

## *Linguistic Security: Conceptual Manifestations and Indicators of Resilience in the Arabic Language*

Yassine bouras

Mahamad Boudiaf University of M'sila  
(Algeria)

[yassine.bouras@univ-msila.dz](mailto:yassine.bouras@univ-msila.dz)

### *Abstract*

*A large number of the world's languages face an increasing risk of extinction, as the number of speakers continues to decline steadily. People are forced or voluntarily migrating from one language to another, thereby threatening their cultural heritage. This article explores the concept of linguistic security in detail, examining the most important criteria used by the United Nations and UNESCO to determine a languages vitality. These criteria include: the transmission of the language across generations; the absolute number of speakers as a percentage of the total population; the diversity of the language's uses; its use in new media and other fields; and the availability of language teaching and literacy materials. The study seeks to determine whether Arabic is stable and linguistically secure or whether it faces varying degrees of endangerment. In other words, is Arabic facing a struggle for influence or a struggle for survival?*

### *Article info*

Received

July 30, 2026

Accepted

September 08; 2026

### **Keyword:**

- ✓ Linguistic security
- ✓ language extinction
- ✓ UNESCO
- ✓ linguistic diversity
- ✓ measurement criteria
- ✓ Arabic language

## 1. Introduction

The number of languages spoken worldwide has declined significantly over the past half-century. According to statistics published by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), approximately 6,000 languages were still spoken during the first decade of the twenty-first century. This figure is considerably lower than the estimated number of languages spoken fifty years earlier, reflecting a persistent and accelerating decline in the world's linguistic diversity. A substantial proportion of these languages are now endangered and face the prospect of extinction. In this respect, languages resemble biological species, which disappear with the extinction of their last surviving members. Unlike biological extinction, however, which frequently results from natural evolutionary processes, language extinction is largely anthropogenic. In most cases, human activity constitutes the principal factor underlying language loss.<sup>1</sup>

Recent United Nations estimates indicate that between 50% and 90% of the world's languages are likely to disappear by the end of the twenty-first century. This rate of decline corresponds to the loss of approximately one language every two weeks, at least two languages each month, and roughly twenty-five languages annually. If current trends persist, humanity

may enter the twenty-second century with only a few hundred languages remaining. According to numerous scholars, such a development would entail the irreversible loss of a substantial portion of humanity's cultural heritage, as well as an immeasurable body of knowledge preserved through these languages.

Although some linguists regard language death as a natural phenomenon comparable to other biological processes affecting human societies and living organisms more generally, the unprecedented pace at which languages are currently disappearing has led many scholars to characterize it as a critical threat to global linguistic diversity and cultural heritage. Every language embodies a distinctive worldview and provides unique ways of conceptualizing, interpreting, and transmitting knowledge about the world. Consequently, the extinction of any language constitutes a loss not only for its speech community but also for humanity as a whole. Endangered languages frequently preserve invaluable scientific, religious, cultural, historical, ecological, and indigenous knowledge accumulated over generations. Moreover, they serve as fundamental markers of the historical, religious, and cultural identities of their speakers. The disappearance of a language, therefore, often entails the erosion—or even the loss—of the collective identity of the community that sustains it.

In recognition of the growing urgency of language endangerment, UNESCO launched the *Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger* one year after the publication of David Crystal's influential book *Language Death* (1995). The Atlas is produced under the supervision of an international committee comprising approximately thirty specialists in linguistics and language planning.\* Its principal objective is to monitor the vitality and endangerment of the world's languages by compiling and disseminating comprehensive information in the form of statistical data, maps, and geographical distributions of endangered languages. The project also seeks to support language preservation through the development of strategies and initiatives aimed at safeguarding endangered linguistic heritage.

Designed as an authoritative reference for researchers, linguists, journalists, educators, policymakers, and other stakeholders concerned with language policy, the *Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger* provides a systematic framework for assessing the status of endangered languages worldwide. To this end, UNESCO's expert committee developed a rigorous conceptualization of language endangerment and language extinction based on a set of criteria designed to evaluate the degree of risk faced by individual languages and their prospects for long-term survival. The first

edition of the *Atlas* was published in 1996, followed by revised editions in 2001 and 2010. Since then, the concept of linguistic security has become an increasingly prominent concern within contemporary language policy and planning, reflecting the growing international recognition that safeguarding linguistic diversity is an essential component of preserving humanity's cultural and intellectual heritage.

## 2. The Concept of Linguistic Security

In its broadest sense, linguistic security refers to the condition in which a language is safeguarded against the threat of extinction. A language can be considered linguistically secure when it continues to perform its communicative and social functions naturally within the community of its speakers. This entails its regular use in everyday interaction across the principal domains of public and private life, including education, the media, government administration, and other institutional settings in which language serves as the primary medium of communication. Conversely, a language is considered endangered when its speakers cease to use it in daily communication, restrict its use to an increasingly limited range of social domains, or fail to transmit it to succeeding generations. As UNESCO observes, a language becomes endangered when its speakers stop using it, employ it in progressively fewer communicative contexts, and discontinue intergenerational

transmission, thereby depriving younger generations of the opportunity to acquire it as either a first or an additional language.<sup>2</sup> Intergenerational language transmission has therefore become one of the principal criteria employed by linguists to assess language vitality and to determine the degree of risk to a language's long-term survival. Once this transmission is interrupted, a language enters a process of decline that ultimately culminates in its extinction with the death of its last fluent speaker.

Language extinction may occur either gradually or abruptly. Gradual language loss is the more common pattern and typically results from long-term historical and sociolinguistic processes such as the passage of time, sustained contact with neighboring languages, bilingualism or multilingualism, colonization, or political and social pressures that progressively reduce the functional domains of a language. By contrast, abrupt language extinction occurs when a language disappears almost instantaneously following the death of its final speaker or as the consequence of catastrophic events such as genocide, ethnic cleansing, natural disasters, epidemics, or other circumstances that eliminate an entire speech community. In such cases, the language may vanish without passing through the prolonged stages of decline that ordinarily characterize language endangerment.

Numerous examples illustrate this phenomenon. The Manx language became extinct as a native language in 1974 following the death of Ned Maddrell. The Asa language of Tanzania disappeared in 1976, while Ubykh became extinct in Turkey with the death of Tevfik Eсен in 1992. Similarly, Eyak ceased to have native speakers after the death of Marie Smith Jones in Alaska in 2008, and the Tinigua language of Colombia lost its last fluent speaker in February 2016.<sup>3</sup> These examples represent only a small number of the many languages that have disappeared during the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

In cases of gradual language extinction, a language often survives by evolving into multiple daughter languages or dialects as its speech community becomes geographically and socially dispersed.<sup>4</sup> Historical linguistics attributes the emergence of new languages to the cumulative effect of incremental differences in pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar that accumulate over extended periods. This process, commonly referred to as language change or linguistic evolution, constitutes a natural aspect of linguistic development. Well-known examples include Proto-Semitic, from which the Semitic language family evolved; Sanskrit, the ancestral language of much of the Indo-European linguistic tradition in South Asia; Ancient Greek and Latin, which provided the foundations for

many modern European languages; and Classical Arabic, from which the contemporary Arabic dialects developed. Each of these historical languages predates the Common Era or emerged during the earliest periods of recorded civilization and has given rise to extensive linguistic families through the natural processes of language diversification.

A different trajectory of language loss arises through language contact. Sustained interaction between neighboring linguistic communities may result in one language gradually yielding to another of greater demographic, political, economic, or cultural prestige. Under conditions of bilingualism, diglossia, or multilingualism, speakers frequently shift toward the socially dominant language while progressively abandoning their native language. Colonization has historically accelerated this process by imposing the language of the colonial power upon the colonized population, often compelling speakers—whether voluntarily or under coercion—to replace their indigenous language with that of the colonizer. Such developments have characterized numerous societies in sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America, where colonial languages continue to occupy dominant positions in education, government, and public life.

Language loss may also result from state language policies or from broader societal attitudes toward particular languages.

Governments may adopt assimilationist language policies that marginalize national, regional, Indigenous, or minority languages by restricting their use in education, public administration, or other official domains. At the societal level, speakers themselves may gradually abandon their heritage language in favor of another language perceived to offer greater educational, economic, or social opportunities. In the literature on language policy and planning, this phenomenon is frequently described as a negative language attitude or negative orientation toward the mother tongue, reflecting a conscious or unconscious preference for a more prestigious language at the expense of the ancestral one.

Whether operating independently or in combination, these factors contribute to the gradual erosion of language vitality and may ultimately culminate in language extinction. Accordingly, linguists generally distinguish two broad dimensions of language death. The first concerns the temporal trajectory of language decline, distinguishing between gradual and abrupt extinction. The second concerns the primary causal mechanisms underlying language loss, whether they arise from natural historical processes or from human intervention, including colonization, coercive language policies, political marginalization, or voluntary language shift toward a socially dominant language. Although these analytical categories are

conceptually distinct, they frequently overlap in practice, making it difficult to isolate a single cause of language extinction in many real-world contexts.

### **3. Linguistic Security: Conceptual Manifestations and Indicators of Language Resilience**

Drawing on the criteria developed by the United Nations and UNESCO for assessing language endangerment, it is possible to identify the principal indicators of linguistic resilience in the world's natural languages. These indicators make it possible to evaluate both languages that are currently endangered or at risk of extinction and those that possess stronger prospects for long-term survival. Although the precise criteria for assessing language vitality vary among scholars, UNESCO's framework has become the most widely adopted model for evaluating the degree of threat facing endangered languages.

UNESCO's framework comprises six principal criteria, each of which examines a particular dimension of a language's vitality and social function while simultaneously measuring its susceptibility to language loss.\* Each criterion is assessed on a graduated scale ranging from linguistic security to complete extinction, thereby providing both a longitudinal and cross-sectional perspective on the historical trajectory and contemporary sociolinguistic status of a language. The six criteria are:<sup>5</sup>

1. **Intergenerational language transmission.**
2. **Absolute number of speakers.**
3. **Proportion of speakers within the total population.**
4. **Breadth of language use across social domains.**
5. **Use in new domains and digital media.**
6. **Availability of educational and literacy materials.**

Taken together, these six criteria constitute the principal indicators of linguistic resilience.

The first criterion—intergenerational transmission—is widely regarded as the single most important indicator of language maintenance. It measures the extent to which children continue to acquire the language as their primary means of communication. A language is considered secure when it is spoken by members of all age groups and is transmitted naturally from one generation to the next. It may still be regarded as relatively stable when speakers are bilingual and use another language alongside their mother tongue, since multilingualism in itself does not necessarily constitute a threat to language survival. By contrast, a language becomes vulnerable when its use is largely confined to the home, endangered when children no

longer acquire it as their first language, severely endangered when only the grandparental generation continues to speak it fluently, critically endangered when only a few elderly speakers retain partial knowledge of it, and extinct when it is no longer spoken by anyone.

The second criterion concerns the absolute number of speakers. Demographic strength constitutes an important source of linguistic resilience because languages spoken by relatively small populations are generally more vulnerable to extinction than those with larger speaker communities. Small speech communities are particularly susceptible to demographic shocks arising from war, disease, migration, or natural disasters, while minority groups often undergo linguistic and cultural assimilation into larger populations.

Closely related to this is the third criterion, namely the proportion of speakers relative to the total population. A language spoken by only a small minority is generally more vulnerable than one spoken by the majority because prolonged contact with a socially or politically dominant language often results in gradual language shift. Over time, speakers may increasingly abandon their ancestral language in favor of the language associated with greater prestige, economic opportunity, or institutional support.

The fourth criterion assesses the vitality of a language according to the range of

domains in which it is used. A language is considered secure when it functions across all major sectors of public life, including government administration, education, the media, commerce, science, and other institutional settings. It remains relatively stable when these domains are shared with another language. Its vitality declines, however, when its functions become increasingly restricted and another language comes to dominate most spheres of communication. A language may therefore be classified as endangered when it is confined to a limited number of social contexts, severely endangered when its use is restricted to only a few highly specialized domains, and extinct when it no longer performs any communicative function within society.

The fifth criterion evaluates the extent to which a language has adapted to emerging domains of communication, particularly digital technologies and contemporary media. These include broadcast and digital media, smartphones, computers, the Internet, social networking platforms, and other forms of electronic communication. The ability of a language to function effectively in these environments significantly enhances its attractiveness to younger generations and increases its prospects for long-term survival. Accordingly, a language may be described as dynamic when it is fully integrated across all forms of contemporary communication; robust when it is used in

most technological domains; expanding when it enjoys substantial digital representation; adaptive when its presence remains limited but growing; minimally represented when its digital use is confined to only a few contexts; and obsolete when it is absent altogether from emerging communicative technologies.

The sixth and final criterion concerns the availability of educational resources and literacy materials. This includes the existence of a standardized writing system, grammatical descriptions, dictionaries, orthographic conventions, pedagogical materials, literary production, and written texts that enable both language learning and literacy development. It also encompasses the use of the language in education, publishing, public administration, journalism, and other formal domains. From this perspective, education constitutes one of the most powerful mechanisms for ensuring language maintenance. A language may therefore be regarded as secure when comprehensive educational materials exist and the language functions as a medium of instruction and public communication. Its status becomes progressively weaker when such materials exist but the language is excluded from official administration or formal education, when written materials survive only as historical or symbolic documents, or when literacy is limited to a small number of community members engaged in documentation or revitalization

efforts. A language lacking an established written tradition is generally considered to face the highest degree of vulnerability.

Although these six criteria continue to provide the most widely accepted framework for assessing language vitality and predicting the future of endangered languages, they should not be regarded as immutable or universally applicable across all historical periods. Languages currently classified as secure—including English, French, Arabic, Chinese, Russian, German, Hindi, and Spanish—may themselves become vulnerable over the long term as global sociolinguistic conditions evolve. Language vitality is not a static condition but rather a dynamic process shaped by shifting political, economic, demographic, technological, and cultural forces.

Indeed, the contemporary international linguistic order appears increasingly characterized by the emergence of a hierarchical global language system in which English occupies an unparalleled position. Its worldwide diffusion is reinforced by widespread intergenerational transmission, a large and geographically dispersed speaker population, its dominance across scientific and technological disciplines, including medicine, engineering, agriculture, astronomy, and mathematics, its overwhelming presence on the Internet, and the unparalleled volume of scholarly publications produced in English. Under these conditions, competition among major

world languages may gradually shift from a struggle for survival to a struggle for global influence and communicative dominance.

This raises an important theoretical question: can existing indicators of language vitality adequately predict which of today's major languages might eventually become endangered, or which language is most likely to consolidate its position as the principal language of globalization? In other words, are the current criteria sufficient to anticipate the future evolution of the world's *lingua franca*\* or what some scholars describe as a *global pivot language*? The answer necessarily depends upon future political, economic, technological, and cultural developments that will shape patterns of language use over successive generations.

From this perspective, the greatest long-term challenge to linguistic diversity arises from the global tendency toward linguistic convergence under globalization. While UNESCO has undertaken extensive initiatives to document and preserve endangered languages through projects such as the *Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger*, the expansion of globalization has simultaneously encouraged the adoption of a common language for international communication. Although the existence of a shared language undoubtedly facilitates global interaction, scientific exchange, and economic integration, it also risks accelerating language shift and

weakening the functional role of national, regional, Indigenous, and minority languages.

A genuinely equitable model of linguistic globalization would therefore not privilege a single language indefinitely but would instead provide all languages with meaningful opportunities to participate in international communication. Otherwise, the global spread of one dominant language may gradually evolve from a practical instrument of communication into a form of linguistic domination and cultural hegemony, ultimately threatening linguistic security and accelerating the erosion of the world's linguistic diversity.

Finally, while the American linguist Michael E. Krauss argues that a language should be considered secure if it is likely to continue being spoken one hundred years into the future—and endangered if it is unlikely to survive that long—this definition rests primarily on the principle of intergenerational transmission,<sup>6</sup> assuming approximately three successive generations over the course of a century. UNESCO similarly classifies the six official languages of the United Nations—English, French, Arabic, Spanish, Russian, and Chinese—as secure according to its current indicators of language vitality. Nevertheless, such classifications should not be interpreted as guarantees of perpetual survival. Even the world's most influential languages remain subject to long-term historical change. Consequently,

the assessment of linguistic security must remain dynamic, and UNESCO's evaluative framework should continue to evolve in response to changing global conditions if it is to remain an effective instrument for safeguarding the future of the world's linguistic heritage.

#### ***4. Indicators of Linguistic Resilience in Arabic: A Struggle for Influence or a Struggle for Survival?***

When evaluated against UNESCO's widely recognized framework for assessing language vitality and endangerment, Arabic emerges as a language of considerable resilience. Despite facing challenges in certain high-status domains—notably higher education and scientific research—it cannot reasonably be described as a language struggling for survival. Rather, Arabic is engaged in a struggle for linguistic influence, competing with other global languages for functional prominence and symbolic capital rather than for its continued existence.

The first UNESCO criterion concerns intergenerational language transmission. Arabic continues to exhibit a high degree of vitality in this respect. It serves as the principal language of instruction for more than 400 million learners across the twenty-two member states of the League of Arab States. When learners of Arabic as a second or foreign language, together with students of Islamic studies worldwide, are included, the number of individuals who use Arabic

for educational purposes exceeds 550 million. These figures demonstrate that Arabic continues to be transmitted successfully across generations and retains a central educational and cultural role throughout the Arab and Islamic worlds.<sup>7</sup>

The second criterion is the absolute number of speakers. According to demographic estimates, Arabic has approximately 467 million native speakers and an additional 250 million second-language speakers, placing it among the most widely spoken languages in the world after Mandarin Chinese, English, and Spanish. Such demographic strength constitutes one of the principal sources of Arabic's linguistic resilience, since languages with large and geographically dispersed speaker populations are generally less vulnerable to extinction than those spoken by relatively small communities.<sup>8</sup>

The third criterion evaluates the proportion of speakers within the total population. Arabic functions as the majority language in twenty-two sovereign states and also serves as a minority language in several African and Asian countries, including Senegal, Mali, Niger, and Iran. Its demographic significance extends beyond native speakers, however. As the liturgical language of Islam, Arabic occupies a unique position among the world's languages. It is used, to varying degrees, by more than two billion Muslims in religious practice and enjoys an exceptionally broad geographical distribution spanning every

inhabited continent. Consequently, Arabic possesses not only a substantial demographic base but also considerable geopolitical and cultural influence.<sup>9</sup>

The fourth criterion concerns the breadth of language use across institutional and social domains. Arabic continues to function in government administration, education, journalism, broadcasting, literature, religious life, and numerous other sectors throughout much of the Arab world. Nevertheless, its position is considerably weaker in higher education, scientific research, and advanced technological disciplines, where English—and, in some countries, French—remains the dominant medium of instruction and knowledge production. From the perspective of UNESCO's framework, Arabic may therefore be regarded as a language that is generally stable but experiences sustained functional pressure in strategically important domains.

This situation corresponds closely to what Abdelkader Fassi Fehri describes as static maintenance, whereby a language is successfully preserved within the family, primary education, and religious practice without acquiring equivalent authority in domains associated with political power, higher education, science, or economic development.<sup>10</sup> Arabic has experienced varying forms of this condition for centuries. Following the intellectual decline that accompanied the fall of the Abbasid Caliphate, the language gradually

lost prominence in several administrative and scientific functions. Later historical developments—including Ottoman administrative reforms, European colonial language policies, and contemporary reliance on foreign languages in science and technology—have further limited Arabic's institutional role despite its continued vitality as a language of religion, culture, and everyday communication.

The fifth UNESCO criterion concerns the use of the language in new domains and digital media. Arabic has demonstrated a remarkable capacity for technological adaptation. From the digitization of Arabic script during the late twentieth century to its integration into modern operating systems, Internet platforms, social media, and contemporary artificial intelligence applications, Arabic has continued to expand its digital presence. Its technological development has paralleled the broader evolution of global communication technologies, enabling it to remain relevant within emerging digital environments.

Arabic has also established itself as a major language of international media. Global broadcasters such as Al Jazeera, Al Arabiya, France 24 Arabic, TRT Arabic, Alhurra, and Deutsche Welle Arabic have significantly expanded Arabic-language journalism and public communication beyond the Arab world. This extensive media presence reinforces Arabic's status as a language of regional and international

influence and illustrates its ability to adapt successfully to changing communicative environments.<sup>11</sup>

The sixth criterion concerns the availability of educational resources and literacy materials. Arabic possesses one of the richest literary and scholarly traditions in human history. Over more than fourteen centuries, it has accumulated an extensive corpus encompassing literature, philosophy, theology, linguistics, history, medicine, mathematics, astronomy, and numerous other disciplines. This intellectual heritage provides an exceptionally strong foundation for language teaching and literacy development. Arabic also benefits from a highly developed grammatical tradition, standardized orthography, comprehensive dictionaries, and a vast body of pedagogical materials, all of which facilitate both first-language and second-language acquisition.

The Qur'an has historically played a particularly significant role in literacy development among Arabic-speaking Muslim communities, serving as one of the earliest texts through which generations of learners acquired reading and pronunciation skills. Beyond religious education, the extensive corpus of classical and modern Arabic literature provides abundant instructional material for developing literacy and advanced language proficiency.

Although the U.S. Foreign Service Institute classifies Arabic among the world's most difficult languages for native English speakers because of its writing system, phonology, and grammatical structure, such classifications primarily reflect the linguistic distance between English and Arabic rather than any inherent complexity of Arabic itself. Acquisition outcomes depend upon numerous variables, including learners' linguistic backgrounds, prior language-learning experience, instructional intensity, and opportunities for interaction with native speakers.<sup>12</sup>

Taken together, these indicators demonstrate that Arabic is not presently engaged in a struggle for survival comparable to that faced by endangered languages. Rather, it is engaged in a struggle for influence within an increasingly competitive global linguistic order dominated by a relatively small number of international languages. In particular, Arabic competes with English for prestige in science, technology, higher education, and international communication, while French has experienced a gradual decline in influence across many traditionally Francophone Arab countries. Arabic therefore remains one of the principal languages of globalization rather than one of the languages threatened with extinction.

This conclusion is further supported by Arabic's extensive international institutional recognition. Arabic is one of

the six official languages of the United Nations, the official language of twenty-two Arab states, an official language of the African Union, a working language of numerous international organizations, including the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, and one of the official languages used by the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA). These institutional functions reinforce Arabic's position as both a resilient language and a language of considerable international influence.<sup>13</sup>

Nevertheless, Arabic continues to face several significant challenges that may affect its long-term vitality. Three issues are particularly noteworthy. First, Modern Standard Arabic remains underused in everyday spoken interaction, with

communication in many Arab societies relying predominantly on regional vernaculars. Second, foreign languages continue to dominate several high-prestige institutional domains, particularly higher education, scientific research, technology, and, in some countries, public administration. Third, widespread lexical borrowing and code-switching between Arabic and languages such as English and French have contributed to increasing linguistic hybridity, especially in urban speech communities. While language contact is a natural sociolinguistic phenomenon, sustained dependence on foreign lexical resources may gradually weaken the development of indigenous scientific and technical terminology if appropriate language-planning policies are not implemented.<sup>14</sup>

## 5. CONCLUSION

1- This study examined the concept of linguistic security through UNESCO's framework for evaluating language vitality and endangerment. The analysis focused on six principal indicators: intergenerational transmission, the absolute number of speakers, the proportion of speakers within the population, the breadth of language use across social domains, adaptation to new media and digital communication, and the availability of educational and literacy materials. These indicators provide a systematic framework for assessing the resilience of languages and their

vulnerability to language shift and extinction.

The analysis leads to several principal conclusions:

1- First, linguistic security denotes the condition in which a language remains protected from extinction and continues to perform its communicative, educational, cultural, and institutional functions without experiencing systematic marginalization or functional restriction.

2- Second, language extinction is overwhelmingly the result of human rather than natural causes. Armed conflict, colonization, coercive language policies,

socioeconomic pressures, and voluntary language shift have historically constituted the principal drivers of language loss, whereas natural disasters account for comparatively few cases.

3- Third, safeguarding linguistic security represents a shared responsibility of governments, international organizations, educational institutions, and speech communities. The extinction of a language entails not only the disappearance of a communicative system but also the irreversible loss of a unique cultural, historical, and intellectual heritage.

4- Fourth, UNESCO's indicators of language vitality provide a robust framework for assessing both the degree of endangerment and the resilience of individual languages. Through these indicators, languages may be classified along a continuum ranging from secure to extinct.

5- Fifth, effective language policy and planning remain among the most important instruments for promoting linguistic security. Carefully designed language policies can strengthen the functional domains of national, official, Indigenous, minority, and regional

languages while ensuring their continued transmission across generations.

6- Sixth, the evidence presented in this study indicates that Arabic should be regarded as a highly resilient language. Although its functions have contracted in certain strategic domains, particularly higher education and scientific research, it is more accurately characterized as a language engaged in a struggle for influence rather than a struggle for survival. Its principal competition is with other global languages—especially English—rather than with endangered languages.

7- Finally, the findings suggest that education, scientific research, and increasingly digital media constitute the three most critical domains for maintaining long-term linguistic vitality. These domains drive lexical innovation, scientific terminology, and technological adaptation, thereby enabling languages to remain fully functional in rapidly changing societies. Strengthening Arabic's role in these sectors is therefore essential if it is to consolidate its international influence while preserving its linguistic security in the decades ahead.

## 6. Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>- See the statistics in: Ariane Dwyer et al., *Language Vitality and Endangerment* (Document submitted to the International Expert Meeting on the UNESCO

Programme for the Safeguarding of Endangered Languages), UNESCO, Paris, 2003, p. 3. Accessed July 25, 2026. Available at: [https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf000183699\\_ara?posInSet=4&queryId=b11dc22b-2d5c-459d-91f1-07c4a723bac3](https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf000183699_ara?posInSet=4&queryId=b11dc22b-2d5c-459d-91f1-07c4a723bac3)

\* For further information on the *Atlas*, see UNESCO, *Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger*, 3rd ed. (Paris: UNESCO Publishing, 2010). Accessed July 25, 2026. Available at:

[https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000192416\\_fre](https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000192416_fre)

<sup>2</sup>- Dwyer et al., *Language Vitality and Endangerment*, p. 3.

<sup>3</sup>- On recently extinct languages, see UNESCO, "UNESCO Presents the New Edition of the Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger," February 19, 2009. Accessed July 25, 2026. Available at: <https://news.un.org/ar/story/2009/02/100212>. See also Wikipedia, "Extinct Languages." Accessed July 25, 2026. Available at:

[https://ar.wikipedia.org/wiki/لغة\\_بائدة](https://ar.wikipedia.org/wiki/لغة_بائدة)

<sup>4</sup>- See Abbad's Blog, "The Languages of the World and Their Bleak Future." Accessed July 25, 2026. Available at: <https://abbad.me/2017/03/language-history/>

\* On the differences among language vitality criteria, see Abdelkader Fassi Fehri, *Language Policies in the Arab World: Towards a Natural, Equitable, Democratic, and Effective Language Environment* (Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-Jadid al-Muttahida, 2013), 75–76.

<sup>5</sup>- Dwyer et al., *Language Vitality and Endangerment*, pp. 8 ff.

\* On the concept of *lingua franca*, see Abdelkader Fassi Fehri, *Language Policies in the Arab World*, pp. 65 ff.

<sup>6</sup>- See Wikipedia, "Endangered Language." Accessed July 25, 2026. Available at: [https://ar.wikipedia.org/wiki/لغة\\_مهددة\\_بالانقراض](https://ar.wikipedia.org/wiki/لغة_مهددة_بالانقراض)

<sup>7</sup>- Saleh Belaid, *Munāsabah wa Kalimah* (Algiers: High Council of the Arabic Language, 2025), vol. 9, p. 368

<sup>8</sup>- Al Jazeera, "The Arabic Language: Its Origins, History, and Number of Speakers," published March 18, 2023.

Accessed July 21, 2026. Available at:

<https://short-url.cc/1A2jF>

<sup>9</sup>- Saleh Belaid, *A Strategy for Promoting the Arabic Language through Its Institutions in the Age of Artificial Intelligence* (Algiers: High Council of the Arabic Language, 2026), vol. 1, pp. 130–131; vol. 2, pp. 459–460.

<sup>10</sup>- Abdelkader Fassi Fehri, *Language Policy in the Arab World* (Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-Jadid al-Muttahida, 2013), p. 119.

<sup>11</sup>- Yacine Bouras, *Citizenship and Language Policy: A Collection of Essays* (Algiers: Dar al-Bahith, 2020), p. 49.

<sup>12</sup>- Arwa Y., "How Long Does It Take to Learn Arabic? A Comprehensive Timeline," *Preply Blog*, March 20, 2026. Accessed July 22, 2026. Available at: <https://preply.com/en/blog/how-long-does-it-take-to-learn-arabic/>

<sup>13</sup>- Belaid, *A Strategy for Promoting the Arabic Language*, vol. 1, pp. 130–131; vol. 2, pp. 459–460. Belaid, *A Strategy for Promoting the Arabic Language*, vol. 1, p. 33.

<sup>14</sup>- See Saleh Belaid, *Educational Security as a Component of Linguistic Security* (Algiers: High Council of the Arabic Language, 2026), pp. 246–247.

## 7. Bibliography List:

### Books and Reports

1. Belaid, Saleh. *A Strategy for Promoting the Arabic Language through Its Institutions in the Age of Artificial Intelligence*. 2 vols. Algiers: High Council of the Arabic Language, 2026.
2. Belaid, Saleh. *Educational Security as a Component of Linguistic Security*. Algiers: High Council of the Arabic Language, 2026.

3. Belaid, Saleh. *Munāsabah wa Kalimah*. Vol. 9. Algiers: High Council of the Arabic Language, 2025.
4. Bouras, Yacine. *Citizenship and Language Policy: A Collection of Essays*. Algiers: Dar al-Bahith, 2020.
5. Dwyer, Ariane, et al. *Language Vitality and Endangerment*. Document submitted to the International Expert Meeting on the UNESCO Programme for the Safeguarding of Endangered Languages. Paris: UNESCO, 2003.
6. Fassi Fehri, Abdelkader. *Language Policies in the Arab World: Towards a Natural, Equitable, Democratic, and Effective Language Environment*. Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-Jadid al-Muttahida, 2013.
7. Fassi Fehri, Abdelkader. *Language Policy in the Arab World*. Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-Jadid al-Muttahida, 2013.
8. UNESCO. *Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger*. 3rd ed. Paris: UNESCO Publishing, 2010.
1. Abbad's Blog. "The Languages of the World and Their Bleak Future." Accessed July 25, 2026. <https://abbad.me/2017/03/language-history/>
2. Al Jazeera. "The Arabic Language: Its Origins, History, and Number of Speakers." Published March 18, 2023. Accessed July 21, 2026. <https://short-url.cc/1A2jF>
3. Arwa Y. "How Long Does It Take to Learn Arabic? A Comprehensive Timeline." *Preply Blog*. March 20, 2026. Accessed July 22, 2026. <https://preply.com/en/blog/how-long-does-it-take-to-learn-arabic/>
4. UNESCO. "UNESCO Presents the New Edition of the Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger." February 19, 2009. Accessed July 25, 2026. <https://news.un.org/ar/story/2009/02/100212>
5. Wikipedia. "Endangered Language." Accessed July 25, 2026. [https://ar.wikipedia.org/wiki/لغة\\_مهددة\\_بالانقراض](https://ar.wikipedia.org/wiki/لغة_مهددة_بالانقراض)
6. Wikipedia. "Extinct Languages." Accessed July 25, 2026. [https://ar.wikipedia.org/wiki/لغة\\_بائنة](https://ar.wikipedia.org/wiki/لغة_بائنة)

### Online Sources