

# A Critical Survey of Arabic Literature and Linguistics on Educational System in Nigeria Universities

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## Abstract

This article, titled “*A Critical Survey of Arabic Literature and Linguistics in the Educational System of Nigeria*,” explores the significance of Arabic literature within Nigerian universities. Arabic literature has played a crucial role during both the pre-Islamic and Islamic eras. Furthermore, Arabic is one of the official languages recognized by the United Nations and is spoken by both Muslims and non-Muslims.

In Nigeria, Departments of Arabic are typically established within the Faculty of Arts, alongside Departments of Linguistics. These departments offer academic programs leading to BA, MA, and Ph.D. degrees in Arabic language and literature as well as linguistics. The primary objective of this article is to raise awareness about the importance of studying Arabic literature and linguistics in Nigerian universities.

A notable problem addressed by this study is the declining interest in Arabic literature, with many students opting for Islamic Studies instead. To address this, the researcher recommends fostering greater interest in Arabic literature and linguistics among students and encouraging parental support for such studies. The study adopts an analytical research methodology to achieve its objectives.

**Key words:** Arabic literature; Linguistics; Nigerian universities; Education; Arabic language

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Arabic literature and linguistics have played a significant role in the educational system of Nigeria. Many Nigerian universities offer programs in Arabic language and literature, graduating students with BA, MA, and Ph.D. degrees. For example, the Federal University Lokoja and Kogi State University have established Arabic and Linguistics departments within their respective Faculties of Arts.

It is important to distinguish between Arabic language and Islamic Studies, as the former focuses on linguistic and literary aspects while the latter emphasizes acts of worship (*Al-Ibadat*). However, in some Nigerian universities, Arabic is offered as a unit within broader departments. For instance, at the Federal University Lokoja, Arabic is part of the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies, while linguistics is a separate and fully established department.

The historical and linguistic significance of Arabic cannot be overstated, as it is the language of the Holy Qur'an. Despite its importance, there is a declining interest in studying Arabic literature in favor of Islamic Studies, posing a challenge to the discipline's development. This article seeks to highlight the value of Arabic literature and linguistics in higher education and propose measures to revive interest in these fields.

Like in Nigeria universities they have linguistics like LIN 101, phonetics, the course is an introduction to phonetics which is generally divided into three categories, and LIN 102 introduction to phonology this course is made for 100 level students offering Linguistics and the course is for second semester, and LIN 103 history of linguistics.

The course teaches students of linguistics about the knowledge of historical Development.

## 2. ARABIC LITERATURE IN PRE - ISLAMIC ERA

Arabic literature in pre - Islamic era has played a vital role in history of Arabic literature, the meaning of literature in that era means training of mortal conduct, or an invitation to a banquet, or is a word that describes the life of Humanities, and provides a good manner to humanities it trains mankind to have a good character, and how to live in a good condition with one another, it teaches moral, values and norms.

Arabic literature in pre - Islamic Era has been classified into two classes

- Poetry
- Prose

According to Historian, Arabic literature has been divided into many Eras:

- Pre - Islamic
- Islamic era
- The era of umayed
- The era of Abassid

Meaning of pre - Islamic Era, is that there are some particular person who lived in the era in Arab pendular before the Advent of Islam, During the period nothing like Islam, they live in a luxurious life, messenger of Allah has not sent to them, they drink alcohol, friend girls anyhow, eat any food anyhow, they don't know anything parting to (Al - halal) and (Al - Haram). But with the Advent of Islam they now knew the difference between (Al - halal) and (Al - Haram), ( Al - halal) means lawful while (Al - Haram) means unlawful.

There are many poets during pre - Islamic Era, and they composed poetry in Arabic language and the poetry that they composed is accordance to Arabic prosody. Some of poets played a vital role during the era.

The Name of the poets as follows:

- imru - kais Al - kindly
- zuhair bn Abi Salma
- Antara bn Shidadi
- Lebid bn Rabi'a
- Turfu bn Al - Abdu Al - Bakari
- Amru bn Khulsum Al - Taglaniy
- Nabiget - Al Zabyaniy

Significance of linguistics:

Linguistics is the scientific aspect of language and its structure including the study and learning of grammar, includes syntax and phonetics, a branches of linguistics includes the knowledge of sociolinguistics, dictology, psycholinguistics, and structural linguistics. Linguistics is called the science of language, the study of human capacity to communicate and organize thought using different tools.

Linguistics is the study or learning of human speech including the units nature of the structure and modification of language

Branches of linguistics:

- Literary linguistics
- Conversation Analysis
- Historical Linguistics
- Language Acquisition
- Morphology
- phonetics
- Phonology
- Pragmatics
- Semantics
- Sociolinguistics
- Syntax

By looking at these branches of linguistics, so when you look at Nigeria universities, you can see that all these branches have been taught from undergraduate programme to post graduate programme, by looking at Arabic language and literature all those branches were taught in undergraduate programme to post graduate programme, so by looking at Arabic literature and linguistics they were established in the same faculty, faculty of Arts, but when you look T Kogi state university, Anyigba, the faculty is called faculty of Arts and Humanities.

So Arabic literature and linguistics were very important in aspect of Humanities, because by looking at those branches, they taught human being how you can communicate according in Arabic language, and the two courses teaches human being how to speak a good Arabic language and English language, Without knowledge of these branches, effective communication in either English or Arabic becomes challenging..

## 3. MORPHOLOGY

Is the study of the internal structure of words and forms, a study of part of linguistics. The term morphology is a Greek and is a make up of morph- meaning shape form, and Ology which means the study of something.

Morphology is a sub - discipline of linguistics or a branch of linguistics vwad called or named in 1859 by a person well known as German Linguist who devoted his time to study this branch of linguistics, the man has played a vital role in the area of morphology.

## 4. PHONETICS

The word phonetics means the study of the learning of the speech, and good sounds or voices, and their physiological production and acoustic good qualities.

### 4.1 Articulatory Phonetics

It is a traditional or natural way of explaining speech sounds in terms of the movement of vocal organs involved in their production or discussion. An essential component in producing clear speech is the lungs, which play a vital role as part of the respiratory system.

## 4.2 Phonology

The word phonology is one of the branches of linguistics that studies and teaches how language had been systematically arranged and organized, is the study of the sound system of a language, or is a systematic use of phonetically grant material or phonetic material within a particular language closely syntax and semantics.

## 4.3 Semantics

Is one of the branches of linguistics that had a relationship with a logic, it deals with matters of affairs such as sense and reference, lexical Semantics.

Is the study, and meaning of the historical and psychology study and the categorization of changes on the importance of word or forms.

## 4.4 Syntax

The word syntax refers to an arrangement or organization of words and phrases in a specific order. Or is about what word comes before and after another word. Meaning the word that comes first and last.

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## 5. SOCIOLINGUISTICS

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Sociolinguistics is to descriptive of the effect of any of some area of the society or an environment, which involves cultural norms expectations, and some context, on the usage of English language it also involve in the area of sociology of language, is also a branch of linguistics that also deals with the study and learning of language. It has two branches Namelu internionist and variationist sociolinguistics.

Impact of Arabic literature in Nigeria universities:

Indeed Arabic literature had played a vital role in Nigeria universities, because Department of Arabic language and Islamic studies award a certificate in BA, MA and Ph,D in Arabic language literature, Arabic literature is written both prose and poetry, in Arabic language is called (Adad - Al - Araby).

We have five periods of Islamic literature:

### 5.1 Per - Islamic period

- Early Islamic period: that is the period that the revelation began, when Allah sent an angel Jibril to the Holy prophet Muhammad, it involves the literature of the Holy prophet Muhammad

### 5.2 Abbasid period

In Nigerian universities, poetry is taught as a course at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. This course aims to provide students with knowledge of Arabic poetry from the pre-Islamic and Islamic eras. Additionally, it introduces students to prominent poets and their biographies, helping them appreciate the historical and cultural significance of Arabic poetic traditions.

In some Nigeria universities the lecturers teach students some poems been composed by Nigeria poets,

like in University of Ilorin they teach students a poetry been composed by Sheikh Adam Al- Ilorin, like in the northern universities in Nigeria they teach students poem composed by Nigeria poets, like Wazir Junaid, Sheikh Nasir Kabara they used a book titled: Harakatu Lugstul Arabiya. And students write their projects by selecting the poetry been composed by Nigerian poets, when you go back to ABU, Zaria many students write their project thesis and dissertation about a poem been composed by Sheikh Yusuf Abdullahi Lokoja, and when you also go back to Prince Abubakar Audu University the same, and the same thing in federal university, Lokoja.

Arabic literature has a powerful renaissance in the late 19th century. The Holy Qur'an which is the Book of Almighty Allah was revealed in Arabic Language. Arabs themselves in Al - Nadim's Fibrhist, written in 1988 AD, the author catalogue is well known as book in arise on the subjects of philosophy history, poetry, theology, law philosophy science, magic.

Linguistics is the scientific study of language. It involves the systematic investigation of the properties of languages and their components. Linguistics is not limited to the study of sounds, grammar, and meaning; it also explores the history of languages, how both adults and children acquire linguistic knowledge, and how languages are used and practiced. Additionally, linguistics has connections with the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences.

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## 6. CONCLUSION

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Linguistics emphasize that the used of linguistics idea in the field that can help the students in Nigeria universities to improve their level of understanding, and provide them ability to communicate between themselves in lecture room or outside the lecture room.

Arabic lecturers in the universities in Nigeria is a wonderful course, it enable the students to know about Arabic literature in pre- Islamic era, and also poets in pre-Islamic era.

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## 7. FINDING

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The federal government with collaboration with state government to build more lecturer room in Department of linguistics in all universities in Nigeria universities.

Students were not ready to learn and study Arabic literature in the Nigeria universities in Nigeria.

Parents attitude towards learning and teaching of Arabic literature and linguistics in all universities in Nigeria

Inadequate textbooks In Departmental library in Department of Arabic language and Islamic studies in kogi state university, Anyigba, and also in the Department of linguistics, Federal university Lokoja.

Inadequate teaching staffs and non teaching staffs in Department of Arabic and Department of Arabic and linguistics in many universities in Nigeria

people's didn't value Arabic literature and linguistics, people's believed if you read or studied Arabic language and literature you will remain as a teacher or a lecturer.

Government attitude toward the study and learning of Arabic language and literature in Nigeria universities.

Environmental factor in study of Arabic literature and linguistics, it affect literature and learning of Arabic literature and linguistics in Nigeria universities.

Socio- cultural factors, is one of the factors that affect the study and learning of Arabic literature and linguistics in Nigeria universities.

Lack of readiness, students and parents they are not ready to learn Arabic literature and linguistics in Nigeria universities.

Suggestions and recommendation:

The researcher recommend the following:

Parents should be sending their children to study Arabic literature and linguistics right from their Junior secondary school up to university.

Federal government and state government should supply enough textbooks to the Department of Arabic language and Department of linguistics.

Lecturers in Department of Arabic language and literature should be ready to face inadequate students in the Department of Arabic, because peoples are not ready

to study Arabic language and literature. They are running away from Arabic to Islamic studies.

parents and students should not underate Arabic language and literature, they should value the language.

lecturers should try to teach all the branches of Arabic literature and linguistics, they should make sure that they cover the course outline, so that the students should be a material in their future.

Lecturers should comply with the course allocation, and study it carefully.

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