

Modern Standard Arabic Attrition and State Stability: Why Prescriptive Arabic is Losing Ground to Arabī CSSA

اضمحلال اللغة العربية الفصحى واستقرار الدولة: لماذا فقدت الفصحى مكانتها لصالح اللسان العربي العام

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ABSTRACT

Recent quantitative research has established a statistically significant association between Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) attrition and rising state fragility across Arab League countries. Using the SPH-LENS framework and an Arabic Attrition Index (AAI), Ahmed and Shadi (2025) demonstrate that declines in Arabic's institutional role in education, science, and media precede increases in the Fragile States Index. However, their study inherits a conceptual ambiguity: it treats Arabic as identical with Modern Standard Arabic (MSA / al-'Arabiyyah al-Fuṣḥā (اللغة العربية الفصحى). Classical Arabic linguistic theory distinguishes *lisān* (language) from *lughah* (dialect), identifying *Fuṣḥā* as a historically privileged dialect rather than the Arabic language itself.

Drawing on Vernacularism, classical philology, and historical linguistics, this paper reinterprets the empirical findings by relocating the site of attrition from *Lisān al-'Arab* to *al-lughah al-fuṣḥā*. We argue that what is measured as "Arabic language attrition" is, in fact, the institutional retreat of an artificially fossilized written dialect imposed by medieval grammarians. Classical authorities — particularly Ibn Jinnī and Ibn Khaldūn — recognized the legitimacy of all Arabic dialects and anticipated grammars derived from living vernaculars.

Reframing Ahmed and Shadi's results through Vernacularism transforms the language-security narrative: the decline of *Fuṣḥā* does not indicate Arabic's death but rather the re-emergence of natural vernacular plurality. In the age of Artificial Intelligence, where computational systems learn from naturally occurring linguistic data, artificially maintained registers lack long-term viability. The future of Arabic vitality therefore lies in Arabī / Contemporary Standard Spoken Arabic (CSSA) as the authentic modern *Lisān al-'Arab*.

الخلاصة

أظهرت دراسات كمية حديثة وجود علاقة إحصائية دالة بين ما يُسمى "اضمحلال اللغة العربية" وارتفاع مستويات الهشاشة السياسية في دول جامعة الدول العربية. فقد قام الباحثان محمد شادي، ومصطفى أحمد (٢٠٢٥) بتطوير مؤشر لاضمحلال العربية (AAI) في إطار نموذج SPH-LENS، وأثبتا أن تراجع دور اللغة العربية في التعليم العالي، والنشر العلمي، والإعلام يسبق ارتفاع مؤشر هشاشة الدول. غير أن هذه الدراسة، على الرغم من صرامتها الإحصائية، تنطلق من افتراض مفاهيمي غير مفحوص، إذ تُساوي بين "اللغة العربية" أو "العربية الفصحى الحديثة (MSA)" واللسان العربي، متجاهلة التمييز التراثي بين العربي (Arabi) بوصفه لسانا جامعا للغات العرب (لغات الأمصار)، واللغة / اللغة بوصفها لهجة (بتعبير اليوم) أو نمطاً تعبيرياً مخصوصاً.

تنطلق هذه الدراسة من إطار المحلانية (Vernacularism) ومن نظريات اللسانيات التاريخية والفقه اللغوي العربي لإعادة تفسير نتائج دراسات الاضمحلال. وتذهب إلى أن ما جرى قياسه بوصفه "اضمحلالاً" أو "استنزافاً" للغة العربية ليس في الحقيقة سوى تراجع الهيمنة المؤسسية للعربية الفصحى الحديثة بوصفها لهجة (لغة) مكتوبة مصطنعة فرضها النحاة منذ القرون الأولى، لا تراجع لسان العرب بوصفه مجموع اللهجات (اللغات) العربية الحية.

ويستند البحث إلى مواقف كلاسيكية صريحة لعلماء العربية؛ فقد قرّر ابن جني أن "كل لغات العرب حجة"، وأكد ابن خلدون ضرورة استخراج (قواعد لسانية) من اللسان العربي المعاصر لا من لغة مضر القديمة. وتلتقي هذه الرؤية مع اللسانيات الحديثة التي ترى التغير اللغوي والاقتران والتبني اللغوي آليات طبيعية في تطوّر اللغات، لا مظاهر فسادٍ أو ضعف كما افترضت عقيدة "نقاء اللغة" التي ورثها الدرس النحوي التقليدي.

وعليه، فإن إعادة تأويل نتائج دراسات أمن اللغة تُظهر أن تراجع الفصحى لا يعني موت اللسان العربي، بل تحولاً في توزيع الوظائف بين أنماط التعبير، حيث تستعيد اللهجات (اللغات) العربية الحية مكانتها الطبيعية في التواصل والتعليم والإعلام. وفي عصر الذكاء الاصطناعي، الذي يتعلم من البيانات اللغوية الطبيعية لا من القواعد المفروضة، تصبح (اللغة) العربية المنطوقة المشتركة (العربي / اللسان العربي المعياري المعاصر CSSA) الامتداد الواقعي للسان العرب، بينما تقف "الفصحى" قدرتها على الاستمرار بوصفها نسقاً كتابياً مصطنعاً منفصلاً عن الاستعمال الحي.

تخلص الدراسة إلى أن زمن الذكاء الاصطناعي هو زمن اللسان العربي (Arabi) لا زمن الفصحى MSA، وأن ما يُرصد بوصفه "اضمحلالاً لغوياً" ليس إلا تصحيحاً تاريخياً لمسار اللسان العربي، وانتقالاً من سلطة النحو المعياري إلى حيوية اللسان الطبيعي.

Keywords**الكلمات المفتاحية**

لسان العرب، العربية الفصحى الحديثة، اضمحلال اللغة، أمن اللغة، التطور اللغوي التاريخي

Vernacularism, Lisān al-‘Arab, Modern Standard Arabic, language attrition, SPH-LENS

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1. INTRODUCTION

Ahmed and Shadi's (2025) empirical study represents the first large-N quantitative validation of the claim that Arabic language attrition predicts national fragility. Employing fixed-effects panel regressions across 22 Arab League states (2000–2025), they construct an Arabic Attrition Index (AAI) and demonstrate that increases in AAI significantly precede increases in the Fragile States Index, even after controlling for economic and governance variables.

While their statistical methodology is rigorous, their conceptualization of “Arabic” remains aligned with Modern Standard Arabic (MSA). This reproduces a long-standing ideological assumption inherited from post-classical grammatical tradition: that Fuṣḥā constitutes the Arabic language itself. Classical Arabic linguistic theory, however, distinguishes lisān (language) from lughah (dialect). The modern term *al-lughah al-‘arabiyyah al-fuṣḥā* thus transforms one dialect into the name of the entire language.

If Arabic vernaculars remain universally transmitted while only Fuṣḥā declines institutionally, current empirical measurements indicate dialect attrition, not language death. Recognizing this distinction fundamentally alters both linguistic interpretation and security-policy conclusions.

2. LISĀN AND LUGHAH IN CLASSICAL ARABIC THEORY

Classical Arabic lexicography consistently differentiates between lisān (language) and lughah (dialect). Works such as *Lisān al-‘Arab*, *Kitāb al-‘Ayn*, *Lughāt al-Qur’ān* (Ibn Ḥassānūn), and *Ma‘ānī al-Qur’ān* (al-Farrā‘) record dialectal variation rather than positing a single exclusive standard.

The Qur’ānic designation *bi-lisānin ‘arabiyyin mubīn* “بلسان عربي مبين” affirms a shared linguistic identity while allowing multiple dialectal realizations. The Prophetic ḥadīth of al-aḥruf al-sab‘ah “الأحرف السبعة” confirms that revelation itself accommodated dialect plurality.

Accordingly:

Lisān al-‘Arab = the totality of Arabic vernaculars (dialects | لغات العرب)

Fuṣḥā = one historically privileged dialect. (lughah | لغة)

3. IBN JINNĪ AND THE PRINCIPLE THAT ALL ARABIC DIALECTS ARE LINGUISTICALLY LEGITIMATE

Ibn Jinnī (d. 392 AH) provides the most explicit classical foundation for rejecting the monopoly of Fuṣḥā over the Arabic tongue. Ibn Jinnī's *al-Khaṣā‘iṣ* articulates explicit dialectal legitimacy:

“باب اختلاف اللغات وكلها حجة”

“وكيف تصرفت الحال فالناطق على قياس لغة من لغات العرب مصيب غير مخطئ، وإن كان غير ما جاء به خيراً منه”
(*al-Khaṣā‘iṣ*, Vol. 2, pp. 14–15).

“Chapter on the divergence of dialects: all of them are authoritative.”

“However speech unfolds, the speaker who follows the structural measure of any dialect of the Arabs is correct and not in error, even if another dialect may be more eloquent.”

(*al-Khaṣā‘iṣ*, Vol. 2, pp. 14–15)

This statement establishes three decisive principles.

First, every Arabic dialect (lughat al-‘Arab) constitutes a valid linguistic authority (ḥujjah). No single dialect possesses exclusive correctness.

Second, grammatical validity arises from the internal structure of the spoken dialect itself, not from an externally imposed prescriptive code.

Third, differences between dialects concern rhetorical preference, not linguistic legitimacy.

This position directly contradicts the later grammarians' doctrine that elevated one selected dialect — eventually crystallized as Modern Standard Arabic — into the sole legitimate form of Arabic. Ibn Jinnī's formulation confirms that Lisān al-ʿArab has always been a plurality of spoken dialects, each fully Arabic in its own right.

Crucially, Fuṣḥā was never a naturally spoken dialect of any community. It was a constructed literary register derived from selected poetic and Bedouin data, later frozen by prescriptive grammar and sustained through schooling and writing. Arabs, by contrast, have always spoken their lughāt, not Fuṣḥā. Therefore, what contemporary studies measure as "Arabic language attrition" cannot concern the living Arabic tongue; it concerns only the institutional written register of Fuṣḥā.

Reintroducing Ibn Jinnī's principle clarifies the object of the present study:

the ongoing attrition affects Modern Standard Arabic as a prescriptive written dialect, while Lisān al-ʿArab — the continuum of spoken Arabic vernaculars — remains fully alive and uninterrupted in transmission.

In this sense, current shifts away from Fuṣḥā do not represent corruption of Arabic but the reassertion of the natural dialectal order that Ibn Jinnī recognized a millennium ago.

4. IBN KHALDŪN AND THE CALL FOR A GRAMMAR DERIVED FROM LUGHAT AL-AMSAAR

Ibn Khaldūn (d. 808 AH) provides the clearest medieval anticipation of a **descriptive grammar of spoken Arabic**. In *al-Muqaddimah*, he explicitly distinguishes between the ancient poetic register of Arabic and the living vernaculars of the cities (lughat al-amsar لغات الأمصار), and calls for extracting grammatical rules from contemporary spoken usage rather than from archaic models. He writes:

"ولعلنا لو اعتنينا بهذا اللسان العربي لهذا العهد واستقرينا أحكامه نعتاض عن الحركات الإعرابية في دلالتها بأمر أخرى موجودة فيه تكون بها قوانين تخصها. "بولعلها تكون في أواخره على غير المنهاج الأول في لغة مضر"

(*al-Muqaddimah*, Vol. 1, p. 767).

"If we were to attend to the Arabic tongue of our present time and extract its rules, we would replace inflectional endings with other functional markers existing within it, producing grammatical laws particular to it. Its final form would differ from the original pattern of the Mudar dialect."

(*al-Muqaddimah*, Vol. 1, p. 767).

This passage establishes three critical points.

First, Ibn Khaldūn recognizes that the living Arabic tongue of his time was no longer the inflected language of early tribal poetry, but a spoken system operating without case endings.

Second, he identifies lughat al-amsar (urban vernaculars) as the proper empirical basis for grammatical description.

Third, he anticipates that a grammar derived from living speech would differ structurally from the earlier Mudar-based model imposed by the grammarians.

This is an explicit rejection of prescriptive reliance on historical dialects as normative models. Ibn Khaldūn thus formulates, six centuries before modern linguistics, the principle that grammar must be extracted from actual language use, not from inherited textual ideals.

His insight directly supports the present argument: Fuṣḥā is a historically fossilized written register, while Lisān al-ʿArab has always continued through spoken lughāt al-amsar. Contemporary Arabī / CSSA therefore represents not a break from Arabic tradition, but the realization of the descriptive grammatical project Ibn Khaldūn already envisioned.

In this light, the current institutional retreat of Fuṣḥā is not a sign of linguistic decay, but the long-delayed correction of a prescriptive system that Ibn Khaldūn himself regarded as historically contingent rather than linguistically absolute.

Despite Ibn Jinnī's affirmation of dialectal legitimacy and Ibn Khaldūn's call for grammars derived from living speech, later Arabic linguistic tradition moved in the opposite direction. Vernaculars (lughāt al-amsar) came to be viewed as inferior, corrupted, or unworthy of scholarly attention, while the grammarians' constructed Fuṣḥā was reified as "the Arabic language" itself. This inversion produced a lasting epistemic distortion: Arabs ceased to study their spoken vernaculars as the living realizations of one Lisān al-ʿArab, and instead treated them as deviations from a sacred norm. Consequently, any institutional weakening of Modern Standard Arabic is today misperceived as a weakening of Arabic as a whole. Yet what contemporary attrition indices actually capture is not the erosion of the Arabic tongue, but the retreat of artificial grammatical features introduced by the prescriptive tradition—notably case endings (i'rāb), tanwīn nounation, and the systematic reconfiguration of originally biliteral verb roots into triliteral templates. The current shift away from these imposed structures therefore signals not linguistic decay, but the gradual shedding of historically superadded grammatical constraints, allowing the natural spoken Lisān al-ʿArab to reassert its primary role.

5. VERNACULARISM, MODERN ARABIC LINGUISTICS, AND THE INHERITED MYTH OF FUṢḤĀ'S EXCLUSIVITY

The misinterpretation of Modern Standard Arabic attrition as Arabic language decline does not arise from empirical error, but from an inherited ideological framework concerning what counts as "real Arabic." For more than a century, formal education across Arab states has institutionalized a single linguistic doctrine: that al-lughah al-fuṣḥā is the sole legitimate

Arabic language, while spoken vernaculars are deviations, corruptions, or merely informal speech unworthy of scholarly or institutional recognition. This doctrine, embedded in school curricula, constitutional language policies, and media regulation, has normalized the belief that Fuṣḥā equals Arabic, and that vernaculars exist outside the domain of legitimate linguistic inquiry.

Contemporary Vernacularism and modern Arabic sociolinguistics challenge precisely this assumption. Vernacularism recognizes spoken dialects as the living realizations of Lisān al-‘Arab, not as defective offshoots of a superior norm. Modern linguistic research likewise treats spoken varieties as primary data for grammatical description and language vitality assessment. However, studies such as Ahmed and Shadi (2025) operate outside these linguistic paradigms. Coming from political economy and security studies rather than linguistics, the researchers adopt the inherited educational view in which Fuṣḥā is “the Arabic language,” and vernaculars are sociolinguistically irrelevant. Their framework thus reproduces, without critical examination, the prescriptive hierarchy established by medieval grammarians and reinforced by modern schooling.

This inherited myth has a direct methodological consequence. When Modern Standard Arabic loses ground in universities, media, or scientific publication, the researchers interpret this as “Arabic attrition,” because they have been trained to see Fuṣḥā as Arabic itself. The possibility that spoken Arabic remains fully alive, expanding, and functionally dominant does not enter the analytical frame, simply because vernaculars have been excluded from legitimacy in the educational and institutional worldview.

In this sense, the study does not merely measure language dynamics; it also unconsciously reflects the very grammatical ideology it inherits. The paper is written under the long shadow of the ancient grammarians’ project: to construct a single authoritative dialect and to marginalize all others. Vernacularism and modern Arabic linguistics expose this inheritance as a historical artifact rather than a linguistic necessity.

Recognizing this ideological background is essential for correcting the interpretation of the empirical data. The retreat of Fuṣḥā from institutional domains does not represent a loss of Arabic, but a weakening of the historically imposed hierarchy that once excluded the living vernaculars of Lisān al-‘Arab from legitimacy.

- Lisān: the living Arabic tongue.
- Lughāt: vernacular realizations.
- Fuṣḥā: a historically imposed prescriptive dialect.

Modern Standard Arabic is therefore not the Arabic language itself but a grammatically fossilized supra-dialect, sustained by institutional enforcement rather than natural intergenerational transmission.

6. METHODOLOGICAL INHERITANCE OF THE CLASSICAL “CORRUPTION OF LANGUAGE” PARADIGM

The empirical methodology adopted by Ahmed and Shadi (2025) is statistically rigorous, yet its conceptual foundation inherits an unexamined pre-modern linguistic ideology: *fasād al-lisān* (فساد اللسان), the belief that language change represents degeneration from an imagined pristine norm. Contemporary sociolinguistics and historical linguistics reject this assumption, viewing change as natural evolution (*al-taṭawwur al-lughawī al-tārīkhī*).

6.1 The Grammarians’ Purity Doctrine

Early Arabic grammarians privileged Lughah Quraysh, excluded lughat al-ḥaḍar (urban dialects), and relied primarily on kalām al-a‘rāb (Bedouin speech). This selection produced an ideology of linguistic purity where deviation became فساد اللسان. Modern Standard Arabic inherits this doctrine directly.

6.2 Methodological Consequence in Attrition Measurement

The Arabic Attrition Index operationalizes attrition through increased foreign borrowing, multilingual education, and scientific publication in English. This implicitly equates borrowing with loss — an assumption inherited from the purity paradigm. In modern historical linguistics, however, borrowing is evidence of linguistic vitality and adaptive evolution.

6.3 Disciplinary Context

Both Ahmed and Shadi originate from political economy and security studies rather than linguistics. Their quantitative modeling is robust, but their linguistic assumptions remain grounded in inherited purity ideology rather than contemporary linguistic science.

7. LANGUAGE EVOLUTION AND THE FALLACY OF “BORROWING AS DEFEAT

Historical linguistics demonstrates that no language survives without adoption. Ibrahim al-Samarra'i's foundational work on *التطور اللغوي التاريخي* establishes that vocabulary replacement, borrowing, and structural convergence are normal evolutionary mechanisms in all languages.

Arabic itself absorbed Persian administrative vocabulary, Greek scientific terms, and Aramaic religious lexicon. None of these processes constituted attrition; they expanded expressive capacity.

7.1 Structural Convergence: *ياء النسبة*

Arabic relational derivation (*ياء النسبة*) parallels English *-t* found in Iraq *--t*. Iraqi) and Persian *-t*. *فارسی - فارس* Such convergence reflects universal typological solutions rather than corruption.

7.2 Vocabulary Death and Language Vitality

Lexical turnover is a sign of vitality, not decline. Al-Samarra'i (1985) emphasizes that historical replacement of vocabulary is intrinsic to linguistic survival, not evidence of weakness.

Thus, interpreting lexical adoption as attrition misreads evolution as defeat.

8. REINTERPRETING THE EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

Ahmed and Shadi's AAI captures decline in the institutional use of Modern Standard Arabic. Vernacular Arabic remains universally transmitted, digitally dominant, and socially central. Therefore:

Empirical Arabic attrition = institutional retreat of *Fuṣḥā*.

The living Arabic tongue remains robust.

9. LANGUAGE SECURITY REINTERPRETED

State fragility correlates not with Arabic loss but with linguistic alienation produced by imposing a non-natural register in education and governance. The decline of *Fuṣḥā*'s monopoly reduces alienation and restores communicative continuity between institutions and citizens.

10. ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND THE END OF ARTIFICIAL REGISTERS

AI models learn from naturally occurring corpora. Artificially fossilized registers lacking living speech communities possess limited data ecology. Vernacular Arabic corpora now vastly exceed MSA corpora in digital space. This technological selection confirms Ibn Khaldūn's prediction: grammar follows living speech.

11. ARABĪ / CSSA AS THE REUNIFYING SPOKEN LANGUAGE OF THE ARABS

If the decline of Modern Standard Arabic represents the retreat of a prescriptive written register, the emergence of Arabī / Contemporary Standard Spoken Arabic (CSSA) represents the reconstitution of *Lisān al-ʿArab* in its natural spoken form. Arabī is not a newly engineered language, nor a standardized dialect imposed from above. Rather, it is the shared communicative convergence of contemporary Arabic vernaculars, shaped organically through inter-Arab mobility, satellite media, digital interaction, and pan-regional cultural exchange.

Unlike *Fuṣḥā*, which was never the native spoken language of any community, Arabī is built from the actual spoken repertoires of Arab societies. It therefore possesses immediate intelligibility, emotional resonance, and pragmatic efficiency. It restores what the prescriptive tradition disrupted: a common tongue grounded in lived speech rather than grammatical abstraction.

11.1 A Common Language Without Exclusion

Throughout modern Arab history, the insistence on *Fuṣḥā* as the sole legitimate Arabic paradoxically produced linguistic fragmentation. While all Arabs were told they shared one “official language,” none actually spoke it natively. Daily life proceeded in vernaculars that were excluded from education and institutional legitimacy. The result was a permanent diglossic fracture between home and school, citizen and state.

Arabī reverses this logic. It does not exclude any dialect; it incorporates them. It is a spoken standard formed by mutual accommodation across dialects rather than imposed uniformity. In doing so, it realizes Ibn Jinnī's principle that all *lughāt al-ʿArab* are legitimate, and Ibn Khaldūn's vision of grammar derived from living usage. Arabī thus offers the Arabs, for the first time since late antiquity, a truly shared spoken language rather than a shared written ideology.

11.2 A Humane Language for Education and Public Life

Curriculum design has long suffered from the unnatural gap between children's spoken vernaculars and the fossilized grammar of Fuṣḥā. This gap produces cognitive overload, early literacy frustration, and high attrition in language mastery. Arabī provides curriculum designers with a daily-life, humane, naturally acquired language for education — one that aligns with children's linguistic instincts rather than suppressing them.

Replacing prescriptive written complexity with naturally spoken grammar simplifies learning, accelerates literacy, and restores confidence in linguistic self-expression. Education ceases to be an initiation into an artificial code and becomes an extension of the learner's lived linguistic competence.

11.3 Reconnecting Arabic to Its Deep Linguistic Heritage

Arabī also reconnects Arabic to its pre-grammatical historical continuum. The Arabic tongue did not emerge in isolation; it evolved through contact with Sumerian, Aramaic, and Nabatean linguistic ecologies. These substratal inheritances shaped Arabic phonology, morphology, and semantic fields long before the grammarians codified Fuṣḥā. By embracing spoken continuities rather than textual fossilization, Arabī restores Arabic to its ancient Near Eastern linguistic ecosystem, where multilingual convergence was the norm rather than the exception.

In this sense, Arabī does not provincialize Arabic; it re-internationalizes it, reconnecting it to the broader family of Semitic and Near Eastern languages from which it historically drew vitality.

11.4 Building Bridges Across Arab Societies

A living shared spoken language strengthens social cohesion. Arabī enables direct oral communication across regions without requiring translation into artificial registers. It bridges the Maghreb and the Mashriq, the Gulf and the Levant, the diaspora and the homeland, through mutual intelligibility grounded in vernacular convergence. This is linguistic unity achieved through inclusion rather than standardization by decree.

In contrast, the insistence on Fuṣḥā as the only legitimate Arabic created unity in theory but alienation in practice. Arabī produces unity in practice.

11.5 Arabī in the Age of Artificial Intelligence

Digital ecosystems reward languages that generate massive naturally occurring data. Arabī already dominates Arabic digital communication: social media, video platforms, podcasts, informal writing, and speech technologies. AI systems trained on such data will inevitably privilege Arabī structures over prescriptive Fuṣḥā grammar. Computational selection thus accelerates the institutional shift already underway.

Arabī therefore becomes not only the spoken lingua franca of Arabs, but the computationally viable Arabic of the AI era.

12. CONCLUSION

The empirical findings of Ahmed and Shadi (2025) demonstrate a measurable retreat of Arabic from institutional domains such as higher education, scientific publication, and formal administration. Their statistical results are valid. What required correction was not their data, but the conceptual object to which the term *attrition* was applied.

Attrition in linguistic science does not denote death, corruption, or defeat. It denotes functional redistribution — the shifting of linguistic roles across registers, domains, and communicative ecologies. Languages do not disappear when one register loses dominance; they reorganize. When Latin lost administrative authority, it did not die — it transformed into Romance languages. When Classical Chinese lost its written monopoly, living Sinitic vernaculars expanded. In precisely the same way, what current research identifies as “Arabic language attrition” is in fact the institutional de-centering of Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), not the decline of Arabic as a living language.

The persistence of misinterpretation among Arabic-language scholars arises from a long inheritance of the grammarians' purity doctrine. For centuries, deviation from the selected Fuṣḥā norm was labeled *fasād al-lisān* — corruption of language. Borrowing, adoption, convergence, and innovation were framed as degeneration rather than evolution. This bias, originating in medieval prescriptive grammar, continues to echo in modern discourse whenever lexical borrowing or foreign-language influence is treated as evidence of Arabic weakness.

Yet historical linguistics has decisively shown that borrowing is not corruption; it is a survival strategy. Ibrahim al-Samarra'i's work on *al-taṭawwur al-lughawī al-tārīkhī* established that lexical replacement and structural convergence are universal mechanisms of linguistic vitality. Hajjaj's (2024) concept of linguistic adoption (*al-tabannī al-lughawī*) further demonstrates that languages exhibit adaptive intelligence: they adopt what enhances communicative efficiency and discard what no longer serves social function. To continue framing adoption as corruption is to cling to a pre-scientific ideology of linguistic purity.

Accordingly, Arab language scholarship must now recognize a fundamental reality:

Arabic has not been losing itself.

It has been recovering itself.

The decline of MSA's monopoly marks the end of an artificially fossilized written dialect imposed by grammarians. In its place, Arabī / Contemporary Standard Spoken Arabic (CSSA) has emerged as the natural supra-regional tongue of Arabs—rooted in vernaculars, learned effortlessly by children, sustained by digital media, and capable of full modern expression.

12.1 Arabī as a Remedy for Linguistic Alienation and State Fragility

Language-security research correctly observes that linguistic alienation correlates with institutional fragility. However, the source of alienation has never been the loss of Arabic; it has been the imposition of a non-native register as the sole legitimate language of education, law, and governance. When citizens are required to think, write, and negotiate public life in a language no community naturally speaks, a structural gap arises between state and society. This gap produces disengagement, low literacy outcomes, bureaucratic opacity, and weakened civic trust.

Arabī / CSSA resolves this structural contradiction. By aligning public language with the naturally acquired linguistic competence of citizens, it restores transparency between institutions and society. Governance becomes linguistically accessible; education becomes cognitively humane; media becomes participatory rather than didactic. Linguistic inclusion thus strengthens institutional legitimacy, which is the core variable in state stability models.

In this sense, Arabī is not merely a linguistic reform.

It is a socio-political stabilization mechanism.

12.2 Arabī and Pan-Arab Communicative Integration

Fuṣḥā promised Arab unity symbolically, but never achieved it practically, because it was no one's spoken language. Arabī, by contrast, achieves unity through mutual intelligibility grounded in vernacular convergence. It allows Iraqis, Moroccans, Levantines, Gulf Arabs, and diasporic communities to communicate orally without translation into artificial registers. This produces horizontal communicative integration, not merely vertical symbolic identity.

Where Fuṣḥā unified through authority,

Arabī unifies through participation.

12.3 Arabī in the Age of Artificial Intelligence

AI systems learn only from naturally occurring linguistic data. Registers without living speech communities cannot sustain viable data ecosystems. MSA, as a prescriptive written construct detached from spontaneous speech, faces inevitable computational marginalization. By contrast, Arabī / CSSA already generates massive corpora through social media, audiovisual content, messaging platforms, and speech interfaces. Technological selection therefore accelerates the sociolinguistic shift already underway.

Thus, the AI era is not the time of Fuṣḥā.

It is the time of Arabī.

12.4 From Fossilization to Restoration

What empirical attrition studies have detected is not a civilizational warning of Arabic disappearance, but an unmistakable signal that the historical experiment of prescriptive purity has reached its ecological limit. The future of Arabic unity, intelligibility, and cultural continuity lies not in preserving a fossilized register, but in documenting, standardizing, and empowering the living Lisān al-ʿArab in its contemporary spoken form.

Modern Standard Arabic is undergoing dialect attrition.

Lisān al-ʿArab remains fully alive.

Arabī / CSSA is the linguistic horizon of the AI age.

This is not language death.

It is linguistic restoration.

TABLE I. FUNCTIONAL REDISTRIBUTION IN THE ARABIC LINGUISTIC ECOLOGY

Domain	Prescriptive Era (Fuṣḥā)	Transitional Phase	Emerging Era (Arabī / CSSA)
Home communication	Vernaculars (illegitimate)	Vernaculars tolerated	Vernaculars recognized as Lisān
Education	Fuṣḥā imposed	Diglossic stress	Arabī-based curricula
Media	Fuṣḥā formal	Mixed registers	Arabī dominant
Governance	Fuṣḥā legal code	Institutional erosion	Arabī accessibility
Digital communication	Marginal	Expanding	Fully dominant
AI corpora	Limited	Insufficient	Massive and natural

TABLE II. LANGUAGE REGIME AND STATE STABILITY OUTCOMES

Language Regime	Linguistic Accessibility	Institutional Trust	Civic Participation	Stability Outcome
Prescriptive Fuṣḥā monopoly	Low	Weak	Limited	Structural fragility
Mixed diglossic regime	Medium	Partial	Uneven	Transitional instability
Arabi / CSSA integration	High	Strong	Broad	Institutional resilience

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