

## Arabic Writing for Sustainability: Integrating Ecotheological Values and HOTS Pedagogy in the Reconstruction of Arabic Language Education

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### Abstract

This study is motivated by the urgent need for Arabic language education to respond to growing issues of sustainability and ecological degradation, while simultaneously addressing the challenges of 21st-century education in fostering critical literacy through higher-order thinking skills (HOTS). Although numerous studies have developed digital and communicative approaches to Arabic writing instruction, most have yet to integrate Islamic ecotheological values as an ethical foundation for curriculum reconstruction. This research aims to formulate a model of Arabic writing pedagogy that combines HOTS-based approaches with sustainability principles rooted in Islamic environmental theology. Employing a qualitative descriptive method, the study draws on content analysis, in-depth interviews, and classroom observations involving students of Arabic Language Education. The findings reveal that integrating ecotheological values expands the concept of writing beyond a linguistic skill into a praxis of ecological and spiritual awareness that nurtures sustainable character. The discussion indicates that HOTS-oriented learning contextualized with environmental values enhances creativity, critical reflection, and social empathy. The novelty of this research lies in constructing a pedagogical model that unites the dimensions of language, ecology, and theology within a sustainability framework. These findings make a significant contribution to transforming the paradigm of Arabic language education toward a more humanistic, transdisciplinary, and ecologically responsive orientation.

**Keywords:** *Arabic Writing, Sustainability, Ecotheology, HOTS Pedagogy, Educational Reconstruction*

### Abstrak

Penelitian ini dilatarbelakangi oleh urgensi pendidikan bahasa Arab untuk merespons isu keberlanjutan dan degradasi ekologis yang semakin meningkat, sekaligus menjawab tantangan abad ke-21 dalam membangun literasi kritis melalui pendekatan berpikir tingkat tinggi (HOTS). Meskipun berbagai penelitian telah mengembangkan model pembelajaran menulis bahasa Arab berbasis digital dan komunikatif, sebagian besar belum mengintegrasikan nilai-nilai ekoteologis Islam sebagai fondasi etis dalam rekonstruksi kurikulum. Penelitian ini bertujuan merumuskan model pembelajaran menulis bahasa Arab yang menggabungkan pendekatan HOTS dengan nilai keberlanjutan berbasis teologi lingkungan. Metode penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif melalui analisis isi, wawancara mendalam, dan observasi implementasi pembelajaran pada mahasiswa Pendidikan Bahasa Arab. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa integrasi nilai ekoteologis mampu memperluas makna menulis tidak sekadar sebagai keterampilan linguistik, tetapi juga sebagai praksis kesadaran ekologis dan spiritual yang membentuk karakter berkelanjutan. Diskusi menunjukkan bahwa pembelajaran berbasis HOTS yang dikontekstualisasikan dengan nilai-nilai lingkungan menghasilkan peningkatan kreativitas, refleksi kritis, dan empati sosial. Kebaruan penelitian ini terletak pada konstruksi model pedagogis yang menyatukan dimensi bahasa, ekologi, dan teologi dalam satu kerangka keberlanjutan. Temuan ini berkontribusi signifikan terhadap transformasi paradigma pendidikan bahasa Arab menuju arah yang lebih humanistik, transdisipliner, dan responsif terhadap krisis ekologis global.

**Kata Kunci:** *Menulis Bahasa Arab, Keberlanjutan, Ekoteologi, Pedagogi HOTS, Rekonstruksi Pendidikan*

## **Introduction**

Arabic language education in the context of contemporary Islamic education is at the intersection of increasingly complex and real challenges. At the practical level, Arabic learning in various Islamic educational institutions, including the Arabic Language Education (PBA) study program at the State Islamic University of Madura (UIN Madura) is still dominantly oriented towards mastering grammatical structures, translation exercises, and reproduction of sentence patterns. In the Arabic writing skills course of UIN Madura in tasks such as compiling simple descriptive paragraphs, copying model texts, or answering questions based on *nahwu* and *sharaf* rules. This practice does contribute to linguistic accuracy, but it is often not followed by the development of analytical, reflective, and creative skills that are the main demands of 21st century learning and the Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) framework (Renti Yasmar, 2024).

Field facts show that PBA Study Program students often experience difficulties when asked to write argumentative or reflective texts in Arabic that relate language to social reality (Dinata et al., 2023; Haniefafa & Lutfiyatun, 2023). In the context of conventional learning, writing is rarely used as a means to respond to real problems, but rather as an instrument of academic evaluation. As a result, students tend to see Arabic writing activities as a technical task, not as a medium of critical thinking or the expression of meaningful ideas (Renti Yasmar, 2024). This condition shows that there is a gap between the ideal goal of language learning and the pedagogical practice that takes place in the classroom.

At the same time, the social and ecological realities in various regions, including in rural areas and areas prone to the Madura water crisis, show the urgency of sustainability issues that are increasingly real. The phenomenon of environmental degradation, limited access to clean water, and low ecological awareness of the community, especially the people in Madura, are no longer abstract issues, but realities directly faced by local communities (Maisaroh dkk., 2024; Umam, 2022). In this context, education has a strategic role to build awareness of environmental values and ethics from an early age (Agung & Siregar, 2025; Gerardis Mayela Berek Bala, 2024). However, in the practice of Arabic language education, these issues are rarely raised as a learning context, so that language is detached from social realities which should be a space for reflection and transformation.

In Islamic education, this condition is a paradox in itself. Islamic teachings normatively affirm the ethical relationship between humans and nature through the concepts of caliphate, trust, and responsibility for the sustainability of creation. These values are often taught in the subjects of faith, environmental jurisprudence, or character education, but have not been systematically integrated in Arabic language learning, especially in writing skills (Karimullah, 2023; Taufikin & YUSDANI, 2025). For example, Arabic writing practice texts generally still dwell on general themes such as daily life, campus activities, or descriptions of places, without relating them to issues of the environment, sustainability, and human moral responsibility (Fathil dkk., 2015; Taisir dkk., 2024).

The study of learning to write Arabic has evolved in recent decades with a diverse focus, especially on improving linguistic competence, grammatical accuracy, and fluency in written expressions (Mahyaddin & Widodo, 2025; Nazwa Awallul Rahma et al., 2024). In the scope of language pedagogy, learning to write Arabic is generally positioned as a productive skill that requires mastery of syntactic structures, vocabulary, and language styles that are in accordance with linguistic rules. Along with the development of the modern education paradigm, a number of studies have begun to shift the focus of writing learning from a traditional approach to a communicative, task-based, project-based, and the use of digital technology (Haniefah & Lutfiyatun, 2023; Hussain & Abdul Ghani, 2024)(Habibulloh, 2024). These approaches contribute to increasing learner engagement and learning effectiveness, but most are still oriented towards academic achievement and language performance alone.

The integration of Higher-Level Thinking Skills (HOTS) into Arabic language learning is increasingly recognized as essential for developing students' critical, analytical, and creative abilities, which are crucial in the 21st century educational framework. Studies show that HOTS-based learning significantly improves students' critical thinking skills, as demonstrated by improved performance in experimental settings compared to control groups (Mustofa et al., 2022). The application of HOTS in Arabic writing, however, often remains focused on cognitive and strategic aspects, such as analysis, evaluation, and creation, without explicitly linking these skills to broader dimensions such as values, ethics, or social issues (Wahyudi et al., 2024) (Maisaroh et al., 2023, 2025).

Various previous studies have tried to update the learning of Arabic writing through a communicative approach (Nurul Atifah Suyuti & Andi Abdul Hamzah, 2025; Susiawati

dkk., 2025), project-based (Hasbullah & Makhisoh, 2025; Mohd. Taqwudin Mohd. Yazid et al., 2023), and the use of digital technology (Ahmadi & Saad, 2024; Aunur Shabur Maajid Amadi & Dina Wilda Sholikha, 2023; Nurul Atifah Suyuti & Andi Abdul Hamzah, 2025). However, in practice, writing projects often focus on language products and technical presentations, rather than on the depth of value reflection. Writing projects are rarely directed to invite students to analyze ecological problems, assess human behavior towards nature, or formulate solutions based on Islamic values. Thus, the integration of Islamic ecotheological values as the ethical and epistemological basis for learning to write Arabic is still relatively marginalized.

Departing from these field facts, this research focuses on efforts to reconstruct Arabic language education through the development of writing learning that integrates Islamic ecotheological values with HOTS pedagogy. This reconstruction is realized through thematic and reflective writing tasks that raise sustainability issues, such as the environmental crisis, human responsibility towards nature, and Islamic ethics in maintaining ecosystem balance. By positioning writing Arabic as a space for analysis, reflection, and construction of meaning, this research seeks to bridge the gap between the practice of learning Arabic and the real needs of society in the face of the global ecological crisis.

## **Method**

The integration of Islamic ecotheological values and High-Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) in learning to write Arabic is a multifaceted pedagogical approach that seeks to improve the cognitive and ethical dimensions of education. The qualitative paradigm used in this study allows for an in-depth exploration of how these elements interact in the learning environment. The application of HOTS in Arabic language education, as discussed in various studies, emphasizes the development of critical, creative, and evaluative skills among students, moving beyond basic understanding to more complex cognitive processes such as analysis, evaluation, and creation (Saepurrohman et al., 2023)(Muchlis et al., 2023b)

The research data sources include 20 5th semester students and 2 lecturers in the Arabic Language Education program of UIN Madura as the main subject, as well as learning

documents as supporting data sources. Students were chosen because they were directly involved in the implementation of sustainability-based writing assignments, while lecturers acted as designers and learning facilitators. The documents analyzed include learning designs, writing assignment instructions, and student writing results that represent the process of thinking, reflection, and construction of meaning related to ecological issues and Islamic values. The selection of participants and data sources was carried out purposively to ensure relevance to the research focus (Farhana et al., 2022; Nabila & Abrianto, 2025)

The research procedure is carried out through several stages that are intertwined. The initial stage is focused on analyzing the needs and mapping the context of learning Arabic writing, especially related to opportunities for the integration of ecotheology and HOTS values. The next stage is the design and implementation of thematic writing tasks that are oriented towards sustainability issues, such as human responsibility towards the environment and Islam's ethical relationship with nature. During the learning process, the researcher observed classroom dynamics and pedagogical interactions, and collected data through in-depth interviews with students and lecturers to explore their experiences, perceptions, and reflections. All data were then analyzed thematically by identifying pedagogical patterns, forms of cognitive and reflective responses, and representations of sustainability values in student written texts.

To ensure the validity and credibility of the findings, this study applied a qualitative validity strategy that included triangulation of sources and methods, observation diligence, and examination of the consistency of data interpretation. Triangulation was carried out by comparing data from observations, interviews, and analysis of learning documents. In addition, the analysis process is carried out reflexively and iteratively to minimize the biases of researchers in interpreting the data. With this procedure, the results of the research are expected to have an adequate level of confidence and be able to accurately represent the dynamics of the integration of ecotheology and HOTS pedagogy in learning to write Arabic.

## **Result and Discussion**

The findings of the study show that the integration of Islamic ecotheological values in HOTS-based Arabic writing learning results in significant changes in the orientation and

quality of students' writing activities. Writing is no longer understood solely as a linguistic exercise to achieve the accuracy of structure and vocabulary, but as a reflective thinking process that requires problem analysis, argument formulation, and value-based construction of meaning. In thematic writing assignments that raise the issue of sustainability, students demonstrate the ability to relate ecological phenomena to Islamic theological principles, such as the responsibility of the caliph, trust to nature, and the ethics of environmental conservation. The resulting texts show stronger argumentative and reflective tendencies compared to conventional writing practices.

### **Finding 1: Changes in Writing Activity Orientation**

In general, student writing activities have shifted from mechanical practice to reflective and analytical practice. In conventional learning, writing is more focused on the accuracy of sentence structure and the use of vocabulary. After the integration of ecotheology and HOTS values, writing developed into a means of analyzing ecological problems, reflecting Islamic values, and constructing ethical arguments.

**Table 1. Comparison of Student Writing Characteristics**

<b>Learning Aspects</b>	<b>Before Integration</b>	<b>After Integration</b>
Focus on writing	Structure & grammar	Meaning, value, and argument
Text type	Simple descriptive	Argumentative & Reflective
Context	Abstract/theoretical	Real ecological issues
Thought process	Reproductive	Analytical & evaluative
Value orientation	Neutral	Ethics & sustainability

This table shows that the integration of HOTS pedagogy and ecotheological values drives a fundamental transformation in writing practice, from a mere linguistic exercise to a value-based critical thinking process.

Interpretation of these findings shows that HOTS-based writing learning contextualized with ecotheological values plays a role as a trigger for the activation of high-level cognitive processes. Students not only reproduce linguistic knowledge, but are involved in the process of analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of ideas. Writing activities become a space for dialogue between language, social reality, and Islamic values, thus encouraging students to position themselves as subjects who think critically about environmental issues. From a pedagogical perspective, this condition indicates that the integration of

values in language learning is able to expand the function of writing from just an academic skill to a praxis of ethical and ecological awareness formation.

These findings can be linked to the development of language pedagogy theory that emphasizes the importance of contextual and meaningful learning. Learning to write from real issues has been proven to strengthen students' intellectual involvement and increase the relevance of language learning to social life. In this context, Islamic ecotheological values serve as a conceptual framework that provides normative direction as well as reflective depth to writing activities. Thus, learning to write Arabic contributes not only to the mastery of the language, but also to the internalization of values and the formation of a sustainability perspective.

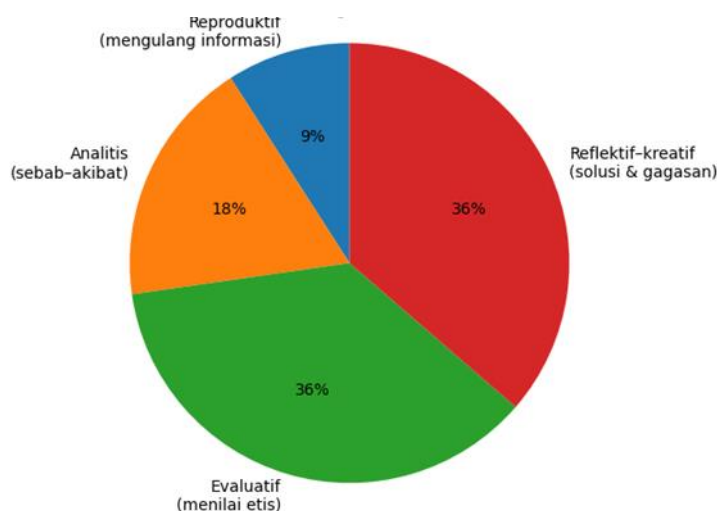
### **Finding 2: HOTS Activation through an Ecotheological Context**

This second finding shows that the integration of ecotheology and HOTS also influences students' attitudes and awareness of environmental issues. Through a reflective writing process, students express ecological empathy and awareness of the link between human behavior and environmental damage. Student texts indicate a shift in perspective from a descriptive approach to an evaluative and normative approach, where environmental issues are understood as moral and spiritual responsibilities. This shows that learning to write can function as a medium of consciousness transformation, not just as a means of linguistic expression

Analysis of student written texts shows the emergence of HOTS indicators, such as the ability to relate ecological phenomena to Islamic theological principles, evaluate human behavior towards nature, and formulate value-based solutions. Students not only describe environmental problems, but also propose normative arguments accompanied by moral reflection.

To clarify this pattern, the distribution of cognitive focus in student writing is visualized as follows:

### **Graph 1. Distribution of Cognitive Focus in Student Writing**



This graph shows that the context of sustainability and ecotheology serves as a trigger for the activation of higher-level thinking, rather than simply as an additional theme in learning.

### Finding 3: Formation of Ecological Awareness and Ethical Attitudes

In addition to cognitive changes, the results of the study also show the emergence of ecological awareness and ethical attitudes in student narratives. The students' writings contain expressions of empathy for nature, criticism of environmental exploitation, and reflections on human responsibility as caliphs. This shows that writing activities play a role as a medium for internalizing values, not just as a means of language expression.

**Table 2. Themes of Values That Appear in Student Writing**

Value Theme	Indications in Text
Responsibilities of the caliph	Normative argumentation
Trust in nature	Moral reflection
Ecological justice	Social criticism
Sustainability awareness	Long-term solutions

This table confirms that learning to write Arabic is able to be an effective pedagogical space to foster awareness of environmental values and ethics.

In terms of pedagogical interpretation, this change in attitude shows that writing activities that are designed reflexively are able to bridge the cognitive and affective dimensions of learning. The application of HOTS in Arabic teaching has been shown to enhance pedagogical practice, encouraging students to move beyond memorization to engage in

deeper cognitive processes such as analysis, evaluation, and creation (Maisaroh, 2022). This approach is in line with the values of Islamic education, which emphasizes the integration of knowledge with ethical and reflective thinking, as seen in the concepts of tafakkur and ta'aqul (thinking) in Islamic teachings (Ismail, 2020). In addition, the use of debate and argumentative writing as pedagogical tools has been effective in fostering HOTS, allowing students to engage critically and reflectively with the content, thereby internalizing the values of sustainability and ethical reasoning (Mokhtar, 2020). The development of HOTS-based modules and teaching strategies has also been shown to improve the pedagogical competence of Arabic teachers, allowing them to further facilitate the integration of these skills into their teaching practices. Overall, the integration of HOTS in Arabic language education not only enhances cognitive skills but also supports the internalization of sustainability values, demonstrating significant transformative potential in aligning educational practices with broader ethical and cultural goals (Che Amran & Abu Bakar, 2024; Isnanda et al., 2021).

The relevance of these findings with previous studies shows the important contribution of this study in expanding the scope of Arabic language pedagogy. While most previous studies have placed HOTS within the framework of cognitive strategies or learning methods, this study suggests that HOTS can be operationalized more meaningfully through the integration of ecotheological values. Thus, this research enriches the discourse of learning to write Arabic with a transdisciplinary perspective that connects language, values, and global issues of sustainability.

Overall, the results and discussion of this study confirm that the reconstruction of Arabic writing learning through the integration of Islamic ecotheological values and HOTS pedagogy is able to expand the function of language education from a linguistic orientation to a humanistic and ecological orientation. These findings are not only relevant to the development of Arabic pedagogical theories, but also provide practical implications for more contextual and sustainability-oriented learning designs.

## **Conclusion**

This section gives the conclusion for research done by the author and its contribution to the topic of this Journal. Authors are advised not to replicate conclusion by the abstract. This section states merely what the researcher thinks the data mean, and as such, should relate directly back to the problem or question stated in the introduction. This section should not offer any reasons more for those particular conclusions (*this should have been presented in the discussion sections*). By looking at only the introduction and conclusion sections, a reader should have known what the researcher has investigated and discovered even though the specific details of how the work was done unknown. This study concludes that the reconstruction of Arabic writing learning through the integration of Islamic ecotheological values and the pedagogy of Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) is able to expand the function of Arabic language education from mere linguistic mastery to intellectual, ethical, and ecological praxis. Learning to write that is designed thematically and reflectively is proven to encourage students to associate language with sustainability issues, develop analytical and critical reflection skills, and build moral awareness of the relationship between humans and nature. Thus, writing Arabic is no longer understood as an isolated academic activity, but as a medium of construction of meaning and internalization of values relevant to global challenges.

The novelty of this research lies in the formulation of a pedagogical framework that explicitly integrates the dimensions of language, Islamic ecotheology, and HOTS in learning to write Arabic. Unlike previous studies that tend to separate language pedagogy, thinking skill development, and value education, this study offers an integrative approach that positions ecotheological values as an ethical foundation as well as a substantive context for writing activities. This novelty is conceptual and pedagogical, as it presents a transdisciplinary perspective in the development of sustainability-oriented Arabic language education.

The theoretical implications of this study suggest that Arabic language pedagogy can be developed beyond structural and communicative paradigms towards a humanistic-ecological paradigm that places language as a means of reflection on global values and consciousness. Practically, the findings of this study provide a reference for lecturers and curriculum designers to develop reflective task-based and problem-based Arabic writing learning that is relevant to sustainability issues. In addition, in terms of education policy, this study emphasizes the importance of integrating sustainability values and HOTS in the

Arabic language education curriculum in Islamic educational institutions as part of the response to the global ecological crisis.

However, this study has limitations that need to be observed. This research was conducted in a qualitative context with limited participant coverage, so the findings produced could not be generalized widely. In addition, this study emphasizes more on the analysis of pedagogical processes and meanings, without measuring the long-term impact on changes in ecological attitudes and real student behaviors.

Based on these limitations, this study is expected to develop studies with a more diverse methodological design, including quantitative or mixed methods approaches, and involve different institutional contexts and levels of education. Advanced research can also explore the integration of ecotheology values in other Arabic language skills, such as reading and speaking, as well as examine the long-term impact of sustainability-based writing learning on the formation of students' ecological character and behavior.

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