistic skill, but also as a symbol of religious and cultural power that determines the social position of learners in the Islamic educational environment.³⁰ This is in line with the view of Alam (2011) that the Arabic language acts as a means of epistemic hegemony that confirms the structure of authority in the madrasah scientific community.³¹

Language, as Fairclough (1989) affirms, serves not only as a means of communication, but also as a social practice that has ideological and political dimensions. In the context of Islamic education, especially the teaching of Arabic in madrasahs, language is an important medium for the process of internalization of religious values, the formation of social morality, and the legitimacy of religious authority. The Arabic textbook published by the KSKK Directorate of the Ministry of Religious Affairs (2020) reflects this, where linguistic discourse and religiosity synergize to form a symbolic power structure in the classroom.

The findings suggest that Arabic textbooks in madrasahs serve a dual function: (1) as a medium of linguistic communication to strengthen learners' Arabic language competence; and (2) as an ideological medium that reproduces social, moral, and religious values. Thus, learning Arabic in a madrasah is not only a process of language acquisition, but also a process of construction of meaning and social identity directed by institutional forces.

Thus, the results of the analysis show that Arabic textbooks in madrasahs serve a dual function: first, as an instrument of linguistic communication to strengthen the Arabic language competence of learners; and second, as an ideological instrument to internalize religious values, social morality, and the legitimacy of religious power. Textbooks became an arena in which discourses of ideology, power, and social values were reproduced through a language that seemed neutral, yet loaded with ideological meaning.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the Critical Discourse Analysis of the Grade IX Arabic textbook, this study demonstrates that language functions not merely as a medium of communication but also as an instrument for transmitting and legitimizing ideological and institutional power. Through lexical choices, textual organization, and material selection, the textbook reproduces social norms and religious values endorsed by madrasah institutions, embedding power relations that position teachers as authoritative knowledge

²⁹ Tom Bartlett, *Analysing Power In Language: A Practical Guide*, Ke-1 (Abingdon, Oxon & New York, NY: Routledge (Taylor & Francis Group), 2014).

³⁰ Ghufon et al., "Integration of Arabic Language Learning in the Formation of Social- Religious Identity in Madrasahs: A Systematic Study of Policy, Local Practices, and Digital Transformation."

³¹ Arshad Alam, *Inside a Madrasa Knowledge, Power and Islamic Identity in India*, Ke-1 (London: Routledge (Taylor & Francis Group), 2011).



holders and students as normative recipients. Using Fairclough's three-dimensional model—text, discourse practice, and social practice—the analysis reveals a dominant and hegemonic learning paradigm characterized by monologic narratives and limited space for critical reflection, through which learners' religious identities are shaped via the internalization of institutional ideologies.

Furthermore, the study confirms that Arabic textbooks function strategically in constructing social reality, legitimizing power, and disseminating state-aligned religious ideology. Beyond linguistic instruction, these materials operate as ideological tools that internalize religious values, social morality, and narratives of religious moderation, while encoding power relations related to religion, gender, and educational authority.

To promote a more inclusive and empowering madrasah education, learning materials must be transformed to accommodate critical discussion, multidisciplinary dialogue, and alternative discourses. Such an approach repositions learners as reflective agents rather than passive consumers and requires Arabic curriculum development to address not only linguistic competence but also the socio-political dimensions of language and power within contemporary Islamic education.

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