

Reconstructing Arabic Communicative Competence in Multilingual Islamic Education: A Qualitative Case Study in Southern Thailand

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Abstract

This study aimed to analyze how Arabic communicative competence is reconstructed through communicative approaches to listening and speaking instruction among non-native learners in a multilingual Islamic educational context in Southern Thailand. A qualitative single-case study was conducted at Assiroh Islamic School. Seven purposively selected informants two school leaders and five Arabic teachers participated in face-to-face in-depth interviews, complemented by participatory classroom observations and document analysis. Data were analyzed iteratively through reflexive thematic analysis, with triangulation across interviews, observations, and institutional documents. The findings revealed that communicative competence was reconstructed through the interrelated development of linguistic, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competence. Dialogue, role-play, peer discussion, presentations, and authentic audiovisual materials shifted classroom practice from grammar- and memorization-dominated instruction toward meaning negotiation and active language use, while teachers increasingly functioned as facilitators. Implementation was strengthened by teachers' pedagogical competence, the functional relevance of Arabic in Islamic education, and access to authentic media, but constrained by limited Arabic use beyond the classroom, heterogeneous prior proficiency, and persistent structural learning traditions. These findings indicate that communicative competence is not produced by communicative activities alone but through interaction among pedagogy, institutional culture, multilingual ecology, and learner participation. As a single-site study centered primarily on school leaders and teachers, its transferability is limited; future multi-site and longitudinal research should include students' perspectives and examine how communicative competence develops across diverse Southeast Asian Islamic educational settings.

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Introduction

The increasing role of multilingualism, transnational mobility, and intercultural communication has fundamentally reshaped the purpose of foreign language education, shifting the emphasis from mastery of linguistic forms to the development of communicative competencies in an authentic social context (Canale & Swain, 1980). In this global transformation, Arabic occupies a distinctive position. Beyond its status as one of the world's major international languages, Arabic serves simultaneously as a language of religion, culture, diplomacy, and regional economic cooperation, thus extending its relevance far beyond the Arab world. As a result, the demand for Arabic language education among non-native speakers has increased rapidly across Southeast Asia, particularly in Muslim-majority communities where Arabic is closely linked to religious learning while also gaining broader communicative and professional significance (Savignon, 2018). Nonetheless, despite the

development of this educational landscape, Arabic teaching in many non-Arab contexts continues to be dominated by grammar-oriented pedagogy that emphasizes memorization, translation, and structural accuracy rather than meaningful interactions. Such teaching traditions often result in learners who have sufficient declarative knowledge of grammar rules but remain unable to understand authentic oral discourse or participate confidently in real-life communication. This difference reflects a broader international concern that language education systems often equate linguistic knowledge with communicative ability, although over decades the development of theory advocated communicative language teaching (CLT) as a more socially contextual model of language acquisition (Al-Harbi, 2025).

Recent studies increasingly recognize that the effectiveness of communicative language teaching (CLT) cannot be understood solely through the application of communicative classroom activities, but must be examined in relation to how communicative competence is conceptually constructed in specific educational, linguistic, and sociocultural contexts. Existing studies can be synthesized into at least five interrelated flows. First, Ellis' (2017) research shows that communicative and task-based pedagogy improves students' verbal fluency, interactional confidence, and communicative engagement compared to grammar-dominated teaching. Second, investigations conducted in Arabic language education report that communicative approaches improve listening comprehension and speaking performance by increasing learners' opportunities for authentic interaction, collaborative dialogue, and contextual language use (Ta'ima & Al-Naqa (2006)). Third, studies in multilingual Southeast Asian environments reveal that learners' communicative development is strongly influenced by first language transfer, classroom discourse patterns, and local educational culture, not just by pedagogical techniques alone (Saithong & Assalihee, 2021). Fourth, a growing body of literature highlights the influence of affective dimensions—including foreign language anxiety, willingness to communicate, learner identity, and perception of self-efficacy—on oral language performance, suggesting that communicative competence emerges through psychological and linguistic development (Al-Harbi, 2025). Finally, recent conceptual discussions have argued that communicative competence should be interpreted as socially negotiated abilities embedded in authentic interactions, rather than as an accumulation of isolated linguistic subskills (Byram, 1997). Although these studies collectively advance the understanding of communicative pedagogy, they are still fragmented across a variety of different theoretical traditions and educational contexts. Most empirical investigations measure learning outcomes in terms of improved speaking scores or classroom participation, while relatively little attention has been paid to how communicative competence itself is reconstructed through the interaction between pedagogy, multilingual reality, learning agency, and institutional culture.

To overcome these limitations, this study adopts communicative competence as an evolving sociocultural construct, rather than as a fixed linguistic outcome. This analysis is theoretically based on the multidimensional model of communicative competence of Lantolf, Thorne & Poehner (2015). Departing from this perspective, this study introduces the concept of reconstruction of Arabic communicative competence, emphasizing that communicative skills must be continuously reconfigured through the interaction between pedagogical design, contextual reality, multilingual resources, and learner participation, instead of being treated as predetermined learning outcomes. Therefore, the conceptual novelty of this research lies not only in the evaluation of the effectiveness of communicative approaches, but also in proposing a context-sensitive framework that explains

how communicative competence is reconstructed in Arabic language classrooms in a multilingual Islamic education environment.

Method

This study adopted a qualitative interpretivist design using a single-case study to examine how Arabic communicative competence is reconstructed through classroom interaction, pedagogical practice, and institutional culture at Assiroh Islamic School in Southern Thailand. A qualitative approach was appropriate because the inquiry sought to understand contextually situated meanings and processes rather than estimate causal effects or population parameters (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Levitt et al., 2018). The case-study strategy enabled intensive examination of a contemporary educational phenomenon within its real-life setting, where the boundaries among pedagogy, multilingualism, religion, and institutional practice are interdependent (Ridder, 2017; Ebneyamini & Sadeghi Moghadam, 2018). This context-sensitive orientation also complements Syukur and colleagues' scholarship on competence formation and the interpretation of cultural-religious meaning within specific educational and sociocultural environments (Yanto et al., 2020; Daryono & Syukur, 2023; Argo et al., 2024).

Assiroh Islamic School was purposively selected as an information-rich case because its students navigate Patani Malay as their first language, Thai as the national language, and Arabic as a foreign and religious language. Seven informants were recruited through criterion-based purposive sampling: two school leaders involved in academic policy and five Arabic teachers directly responsible for listening and speaking instruction. Purposive sampling ensured close alignment between participants' experiential knowledge and the research objectives (Campbell et al., 2020). Data were generated through three complementary sources: face-to-face in-depth interviews, participatory classroom observations, and document analysis. Interviews were conducted in Patani Malay, lasted approximately 90 minutes, were transcribed verbatim, and were translated into Arabic with attention to conceptual equivalence. Classroom observations focused on teacher-student interaction, communicative activities, negotiation of meaning, listening and speaking practices, and students' responses. Documentary materials included curricula, lesson plans, teaching materials, assessment instruments, and other institutional records. Triangulation across methods and data sources was employed to reduce dependence on any single evidence stream and strengthen the credibility of contextual interpretation (Korstjens & Moser, 2018).

Data collection and analysis proceeded iteratively rather than as strictly separated stages. Sample adequacy was evaluated in relation to the bounded case, the participants' role-specific expertise, and convergence across interviews, observations, and documents; data generation continued until no substantively new categories were identified, consistent with contemporary discussions of saturation in focused qualitative inquiry (Guest et al., 2020; Hennink & Kaiser, 2022). Analysis followed reflexive thematic procedures comprising repeated familiarization with transcripts, field notes, and documents; generation of initial codes; iterative comparison and refinement of codes; development of candidate categories and themes; review of themes against the complete dataset; and interpretive synthesis in relation to the communicative-competence framework (Braun & Clarke, 2019, 2021; Kiger & Varpio, 2020; Byrne, 2022). Analytic decisions and theme development were systematically documented to strengthen transparency and trustworthiness (Nowell et al., 2017). Researcher reflexivity was further supported through reflective journaling and periodic analytical discussion to identify assumptions arising from cultural

and linguistic proximity to the research setting. The data collection process is carried out gradually and repeatedly until no new categories or themes are found that emerge from the empirical data, so that the research is declared to have reached thematic saturation (Guest, Namey & Chen, 2020).

Table 1: Informant profiles

Yes	Initials	Gender	Where to Work	Remarks
1.	MD 1	Male	Assiroh Islamic School, Southern Thailand	Principal
2.	MD 2	Women	Assiroh Islamic School, Southern Thailand	Principal
3.	UT 1	Male	Assiroh Islamic School, Southern Thailand	Teacher
4.	UT 2	Male	Assiroh Islamic School, Southern Thailand	Teacher
5.	UT 3	Male	Assiroh Islamic School, Southern Thailand	Teacher
6.	UT 4	Women	Assiroh Islamic School, Southern Thailand	Teacher
7.	UT 5	Women	Assiroh Islamic School, Southern Thailand	Teacher

Confidentiality in reporting is maintained by replacing participants’ personal identities with role-based codes. To meet the ethical reporting requirements for international journals, verified institutional information must be included as follows: “Ethical approval was obtained from all participants, who provided informed consent both written and verbal prior to data collection. Participants were informed of the voluntary nature of their participation and their right to withdraw without any consequences.” The approving institution, approval number, and form of approval are not yet included in the current manuscript; therefore, these details must be provided based on the original research records, not merely summarized.

Results

Patterns of Communicative Competency Development in Arabic Listening and Speaking Learning for Non-Native Speaker Students in Southern Thailand

The research data shows that the development of Arabic listening and speaking skills at Assiroh Islamic School takes place through a learning pattern oriented towards the formation of communicative competence. Learning no longer places mastery of vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation as the ultimate goal, but rather as the foundation for meaningfully using Arabic in various communication situations. This pattern is realized through the integration of four dimensions of communicative competence, namely linguistic, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competencies. All of these dimensions seem to be interconnected in the listening and speaking learning activities that take place in the classroom.

The observation results showed that at the beginning of the learning the teacher introduced vocabulary and sentence patterns related to the *الحياة اليومية* theme, then students were directly asked to do a dialogue in pairs without reading the script. When some students have difficulty expressing a vocabulary, the teacher does not immediately give an answer, but encourages them to use other expressions, ask a partner for clarification, or use the context of the conversation to maintain communication. During the process, teachers play more of a role as a facilitator than as the main source of information. This condition is strengthened by the following statement by the Principal.

"We no longer consider students successful just because they are able to memorize rules or vocabulary. What is more important is whether they can use Arabic when talking to teachers and friends. Therefore, we always direct every learning so that language is used in real situations so that students are used to conveying meaning, not just remembering the rules." (MD 1, interview, October 6, 2025).

The data show that learning orientation has shifted from an emphasis on structural accuracy to

the use of language as a means of communication. Linguistic competence is still taught, but it functions as a basis for the formation of communication skills in a real social context. The findings were also supported by the teacher's statement explaining how linguistic elements are integrated into communication activities.

"In teaching, I usually start with simple vocabulary and sentence patterns, but after that students are immediately asked to dialogue or role-play. If they forget a certain vocabulary, I don't correct them right away, but rather encourage them to find other ways to explain what they mean. That's where they learn to communicate naturally." (UT 2, interview, October 14, 2025).

The results of observations in the role play activity showed that students acted out conversations between teachers and students in the school environment by using expressions of respect, greeting, and expressions that were in accordance with the context of communication. The teacher provides feedback after the entire group finishes performing so that the interaction is not interrupted during the communication process. In addition, students seem to be able to connect several sentences into a complete conversation even though there are still grammatical errors in some parts.

The data shows that the development of communicative competence is not only directed at the accuracy of the form of language, but also at the ability to use language according to the social context and build the continuity of meaning in oral communication. These findings show the development of sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence simultaneously through communicative activities. This statement is further reinforced by the following teacher's experience.

"Children are actually more confident when learning using conversations, videos, and group discussions. They are not afraid to try to speak because the atmosphere is more relaxed. We make pronunciation or grammar mistakes part of the learning process, not something that should make them stop talking." (UT 4, interview, October 22, 2025).

The results of observations in Arabic video-based group discussions showed that students interacted more often with their peers than with direct questions to the teacher. They help each other improve pronunciation, choose more appropriate vocabulary, and explain the content of the video in simple Arabic. Teachers only provide reinforcement when necessary without dominating the course of the discussion.

These findings show that interaction between students is an important part of the process of forming communicative competence. Communication activities allow students to build meaning collaboratively, develop communication strategies when experiencing difficulties, and increase confidence in using Arabic orally. This tendency was also confirmed by the statement of the Deputy Principal.

"We see that language competence develops when students often interact using Arabic. Although their initial abilities vary, communication activities help them improve pronunciation, choose the right vocabulary, and understand how to use expressions according to the situation at school and in religious activities." (MD 2, interview, October 28, 2025).

Overall, all interview and observation data show a consistent pattern that the development of Arabic communicative competence at Assiroh Islamic School is carried out through the integration of linguistic, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competencies in learning activities centered on the authentic use of language. This pattern shows a shift in learning orientation from mastery of linguistic structures to the formation of the ability to use Arabic in a meaningful way in social, academic, and religious contexts.

Communicative Approach Based on Learning Interaction Practices in Shaping Student Learning Experience

The research data shows that the practice of learning interaction based on a communicative approach at Assiroh Islamic School forms a more interactive Arabic learning experience through changes in the role of teachers and students in the learning process. Teachers no longer dominate the delivery of material, but play the role of facilitators who provide opportunities for students to use Arabic in various communication activities. The learning experience is built through direct exposure to Arabic, interaction between students, the use of authentic media, and communication activities related to daily life.

The results of the observation showed that during the learning of listening skills, teachers made use of audio recordings, short videos in Arabic, and oral instructions without translating each speech into Malay or Thai. After listening, students were asked to discuss the content of the material in pairs, then reconvey the information they understood using simple Arabic. During the activity, the teacher only gives directions when students have difficulty understanding the main message. The findings were reinforced by the statement of one of the following teachers.

"When students only hear the teacher's explanation, they tend to be passive. That's why we use audio, video, and simple conversations to get them used to capturing meaning directly. Even though they don't understand all the vocabulary, they learn to understand the content of the conversation through the context and communication situation." (UT 1, interview, October 8, 2025).

The data show that the learning experience of listening no longer focuses on translating word for word, but on the ability to understand messages through the context of communication. Authentic language exposure gives students the opportunity to develop their listening skills gradually through hands-on experience.

In the development of speaking skills, the results of observations showed that teachers applied various communicative activities, such as paired dialogues, role plays, group discussions, and short presentations. In one of the role play activities, students acted out conversation situations in the school library and in the cafeteria using expressions of their own choosing. During the activity, the teacher does not directly correct language errors, but provides feedback after the rest of the group finishes their conversation so that communication continues naturally. This condition is in line with the results of the following interview.

"We give students the opportunity to speak first. Even though there are still grammatical errors, they are still encouraged to express their opinions until they are finished. Corrections are made after the communication is complete so that they do not lose their courage." (UT 3, interview, October 17, 2025).

The data shows that communication activities provide space for students to actively produce Arabic without fear of making mistakes. The learning process emphasizes fluent communication as part of the learning experience before improvements are made to the linguistic aspect.

The results of subsequent observations show that interaction between students is the dominant part of the learning process. In group discussion activities, students exchange opinions, improve the pronunciation of friends, help choose appropriate vocabulary, and provide explanations when there are group members who have difficulty understanding the material. Teachers go around observing the course of the discussion rather than giving explanations directly in front of the class. The findings are reinforced by the following statements.

"The most visible thing is that students learn from their own friends. When someone forgets vocabulary or pronounces a word wrong, other friends immediately help. This kind of interaction makes them more courageous to speak up than when they just answer the teacher's questions." (UT 5, interview, October 24,

2025).

Observation data shows that interaction between students is a learning medium that allows mutual help, negotiation of meaning, and collaborative resolution of communication difficulties. These activities form a more participatory learning atmosphere compared to teacher-centered learning patterns. This tendency was also confirmed by the Deputy Principal.

"The change we feel is not only students' improved speaking skills, but also the way they learn. They are more active in discussing, daring to ask questions, and using Arabic in various school activities. They began to consider Arabic as a means of communication, not just a subject." (MD 2, interview, October 29, 2025).

Overall, interview and observation data show that interaction practices based on communicative approaches form a more active learning experience through changing the role of teachers to facilitators, increasing interaction between students, using authentic media, and student involvement in various communication activities relevant to the context of daily life. This experience encourages students to move from a position as a recipient of knowledge to an active Arabic user in a learning situation.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors for the Implementation of Communicative Approaches in the Development of Arabic Listening and Speaking Skills

The research data showed that the implementation of a communicative approach in the development of Arabic listening and speaking skills at Assiroh Islamic School was influenced by interrelated supporting and inhibiting factors. Supporting factors include the pedagogical competence of teachers, an Islamic education environment that provides a real function for the use of Arabic, and the use of authentic learning media. On the other hand, the limited use of Arabic outside the classroom, the heterogeneity of students' initial abilities, and the still strong orientation of rote learning are factors that limit the development of communicative competence.

The results of the observation showed that teachers were able to manage learning flexibly by combining dialogue, group discussions, language games, learning videos, and listening exercises according to the student's ability level. Teachers provide opportunities for all students to participate and adjust the difficulty level of communication activities based on the abilities of each group. The classroom atmosphere was conducive and most of the students were actively involved during learning activities.

The findings were reinforced by the statement of one of the following teachers.

"The success of the communicative approach is highly dependent on the readiness of teachers. We have to choose activities that suit students' abilities, set the classroom atmosphere so that they dare to speak, and use media that makes them interested in listening to Arabic. If the teacher only explains the material, students will return to being passive." (UT 1, interview, October 9, 2025).

The data shows that teachers' pedagogical competence plays an important role in determining the quality of the implementation of communicative approaches. The teacher's ability to design activities, manage interactions, and utilize learning media are factors that support student involvement in the communication process.

The results of subsequent observations show that various learning activities are often associated with the context of life in Islamic schools, such as conversations about congregational prayer activities, reading the Qur'an, learning hadith, and daily activities in the pesantren environment. In addition, teachers utilize videos, audio recordings, and digital teaching materials as a source of authentic Arabic exposure that students can listen to and discuss together.

This condition is in line with the following statement of the Principal.

"Arabic has a strong position in our school because it is directly related to religious studies. This makes it

easier for students to receive communicative learning. When the material is related to worship activities and daily life at school, they are more motivated to use Arabic in communication." (MD 1, interview, October 16, 2025).

The data shows that the characteristics of the Islamic educational environment provide support for the implementation of communicative approaches. The link between Arabic and religious activities makes the use of language have a context close to the student's learning experience.

On the other hand, the results of observations also show that the use of Arabic is still very limited outside of class hours. After the learning ended, most of the students returned to using Patani Malay or Thai when communicating with friends. In some groups, there is also a striking difference in ability so that students who have higher abilities tend to dominate conversations, while students with low initial abilities are more likely to be listeners.

The findings are reinforced by the following teacher's statement.

"The biggest difficulty is that students rarely use Arabic after the lesson is over. When returning to the dormitory or interacting with friends, they are more comfortable using Malay or Thai. In addition, their initial abilities are different, so teachers must continue to adjust the form of communication activities." (UT 3, interview, October 21, 2025).

The results of these observations show that the environment of language use outside the classroom has not fully supported the development of communicative competence. Limited practice opportunities have led to the use of Arabic still concentrated in formal learning situations.

This condition was also confirmed by the Deputy Principal through the following statement.

"Some students still think that learning Arabic means memorizing vocabulary and understanding grammar. Such a way of thinking has not completely changed so they sometimes feel hesitant when asked to speak. Therefore, we continue to strive to build a culture of Arabic communication, not just increase the subject matter." (MD 2, interview, October 30, 2025).

Overall, observational and interview data show that the implementation of the communicative approach is influenced by a combination of internal and external factors. Teacher competence, Islamic education environment, and the use of authentic media are factors that support the implementation of communicative learning, while the limited Arabic-speaking environment outside the classroom, differences in students' initial abilities, and the still strong orientation of memorization-based learning are factors that hinder the optimal development of communicative competence.

Discussion

The present study sought to explain how Arabic communicative competence is reconstructed through communicative listening and speaking instruction in a multilingual Islamic educational setting and to identify the pedagogical and contextual conditions that enable or constrain this process. Three interrelated findings address these objectives. First, communicative competence emerged through the integration of linguistic, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competencies rather than through grammatical knowledge in isolation. Second, dialogue, role-play, collaborative discussion, presentations, and authentic audiovisual materials repositioned students from recipients of linguistic knowledge to active users of Arabic, while teachers increasingly assumed facilitative roles that supported negotiation of meaning and sustained interaction. Third, this transformation was enabled by teachers' pedagogical competence, the functional significance of Arabic within Islamic education, and access to authentic learning resources, but was constrained by limited Arabic use beyond formal lessons, heterogeneous prior proficiency, and a persistent culture of memorization and grammar-oriented learning. These findings suggest that communicative

competence is better understood as a contextually reconstructed capacity produced through the interaction of pedagogy, multilingual ecology, learner participation, and institutional culture than as the automatic outcome of increasing the frequency of communicative activities.

At the international level, the findings converge with contemporary research emphasizing that communicative development depends on meaningful, context-sensitive tasks rather than decontextualized linguistic practice. Bygate (2020) argues that task-based language teaching must remain responsive to the practices, demands, and perspectives of real-world classroom stakeholders, an argument reflected in the present finding that communicative activities became meaningful when connected to students' social, school, and religious experiences. Fang et al. (2021) similarly demonstrated that mobile-supported task-based language teaching enhanced vocabulary and conversational comprehension and strengthened learners' awareness of oral communication strategies, although gains in grammar were less pronounced. This distinction reinforces the present study's observation that communicative development cannot be reduced to structural accuracy. Furthermore, Chen et al. (2021) found that translanguaging-oriented multimodal instruction among multilingual learners of French supported pronunciation development and learner satisfaction. Although the current study did not experimentally evaluate learning gains, its observational evidence that audiovisual materials, dialogue, and contextualized oral tasks encouraged students to maintain communication supports a broader international shift toward multimodal, interaction-oriented language pedagogy. Importantly, however, technology or communicative tasks should not be considered effective in themselves; their pedagogical value depends on how they scaffold interaction, meaning construction, and learner agency.

The multilingual character of the findings is also consistent with the expanding literature on translanguaging and multilingual pedagogy. Tai and Wei (2021) showed that multilingual and multimodal resources could create a productive translanguaging space, strengthen rapport, facilitate explanation, and promote meaningful classroom communication. Similarly, Rajendram (2023) found that learner-initiated translanguaging supported peer learning, rapport, problem solving, and cultural identity, although its use could be constrained by language policies and ideologies. Perfecto (2022) demonstrated that strategic bridging between languages could facilitate more active participation among multilingual learners, while Llanes and Cots (2022) showed that a plurilingual pedagogy need not impede target-language development. Karabassova and San Isidro (2023), however, identified considerable ambiguity in teachers' attitudes toward translanguaging, ranging from its acceptance as scaffolding to continued adherence to target-language-only ideals. These international findings illuminate the linguistic ecology of Assiroh Islamic School, where Patani Malay, Thai, and Arabic occupy distinct functional and symbolic positions. They suggest that students' existing linguistic resources may constitute pedagogical assets rather than interference to be eliminated. Nevertheless, the present study did not explicitly investigate translanguaging as a planned instructional strategy; consequently, its multilingual findings should not be interpreted as evidence that translanguaging itself caused the observed communicative development. Rather, translanguaging scholarship provides a productive explanatory lens for understanding how multilingual resources might mediate meaning-making in this context.

A particularly important comparison arises from contemporary Arabic and affective language-learning research. Soliman and Khalil (2024) found that teachers of Arabic in the United Kingdom generally recognized communication as an important learning objective, yet classroom practice often

remained dominated by traditional written activities, with listening and speaking receiving comparatively less attention. This tension closely parallels the present study, in which communicative practices coexist with established traditions of grammatical mastery and memorization. The findings concerning increased confidence and willingness to participate can also be interpreted in relation to research showing that classroom social climate and emotional experience shape willingness to communicate (Wang et al., 2021), while speaking anxiety may change substantially through sustained oral-language experience (Veenstra & Weaver, 2022). Lee and Lu (2023) further demonstrate that willingness to communicate is influenced by motivational processes operating both within classrooms and in extramural digital environments, whereas Dewaele et al. (2024) show that enjoyment, anxiety, boredom, and social interaction vary according to learning environments. Pedagogical translanguaging has likewise been associated with reductions in perceived learner anxiety (Cenoz et al., 2024). These studies help explain why the non-punitive treatment of errors and peer interaction observed at Assiroh may be consequential for oral participation. However, because the present research did not administer validated anxiety, enjoyment, or willingness-to-communicate measures, increased confidence should remain a qualitative finding rather than being interpreted as a measured psychological effect.

The study also contributes to questions of language, identity, and symbolic legitimacy. Wu and Leung (2022) demonstrated that flexible multilingual practices in a heritage-language classroom could enable learners to interrogate imposed linguistic identities rather than treating a named language as a homogeneous cultural category. This insight is relevant to Southern Thailand because Arabic operates not only as a foreign language but also within an Islamic institutional environment in which it possesses religious and symbolic significance. Regional evidence further strengthens this interpretation. In Indonesia, Raja et al. (2022) found that teachers implemented translanguaging despite differing attitudes toward the practice, while Liando et al. (2023) showed that English, Indonesian, and local languages were strategically combined to clarify learning materials and facilitate understanding in multilingual EFL classrooms. Umam et al. (2023) likewise demonstrated that verbal, semiotic, and multimodal resources supported negotiation of meaning and more multilateral interaction in Indonesian tertiary EFL education. Particularly relevant to Arabic education, Kassim et al. (2023) found among 203 Malaysian non-Arabic-speaking learners that readiness—especially computer and Internet self-efficacy—predicted satisfaction and performance in a virtual Arabic-learning environment, underscoring the importance of learner and institutional preparedness when digital resources are incorporated. Most directly, Rostandi et al. (2025) documented the integration of Arabic, Indonesian, and English in an Indonesian *tafsir* classroom, showing how multilingual resources can simultaneously support comprehension, critical engagement, and cultural identity. These Southeast Asian findings resonate with the present case because language learning occurs within multilingual environments where different languages carry unequal academic, communicative, national, and religious functions. The distinctive feature of the Southern Thai context is therefore not multilingualism alone, but the interaction between Patani Malay as a community language, Thai as the national language, and Arabic as both a foreign language and a language of Islamic learning. This helps explain why communicative transformation cannot simply reproduce models developed for monolingual or English-dominant classrooms.

Theoretically, the findings refine multidimensional models of communicative competence by suggesting that linguistic, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competencies are not merely

parallel components to be acquired but are dynamically reconstructed through participation in situated multilingual practices. The study therefore complements the communicative-competence framework with a sociocultural interpretation in which learning develops through mediated interaction, participation, and context (Canale & Swain, 1980; Lantolf et al., 2015). International translanguaging research further suggests that learners' existing linguistic repertoires can function as mediational resources rather than obstacles, although their use remains shaped by institutional ideologies and teacher beliefs (Rajendram, 2023; Karabassova & San Isidro, 2023). Pedagogically, Arabic teachers should therefore combine explicit linguistic support with meaning-focused dialogue, role-play, peer collaboration, authentic audio and video, strategically delayed corrective feedback, and differentiated scaffolding for students with heterogeneous proficiency. A psychologically safer environment in which errors are treated as part of learning may also sustain oral participation, although emotional well-being should be assessed directly in future studies rather than inferred from participation alone (Wang et al., 2021; Cenoz et al., 2024). Digital and media literacy should focus on learners' capacity to select, interpret, and critically evaluate authentic Arabic audiovisual resources instead of merely increasing technology exposure. At the policy level, Islamic educational institutions should align curriculum, assessment, teacher professional development, and extracurricular language environments with communicative outcomes, while recognizing the multilingual resources students already possess. Assessment policy should consequently encompass authentic oral performance and meaning negotiation alongside grammatical knowledge. Because this study did not investigate social-media behavior, platform regulation, or clinical mental-health outcomes, its policy implications should not be extended to social-media regulation or mental-health intervention; the evidence supports educational language, digital-resource, and learner-support policies rather than broader claims about digital psychological well-being.

The principal contribution of this study lies not in demonstrating once again that communicative activities can increase classroom participation, but in conceptualizing the development of Arabic communicative competence as a process of reconstruction within a multilingual Islamic educational ecology. Existing international research has examined task-based interaction, translanguaging, multimodality, willingness to communicate, and Arabic pedagogy largely as separate domains. The present findings connect these domains by showing how communicative practice interacts with institutional culture, religious functionality, multilingual resources, teacher agency, and opportunities for language use. The Patani Malay–Thai–Arabic configuration is particularly consequential because the three languages do not perform equivalent social functions. Methodologically, the triangulation of interviews, classroom observations, and institutional documents enables the study to move beyond evaluating whether a particular communicative technique “works” and instead illuminate how and under what conditions communicative competence is reconstructed. In this sense, the proposed context-sensitive framework extends method-centered interpretations of communicative language teaching toward an ecological and social-pedagogical account of competence formation.

These contributions should be interpreted within the study's methodological boundaries. The research examined one Islamic educational institution and involved seven purposively selected school leaders and teachers; consequently, the findings offer analytical rather than statistical generalization. Student experience was captured primarily through classroom observation and teachers' interpretations rather than through systematic student interviews, and the study did not

quantitatively measure changes in listening proficiency, speaking performance, anxiety, confidence, or willingness to communicate. Furthermore, interviews conducted in Patani Malay and subsequently translated into Arabic create a potential layer of interpretive mediation, even though attention was given to conceptual equivalence. Future research should therefore employ multi-case designs across Islamic schools in Southern Thailand and other Southeast Asian settings, incorporate students' voices, and follow communicative development longitudinally. Mixed-method and quasi-experimental studies could combine classroom ethnography with validated measures of listening, speaking, willingness to communicate, and language anxiety. Comparative studies should also examine planned translanguaging versus predominantly target-language instruction, proficiency-based differentiation, digital Arabic learning environments, and language use beyond the classroom. Such research would determine which elements of the proposed reconstruction framework are specific to Assiroh Islamic School and which are transferable across multilingual Islamic educational systems, thereby strengthening both the theoretical precision and practical applicability of Arabic communicative-language pedagogy.

Conclusion

This study concludes that the reconstruction of Arabic communicative competence does not occur solely due to the application of communicative approaches as a learning method, but due to the formation of a pedagogical ecosystem that integrates linguistic, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competencies into authentic and meaningful learning experiences. The most surprising finding was that the success of communicative competency development was determined more by the ability of institutions and teachers to build spaces of social interaction that allowed students to use Arabic functionally than by the intensity of the language practice itself. In other words, communicative competence does not emerge as a direct product of communicative activity, but rather as the result of ongoing negotiations between pedagogical practices, institutional culture, religious identity, and the sociocultural context in which the language is learned. Therefore, this research makes a conceptual contribution to the development of Arabic communicative competency theory while offering a new perspective that the transformation of Arabic language learning requires a comprehensive reconstruction of the educational ecosystem, so that Arabic is positioned not only as an object of learning, but as a social practice that has academic, religious, and professional relevance in the global society.

However, this study has some limitations that need to be considered in interpreting the findings. First, the research uses a case study design at one Islamic educational institution so that the results are more directed towards the development of conceptual understanding rather than empirical generalizations to the entire context of Arabic language learning. Second, the focus of the research is more focused on the perspective of the principal and teacher so that it does not fully capture the learning experience of students in depth as well as the dynamics of the development of communicative competence in the long term. Therefore, further research is recommended to develop a multi-case study design in various Islamic educational institutions in the Southeast Asian region, using a longitudinal approach to observe the process of continuous communicative competency reconstruction, and combining qualitative and quantitative methods (mixed methods) to produce a more comprehensive explanation. Future research also needs to explore the role of digital ecology, translanguaging practices, and institutional policies in shaping Arabic communicative competence, so as to expand theoretical validity while providing a stronger foundation for the transformation of

Arabic language learning in the context of a multilingual society at the international level.

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