

The Role of Orality in Classical Arabic Literary Criticism: A systematic Literature review

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Abstract

This systematic literature review explores the role of orality in classical Arabic literary criticism about the transmission, interpretation, and preservation of texts. Through a close reading of the scholarship produced between 2000 and 2023, what follows is an argument that maintains oral traditions of Arabic literature as integral to written forms. It shows how orality has been highly instrumental in developing religious texts, such as the Quran, and how orality could sustain cultural identity through oral poetry, folklore, and the different usages of Arabic dialects. Underlined by the reviewed author, qualitative methodologies dominate this area of scholarship and provide profound insights into the details of orality. At the same time, the possibility of exploring broader patterns is limited. These findings particularly encourage more diversified approaches, both quantitative and interdisciplinary, that could add to the improvement of understanding. This review generally contributes to the ongoing academic discourse by showing orality's persisting influence on classical Arabic literature and its evolving modern role within digital contexts.

Keywords: Orality, Classical Arabic Literary Criticism, Text Transmission, Cultural Preservation, Oral Traditions.

Orality in Arabic literature is deeply rooted in the historical context of the Arabic-speaking world, which was dominated by oral traditions until written texts gained precedence. The most crucial role of the oral tradition was to mediate between cultures being passed along; it allowed the transmission, broadly speaking, of knowledge, values, and artistic expression in general. Ramadhan et al. (2022) shed light on the

dual nature of commentary studies within Muhammadiyah, with a simultaneous embrace of written and oral traditions—a reflection of the general Arabic literary criticism scene, where oral forms coexisted with written texts throughout history. The oral tradition facilitated the transmission of works and the critical frameworks from which such works were analyzed and appreciated.

The role of orality continues with the proper linguistic features of Arabic, represented by a complex diglossic situation where it gets divided into the following: Spoken Arabic-vernacular and Literary Arabic-Modern Standard Arabic-fend for different communicative functions, and this linguistic duality has its implications for literary criticism. Saiegh-Haddad (2003) reflects on how the linguistic distance between these varieties' influences reading acquisition and comprehension, where the interaction of spoken and written forms gives distinction in critical reading. In this diglossic environment, a critical direction is essential, which may also consider the oral origins of so many literary genres are considered since critics have to engage both spoken and written Arabic in their respective works.

Besides, the oral tradition has played a positively important role in Arabic literature's aesthetic and thematic development. This is well-attested in employing oral techniques in classical Arabic poetry and prose, such as repetition, parallelism, and rhythmic patterns. Edwards (2023), in turn, points out that oratory and oral performance have reflected in the production of works, especially within the perspective given through the *Nahḍa*, where new meanings were given to traditional forms and innovated upon. This integration of old and new modalities of knowledge production underlines the dynamic nature of Arabic literary criticism, which has to keep in mind the oral heritage constituting the contemporary practice.

The relationship between orality and literacy in Arabic literature mirrors other vital questions about text authenticity and authority. Nobili 2017 mentioned that oral traditions have become perceived as authentic modes of apprehension in which history and culture are obtained; this position sometimes eclipses the rich manuscript traditions that evolve alongside oral forms. This would invite a tautological relationship between orality and literacy, one which is crucially relevant to the understanding brought about by literary critics as they grapple with how the oral

heritage of a text influences its interpretation and reception. The duality between orality and writing is commonly reflected in critical discourse on Arabic literature; in most cases, scholars working with the literature try to grapple with the implications of both oral and written traditions in their various analyses.

Apart from aesthetic and historical dimensions, cognitive aspects of orality also represent a dimension of interest in literary criticism. Scholarship by Schiff and Saiegh-Haddad (2018) underlines the importance of phonological and morphological awareness in reading an Arabic text and grasping its meaning, especially in a diglossic context. This cognitive perspective thus brings into sharp focus oral skills as the very bedrock of literacy development; the ability to engage with oral forms provides an impetus to deal critically and interpretively with literary works. Thus, the literary critic must also be attuned to the cognitive processes at play in handling Arabic literature's oral and written forms.

More specifically, the influence of orality on Arabic literature further elucidates specific genres and forms of criticism. For example, the oral tradition of storytelling had a significant impact on both the structures of narration and thematic content in the novel and poetry of Arabic literature. According to Tarabya et al. (2021), processing printed words in Literary Arabic and Spoken Arabic evidences deep-seated linkages between the forms and finally puts a literary critic given the oral dimensions of narrative construction. Such an interplay of oral storytelling and written literature enriches critical discourse by inviting scholars to explore how oral traditions inform contemporary ones in literary practices.

The role of orality in Arabic literary criticism is not confined to the new traditional forms, reaching into modern and contemporary literature. This restored interest in the oral traditions within contemporary Arabic literature reflects the more significant cultural movement of recovering and celebrating the lost oral

heritage of the Arab world. As Hussien's work illustrates, the effect of bilingualism on Arabic literacy carries an important implication for understanding the oral grounds on which literary practices lay since these further how literature is produced and consumed even today. This ongoing dialogue between orality and literacy within Arabic literature invites critics to account for the evolving nature of literary forms and cultural significance.

A comprehensive literature review can indicate the lacuna in the literature, systematize the existing knowledge, and provide clues regarding additional research and professional activities that may be conducted in the area. The present review concerns the critical role of orality in classical Arabic literary criticism- a juncture among oral traditions, literary expressiveness, and critical analysis. This study, therefore, intends to undertake a systematic review of the literature on orality's effect on classical Arabic literary criticism to find critical gaps in the understanding and existing areas of convergence. More specifically, the following questions form the basis of this review:

RQ: What is the role of orality in shaping classical Arabic literary criticism, and how are factors such as historical context, cultural practices, and linguistic traditions linked to this relationship?

The present study will tackle the following questions directly and provide a comprehensive and updated overview of the relationship between orality and literary criticism in the classical Arabic tradition. It also embarks on building up some theoretical frameworks that academics undertaking research and practicing scholarship in this domain should pursue. The structure of the remainder of the paper is as follows. The literature review methodology regarding the theoretical and conceptual framework is reviewed; an analysis and synthesis of the review findings are then undertaken. The study concludes with an overarching conclusion and a discussion of areas for future research.

Research Methodology

Therefore, the following protocol details the process to be followed in a systematic literature review. This paper aims to establish the function of orality within classical Arabic literary criticism. This review methodology is of the essence to reduce the risk of researcher bias and analyses headed towards findings based on preconceived expectations of researchers. So, Kitchenham et al. explain, 2002. It outlines the background and research questions, the selection criteria of the studies, the search strategy, quality assessment, and data extraction and synthesis of relevant primary studies. Considering these elements, the first part of the paper extensively debated the research topic and background. The remaining methodological aspects regarding review-study selection, quality assessment, and synthesis of findings are covered in the following sections.

Search Strategy and Databases Used

This inclusive search strategy involves automated and manual approaches to investigate the relationship between orality and classical Arabic literary criticism. Automatic searching was done using pre-set keywords to answer the research questions set for this systematic literature review. Following the guidelines by Kitchenham et al. (2002), our approach began with an automated search for primary sources, followed by a manual search to ensure full literature coverage. The significant databases considered in this study included Scopus, ISI Web of Knowledge, and Wiley Online Library. Scopus and ISI, Web of Knowledge, are two of the largest sources of peer-reviewed academic journals that the humanities and social sciences desperately need. Wiley Online Library is hosted by the well-known publisher Wiley, which hosts many academic article collections, books, and journals in diverse fields like literature and linguistics. Put together; these databases accounted for an expansive and valid source selection that was relevant to orality issues in classical Arabic literary criticism.

A combination of keywords and keywords was used singly and in combination, with Boolean operations "AND" and "OR" for refining the search. Key terms included "orality," "oral tradition," "classical Arabic literature," "literary criticism," "oral narrative," and "oral transmission." These were combined with other auxiliary terms like "scholarly interpretation," "historical context," "cultural practices," "preservation of oral traditions," and "literary heritage." All these search terms were adapted, one by one, so that the review covered all the different aspects of orality's influence on classical Arabic literary criticism. The elaboration of the structured search strategy provided a systematic way of investigating this relationship and assisted in identifying critical studies and trends within the literature. Table 1 gives an overview of various stages of this methodology in searching to comprehensively depict the process leading to meeting the effective and efficient strategy for this review.

Table 1 describes a research methodology for developing an effective search strategy. This model is made up of elements such as input factors, mediating mechanisms, outcome variables, moderating influences, and contextual factors that deepen the understanding of the role of orality within the critical discourse of classical Arabic literary criticism and may help to frame the search and analysis of relevant literature for this topic. Input factors are individual factors, such as linguistic competence, personal experience, and critics' erudition, which support their interpretation of oral traditions. Cultural and historical factors prevailing in society through cultural impressions, which assist in preserving and passing on oral traditions to the current generation, are also decisive in setting trends in literary criticism.

The mediating mechanisms include factors like oral transmission techniques, which involve methods of oral transmission that affect classical Arabic literature from within, and scholarly interpretation, where the critics mediate the relationship between the oral and the written traditions. Another important mechanism that can be considered is the interaction between oral and written forms, a factor fostering critical discourse and enriching textual analysis from a blend of both oral and written traditions. Other dependent variables that might be used within this model include the effects of orality on literary criticism and the preservation of the Arabic literary heritage. Orality's impact on criticism serves to reveal how the oral traditions shape not only the critical frameworks but also the evaluative standards at play in the classical Arabic literature; preservation of the literary heritage underlines orality's meaning regarding the persistence and transmission of the richness occurring within the canon to successive generations.

This model considers the moderating implications of scholarly authority and the influence of institutions. Scholarly authority is, of course necessary for endorsement or in supplanting the value of the oral traditions. On the other hand, educational institutions and formal training influence recognition and ways of orality in literary studies. At last, the model considers contextual variables like historical and cultural settings, which synopsis estimates orality at various times and places and defines its role within classical Arabic literary criticism. Given the different components considered, this research model provides a sound framework for evaluating the orality relationship to literary criticism and factors contributing to an effective search strategy in a systematic literature review.

Table 1. Study Model for Attaining an Efficient Search Strategy.

Number	Phase Title	Phase Description
1	Input Factors	Individual Factors: Personal traits, linguistic skills, and expertise of scholars that shape their approach to oral traditions and literary criticism in classical Arabic literature. Cultural-Historical Factors: The cultural, social, and historical contexts that influence the preservation, transmission, and interpretation of oral traditions in literary criticism.

2	Mediating Mechanisms	<p>Oral Transmission Techniques: These methods and practices preserve and pass down oral traditions, enhancing literary interpretation.</p> <p>Scholarly Interpretation: The role of scholars in interpreting oral literary texts, influencing their significance in literary criticism.</p> <p>Interaction between Oral and Written Forms: The dynamic relationship between orality and written texts, promoting deeper critical analysis.</p>
3	Outcome Variables	<p>Orality's Influence on Criticism: The impact of oral traditions on shaping literary criticism and evaluative frameworks in classical Arabic literature.</p> <p>Preservation of Literary Heritage: The role of orality in maintaining the integrity and continuity of classical Arabic literary traditions.</p>
4	Moderating Factors	<p>Scholarly Authority: The influence of leading scholars and critics in endorsing or challenging oral traditions in classical literary analysis.</p> <p>Institutional and Educational Influence: The role of educational institutions and formal training in shaping the recognition of orality in literary criticism.</p>
5	Contextual Factors	<p>Historical and Cultural Contexts: The influence of historical events and cultural norms on the role of orality in shaping classical Arabic literary criticism.</p>

Subsequently, we conducted a manual search through forward and backward searching to follow references from primary studies. This process, which Watson & Webster (2002) refer to as "snowballing," is popularly applied to follow up relevant literature systematically and thoroughly, even when it would inadequately emerge in the output of the automated search. A retrospective search of the references of the already collected papers has been conducted, and some relevant studies have found that the automated search had not been retrieved. The forward search confirmed results from referenced studies, extended some aspects, and provided complementary information. Research was organized using Mendeley software, which allowed us to manage the studies and weed out duplicates.

It thus followed the guidelines reviewed by Kitchenham et al. (2002) and contained three major phases: planning, execution, and documentation. These phases encompassed various sub-components, including formulating the review question, identifying the research methodology, establishing inclusion and exclusion criteria, conducting a quality assessment of studies, and synthesizing evidence to address the research inquiry. The integration of backward and forward search techniques and automated search capabilities allowed for a comprehensive examination of the relevant literature on the role of orality in classical Arabic literary criticism.

During the initial analysis, a verification process was conducted to eliminate duplicate data. Following this, the abstracts of the remaining studies were reviewed according to the inclusion criteria. For those papers deemed relevant, we carefully examined and condensed the methodology and discussion sections, paying particular attention to the impact of orality on literary criticism. An open coding approach was employed, leading to an inductive content analysis.

The selection process for articles is visualized in Figure 1. Initially, 1084 articles were identified: 162 from ISI Web of Knowledge, 692 from Scopus, and 230 from Wiley Online Library. The second step involved eliminating 27 duplicate articles across databases. In the third step, we reviewed the abstracts of 1057 articles, assessing their eligibility based on the inclusion criteria, which led to the exclusion of 812 articles. This left 245 articles for further evaluation. A detailed review of these papers' introduction, methodology, and discussion sections resulted in the exclusion of an additional 24 articles. After applying the final filter, 65 articles were excluded as irrelevant upon full reading, leaving 33 articles that fully met the inclusion criteria.

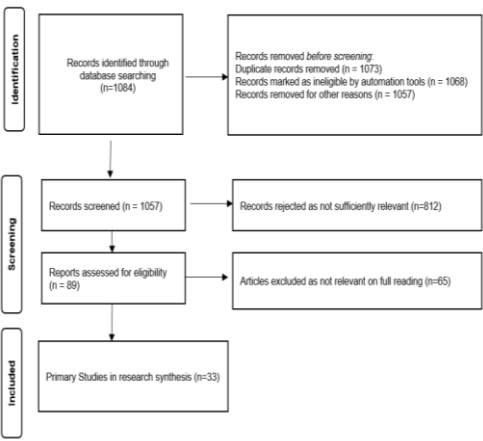


Figure 1: PRISMA Flow chart for SLR included searches of databases and registers only.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The inclusion and exclusion criteria ensure that every piece of primary research selected for this review is relevant and significant to investigating orality's role in classical Arabic literary criticism. This literature review aims to understand how orality influences the formation and evolution of literary criticism in classical Arabic literature. Table 2 outlines the inclusion and exclusion criteria used in this review.

To be included, studies had to be published in peer-reviewed journals between 2000 and 2023, and they had to focus on empirical or non-empirical research exploring the connection between orality and classical Arabic literary criticism. Those eligible for study must focus on the oral tradition's impact on critical approaches, use confident and accurate methods to test the effect of orality on critical interpretation and center their study around texts or practices relevant to classical Arabic literature. Such papers must involve human subjects, namely, thinkers, critics, or literary historians, and be published in Arabic or English. This included the exclusion from consideration of studies that did not relate to the relationship between orality and classical Arabic literary criticism or whose methods for determining such were unreliable.

Other excluded studies involved oral traditions outside of the context of Classical Arabic Literature or those dealing with subjects other than human participants through computational modeling simulations. Publications in any language other than Arabic and English were also excluded. During the review, every piece of literature was sifted using inclusion criteria. The application of clear and consistent criteria for the selection of the studies addressing the research questions helped to reduce potential bias. Evaluating each study against the same criteria and documenting the outcome made the review's conclusions transparent. This was achieved through the collaboration of the research team members throughout the process for consistency and accuracy. Appendix A shows that the extraction process represented recording all the relevant information obtained from the 33 primary studies.

A data extraction form was designed to reduce any kind of bias; key columns included study ID, title, and authors of the study, year of publication of the study, key findings, methodology adopted, paper type, sources of data, and title of journal publishing the study.

Following the systematic review, 33 primary studies have been selected to feature in the in-depth study on orality in classical Arabic literary criticism. These studies have been selected for their relevance, importance, and potential impact on the research questions. They have been published in recognized and peer-reviewed journals.

Study Quality Assessment (QA)

Table 2 presents the QAC used for the selected studies addressing orality in classical Arabic literary criticism. This table guarantees the research is relevant, reliable, and methodologically adequate. QAC1: The study addresses the features of orality within the framework of literary criticism. QAC2: The aspect of orality as a shaping factor for critical concepts in classical Arabic literature. QAC3 checks whether the relationship between orality and literary criticism is given, whereas QAC4

verifies the appropriateness of the research context, be it historical, cultural, or literary. Finally, QAC5 concerns the exactness and reliability of the methodology and results. All these will help maintain the quality and relevance of the studies in the systematic literature review.

Of the papers selected, a ranked quality system was applied whereby full, medium, and low were rated for any criteria. For a paper that fully satisfied the component of the quality criterion, a yes score of 1 was given, while a score of 0.5 was given to those where only some of the components were met. If a paper did not satisfy the criterion, a zero score was given in line with the methodology by Nidhra et al. 2013. Scoring was done such that the maximum a paper could score was 5, while the lowest was 0. To that end, high-quality papers scored between 4 and 5 points, medium-quality papers scored between 3.0 and 3.5, and low-quality papers scored 2.5. The findings from this critical evaluation resulted in the identification of 33 research articles, which, based on their quality, were categorized as follows: 12% low quality, 42% medium quality, and 46% high quality. Categorizing them in this manner helped ensure the reliability and relevance of the studies included in this review.

Table 2. Quality assessment criteria (QAC) list.

Criteria No.	Quality Criteria
QAC1	Does the research examine the characteristics of orality in classical Arabic literary criticism?
QAC2	Does the research explore how orality influences the development of critical concepts in classical Arabic literature?
QAC3	Is the relationship between orality and classical Arabic literary criticism clearly and accurately defined?
QAC4	Is the research context (historical, cultural, or literary) appropriately specified?
QAC5	Are the research methodology and results clearly described and reliably presented?

Results Analysis

Figure 2 shows the chronological distribution of critical studies over the years, illustrating the

number of publications per year from 2010 to 2023. The data reveals fluctuations in research activity within this period. 2012 marks the highest number of publications, with six studies indicating a peak interest or focus on the topic. There are notable declines after 2012, with only two publications in 2015 and 2016, indicating a lull in research output. Following this dip, the trend begins to stabilize, with the number of publications fluctuating between two and three per year from 2017 to 2023. The consistent publication count of three studies in 2022 and 2023 suggests renewed and sustained scholarly interest in recent years. Overall, the figure highlights critical periods of research focus, with peaks in 2012 and a relatively stable output in the later years. This pattern may suggest periods of heightened academic discourse followed by more moderate but steady interest in the subject.

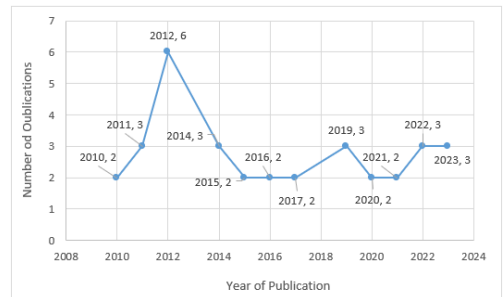


Figure 2. Distribution of the critical studies chronologically.

Figure 3 illustrates the distribution of publications across three data providers: Scopus, ISI, and Wiley. Most of the studies, with a total of 25 publications, were sourced from Scopus, making it the most dominant data provider in this review. On the other extreme of the scale, ISI had the least number, amounting to only two studies in total, and hence, this source contributed very minimally. Wiley supported a moderate number, issuing six studies toward the overall data pool. This distribution indicates a heavy reliance on Scopus as the primary source for academic research in this systematic review. At the same

time, Wiley was another excellent contributor, and ISI thus played only a minor role in compiling the literature.

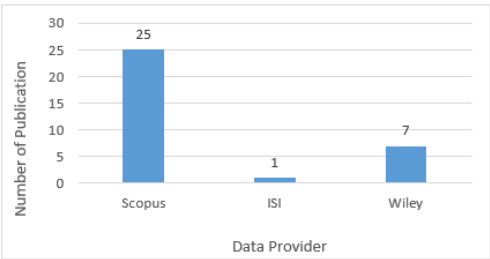


Figure 3. Distribution of the Data Provider.

Figure 4 shows the distribution of methods adopted in the studies that make up the systematic review. Moreover, as would be apparent from the data, the top publications- just over 20-are for qualitative studies, indicating an extreme preference towards the qualitative methods while attempting to explore orality through classical Arabic literary criticism. By contrast, quantitative studies are rarer, with only a few publications, which would state that numerical and statistical approaches in this area are put to very sparse use. A few studies employed a mixed-methods approach involving qualitative and quantitative strategies; equally, this shows the integration of diverse methods on a minuscule scale. The figure highlights the predominance of qualitative research, with minimal quantitative and mixed methods representation.

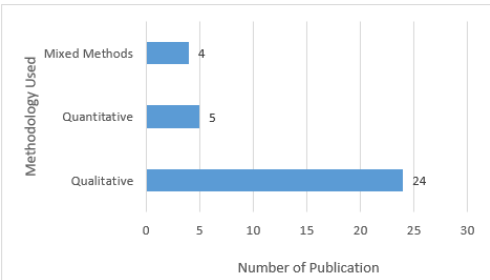


Figure 4. Distribution of the Studies Methodology Used.

Orality and the Influence on Classical Arabic Literary Criticism

This analysis teases how oral traditions have informed classical Arabic literary criticism. Scholars in this section explore elements of orality, such as the role of oral traditions in the transmission of texts, relationships with written traditions, and how this shape literary interpretation in the classical Arabic contexts outlined in Table 3. The studies in this thematic section underscore the profound influence of orality on classical Arabic literary criticism. Dutton (2012) provides a basic understanding of how oral transmission of the Qur'an, specifically through the 'seven ahru' hadith, formed its textual variations to show the deep interconnectedness of oral recitations and the written form of the Qur'an. Gezer (2019) discusses the evolution of oral culture to written culture in the Qur'an, showing how oral practices informed the meaning of the written text.

Apart from religious texts, Yaman (2021) critiques the use of modern Western theories on pre-Islamic Arabic poetry and insists that understanding the oral nature of this poetry is a sine qua non for grasping the same. Altwaiji (2023) furthers the discussion by exploring Yemeni folk literature, showing how oral poetry preserves cultural identity and historical narratives, further underscoring the constitutive role of orality in shaping cultural memory. Tobi - 2012, discusses how oral recitation influenced the first Judeo-Arabic Bible translations. Gintsburg - 2017, talks about "wa-ma" in Moroccan oral poetry as a syntactically significant particle. In this respect, the previous articles underline the interaction between oral linguistic traditions and written texts, giving quite a vivid view of the linguistic impact of orality upon classical Arabic literature.

Enunciations on the role of orality in religious transmission are continued by Murata (2011), who researches how the memory of Prophet Muhammad has been conserved in oral traditions, and by Olalekan Sanni (2012), who discusses the Qur'an and its Biblical subtext in

light of oral transmission. Al Shlowiy (2022) broadens this to the dissemination of Arabic as a religious lingua franca in the Asia-Pacific region and demonstrates how oral recitation keeps Arabic *living* viable in its religious function in large swaths of the non-Arabic-speaking world. In sum, all these works together demonstrate that

orality plays an essential role in the transmission and preservation of texts and in shaping the structure and interpretation of classical Arabic literature. This is attested to through religious texts, poetic forms, and cultural narratives; hence, the importance of orality in classical Arabic literary criticism.

Table 3. Studies on Orality and its Influence on Classical Arabic Literary Criticism.

Reference	Study Focus	Key Contribution
Dutton (2012)	'Seven ahruf' hadith and Qur'an's textual variation.	Highlights the influence of oral transmission on the Qur'an's early textual variations.
Yaman (2021)	Western literary theories in pre-Islamic poetry.	Examines limitations of applying modern theories to pre-Islamic Arabic poetry, emphasizing orality.
Gezer (2019)	Qur'an's oral culture and its written form.	Explores how oral traditions influenced the development and interpretation of the Qur'an's written form.
Altwaiji (2023)	Oral traditions in Yemeni folk literature.	Investigates how oral poetry preserves cultural identity and historical memory in Yemeni literature.
Tobi (2012)	Judeo-Arabic Bible translations and linguistic features.	Analyzes the impact of oral recitation on linguistic structures in early translations.
Murata (2011)	Oral transmission of Prophet Muhammad's memory.	Examines how oral traditions preserved the memory of Prophet Muhammad in Islamic culture.
Olalekan Sanni (2012)	Qur'an's Biblical subtext and its relation to Jewish/Christian traditions.	Explores how oral traditions connect the Qur'an with Jewish and Christian scriptures.
Ginsburg (2017)	The role of "wa-ma" in Moroccan oral poetry.	Discusses the linguistic significance of the particle "wa-ma" in Moroccan oral poetry.
Al Shlowiy (2022).	Arabic language as a religious lingua franca in the Asia-Pacific.	Explores how oral recitations maintain Arabic's religious role in non-Arabic-speaking regions.

Linguistic and Cultural Intersections in Oral and Written Traditions

This section presents how oral traditions interact with the written ones in classical Arabic literature and how orality shapes the linguistic practices that create cultural preservation, as shown in Table 4. Of course, the most critical work in this area is Al-Dajani's (2019), in which the author tries to indicate the importance of orality in teaching cultural literacy. It indicates the role of Arabic literature in education. Also, it proves that oral traditions are an indispensable key for understanding cultural contexts since orality is at once a means of teaching and a medium for preserving cultural identity. In turn, Horesh & Cotter 2016 speaking about linguistic diversity within Arabic dialects, indicate that oral traditions encapsulate the shaping of spoken language and its relations to written forms, especially in the ways whereby dialects are represented in literature.

In this respect, Albirini et al. (2011) address, in a narrower sense, Arabic heritage speakers' oral production in the U.S., analyzing their morphosyntactic competence. This work again underlines the role of oral traditions in sustaining language proficiency among speakers living in diaspora communities, thus preserving both linguistic and cultural heritage. The paper also focuses on some challenges of teaching Arabic as a community language in the UK concerning diglossia and dialect variation by Soliman and Khalil (2022). Indeed, their study demonstrates how oral dialects complicate proficient teaching of Modern Standard Arabic, rendering orality essential for understanding the broader linguistic landscape.

Al-Bataineh (2019) deals, from a phonological point of view, with the problem of vowel-consonant harmony in Arabic dialects and thus proves that oral linguistic structures most definitely foretell specific phonetic patterns. This provides further insight into how, through

oral tradition, some phonetic characteristics in Arabic have been retained, further revealing the deep connection between spoken and written languages. For example, Altwaiji extends the discussion by researching Arab folklore in post-9/11 immigrant stories where oral traditions are one means of retaining cultural artifacts. Oral storytelling retains cultural identity within communities that are otherwise displaced while at the same time hinting at how orality resists modern challenges.

Also, poor oral traditions are not excluded from the impact of technological advances. Rüller 2022 elaborates on how wearable technology is used in combating illiteracy in Morocco: "Worn for reading: Wearable technology to develop literacy in Morocco." Such digital means are supportive of the transmission aspect of oral knowledge preservation. Reasons have been given in the present study regarding how traditional oral practices combined with modern technologies might bridge educational gaps. Similarly, other works, such as that by Ameer et al. (2020), have discussed the challenges Arabic machine translation has posed to preserving oral traditions in these modern times of digitization within Arabic texts. The study, for example, notes that machine translations can provide an appropriate

avenue through which readers access Arabic literature; however, they cannot usually capture nuances from oral traditions that occur within the language.

The study (Alatas, 2014) examines pilgrimage and network formation in Indonesia, highlighting how oral traditions are involved in religious and cultural practices. It was discovered that oral traditions are essential in preserving religious identity since they are passed down generations through religious congregations such as pilgrimages. In a related direction, Mahadevan and Moore (2023) link oral traditions and reflexive ethnography in international business studies by pointing out that orality inherits cultural identity and impacts contemporary ethnographic research.

In brief, the research in this section brings out the role of oral traditions in maintaining the languages and cultures of entities of Arabic-speaking communities. Through educational practices, linguistic variation, folklore, or the adoption of modern technology, whether taking one consideration or another, orality has indubitably played a chief role in understanding the relationship between the spoken and the written word-sustaining cultures in their own local and global contexts.

Table 4. Studies on Linguistic and Cultural Intersections in Oral and Written Traditions.

Reference	Study Focus	Key Contribution
Al-Dajani (2019)	Role of Arabic literature in teaching cultural literacy.	Highlights the importance of orality in teaching and understanding cultural contexts through literature.
Horesh & Cotter (2016).	Linguistic variation in Arabic dialects.	Explores the connections between oral and written forms in Arabic dialect variation.
Albirini et al. (2011)	Oral production of Arabic heritage speakers in the U.S.	Analyzes how heritage speakers maintain morphosyntactic competence through oral traditions.
Soliman & Khalil (2022)	Teaching Arabic as a community language in the UK.	Discusses challenges in teaching Arabic, focusing on diglossia and the influence of oral dialects.
Al-Bataineh (2019)	Vowel-consonant harmony in Arabic dialects.	Examines how oral linguistic structures influence phonetic patterns in dialects.
Altwaiji (2016)	Arab folklore in post-9/11 immigrant narratives.	Investigates the role of oral traditions in preserving cultural identity in contemporary literature.
Rüller (2022)	Wearable technology and literacy in Morocco.	Explores the use of digital tools to preserve oral traditions in addressing illiteracy.
Bowdoin (2011)	Accessibility of African Open Access journals.	Examines how oral traditions contribute to information dissemination in African journals.
Mahadevan & Moore (2023)	Reflexive ethnography in international business.	Connects oral traditions with ethnographic research, emphasizing cultural identity.

Alatas (2014)	Pilgrimage and network formation in Indonesia.	Investigates how oral traditions play a role in preserving religious and cultural identity through pilgrimage.
Ameur et al. (2020)	Trends in Arabic machine translation.	Highlights challenges in preserving oral traditions during digital translation of Arabic texts.

Preservation and Transmission of Cultural and Religious Identity Through Orality

The Preservation and Transmission of Cultural and Religious Identity Through Orality section critically emphasizes oral traditions, through which cultural and religious identities are preserved in today's Arabic-speaking communities. Much evidence from these studies shows the presence of oral stories, folklore, and religious recitations that help keep the historical, social, and religious texture alive in societies. For instance, Deeb and Winegar (2012) reviewed anthropological studies of Arab-majority societies, with particular attention to how oral traditions produce and maintain cultural identity. This work thus testifies that oral practices can still stand as the backbone of today's modern cultural dynamics, thus providing continuity between the past and present, especially in cultural production.

In a related vein, Rachman (2020) examines manuscript preservation in Indonesia's Radya Pustaka Museum and restores oral practices as agents of memory in preserving historical knowledge. This study confirms that oral tradition is often used to fill in written records, bringing additional layers of interpretation and memory to preserve such manuscripts with cultural significance. Similarly, Jawad discusses social protection regimes in the MENA and emphasizes the place of oral traditions within state-civil society relations. The work of Jawad illustrates that aside from the transmission of religious and moral values, oral practices provide a space to debate the causes of social justice and the well-being of communities.

Orality is very much at the center of cultural expression and resistance. The work by Rowe examines how political discourse informs the pedagogy and performance of dance in Palestine. The study identified oral traditions in Palestinian society, through storytelling, chanting, and

singing, as a mode of cultural expression given the ramifications of occupation. These oral practices allow Palestinians to cling to their cultural identity and to resist outside pressures to erase their traditions. In a related vein, Oumlil (2021) explores Suheir Hammad's poetry and its transnational resonance in revealing how orality in her work contests Islamophobic discourses. Hammad's spoken word poetry, based on the Arab tradition, is an excellent tool for Abed's cultural resistance against global racial and religious discrimination.

Robinson-Garcia et al. (2017) explore the role of orality in digital spaces, where the dissemination of research on Twitter is investigated. This work raises interesting and significant questions regarding how oral traditions, constantly face-to-face, are now being adapted to digital platforms. The paper assumes that as new digital tools afford possibilities for the diffusion of knowledge, they also raise challenges about the maintenance of depth and nuance associated with oral recitation. The theme of digitization continues in Zaid et al. (2012), which surveys Greco-Arab anticancer treatments and describes how medical knowledge has been passed orally through generations. This study also pinpoints how these oral practices are integrated into modern scientific research, underlining the continuity between traditional oral knowledge and today's medicine.

Besides the medical traditions, Fox & Hanlon (2015) also describe barriers to Open Access publishing in Africa. This paper argues for the need to protect and preserve traditional oral knowledge in scientific and academic discourses. Their study reveals that while people depend so much on oral traditions to pass on knowledge, these resources are usually invisible at academy publishing. The research insists on more inclusiveness regarding knowledge

dissemination and recognizing oral contributions. Gbamwuan and Agidi further this discussion by undertaking an overview of the preservation of the national archives of Nigeria, going as far as to argue that oral traditions form the basis of all cultural memory. Their study illustrates international cooperation as necessary in oral history preservation, which is threatened in the digital era.

Finally, Al-Bluwi narrates a case study of how oral tradition can affect public health education using dental caries prevention in children in the UAE as a case study. The study shows how oral storytelling and community-based education are the backbone of public health promotion, especially in rural areas where formal education may be limited. Similarly, Altwaiji (2016) discusses how Arab folklore has represented a form of cultural resistance, especially in the world after 9/11, through oral traditions passed down. His study elucidates that oral traditions are a means of preserving one's culture and a counter-narrative mechanism to the dominant narratives imposed by alien forces.

What follows, therefore, from these contributions in this section is that oral traditions remain a potent means of preserving and passing on cultural and religious identity in Arabic-speaking communities. From forms such as storytelling, religious recitations, or even modern practices in digital and academic contexts, orality remains essential for ensuring cultural continuity and evading external pressures toward losing one's identity within continuous generations.

Discussion

This systematic review provides several key insights into the role of orality within classical Arabic literary criticism and its wider ramifications regarding cultural and religious identity. The output varies temporally: 2012 had the most significant publications. This increase perhaps was due to a renewed scholarly interest in oral traditions, mainly because the globalization of academic discourse evinced the

need to re-think traditional modes of literary criticism and textual transmission. Immediately following this peak, the number of publications dropped; from 2017 onward, the research output stabilized, with a flow of contributions that have come out reasonably regularly toward the field. This would imply that the 2022 and 2023 resurgence still represents a continuing interest and orality among academics, perhaps related to the topical interest in preserving culture and the currently suspended digital transformation of oral practices.

Orality, therefore, occupies a privileged position in Arabic studies, as shall be seen by the distribution of publications across the different data providers. In this respect, Scopus stands out as the leading source of research output, suggesting that scholars working on orality within classical Arabic literary criticism publish regularly in established journals, most of which are indexed in Scopus. On the other hand, the few inputs from ISI might suggest minimal research coverage about the topic under consideration in more conventional scientific and interdisciplinary databases. Wiley, again with only a few moderate contributions but supported by a specialized academic focus, underpins some precious insights that contribute to the diversity of approaches in exploring the association between orality and written texts.

In this direction, the methodological supremacy of qualitative research in the work provided is the expression of the nature of the subject that can be explored only interpretively due to the intricacies of oral transmission, cultural memory, and, above all, literary criticism. The relatively few quantitative and mixed-method studies consider that numerical and statistical approaches to the themes of orality and influencing literary forms are less suitable. This emphasis on qualitative approaches, like thematic analysis and textual interpretation, facilitates work on complexly intertwined relationships between oral and written traditions in describing, for instance, how oral practices

inform linguistic, cultural, and religious processes.

Thematic analysis of orality and its influence on classical Arabic literary criticism reveals how the oral tradition profoundly shaped classical Arabic literature. Reviewed studies show that orality influences textual transmission to shape literary interpretation. From the implications of the 'seven ahruf' hadith for Qur'anic textual variation to the mastery of cultural identity by Yemeni oral poetry, these texts can collapse the distance between past and present forms of literature. This chapter shows how oral practices are responsible for religious, poetic, and linguistic traditions while reaffirming that the oral and written forms are intertwined in Arabic classical criticism.

This view is further supported by the Linguistic and Cultural Intersections in Oral and Written Traditions section, whereby orality intersects with Written language in shaping linguistic practices and cultural preservation. We also have Al-Dajani 2019 and Horesh & Cotter's 2016 work, which demonstrates the role of orality concerning the maintenance of linguistic variation, especially in Arabic dialects. For instance, Albirini et al. (2011) stress the function of orality within the diaspora for maintaining both linguistic proficiency and cultural identity outside the typical context of the Arab world. As the work by Rüller shows, integration of advanced technologies means that orality is in change and that traditional practices get adapted to digital platforms, thus assuring survival and relevance before modern educational and cultural settings.

The final section, Preservation, and Transmission of Cultural and Religious Identity through Orality, proves oral traditions resilient in maintaining and passing on cultural and religious identity. Research into this theme, such as that found in Deeb & Winegar 2012 and Rowe 2010, underlines orality within the dimensions of cultural resistance and expression from politically or socially peripheral communities. This is an oral tradition not only applied in the

preservation of history but also as a counter-narrative to dominant discourses, as explained by the analysis done by Oumlil (2021) of the poetry of Suheir Hammad. Adapting oral traditions to digital and academic spaces, following the work of Robinson-Garcia et al. (2017) and Fox & Hanlon (2015), while there are serious challenges that traditional oral practices face in new contexts, these also provide more expansive possibilities for dissemination and preservation.

This systematic review unequivocally demonstrates that orality has remained the central force in shaping classical Arabic literary criticism and retaining cultural and religious identity. As much focus has been placed on the qualitative approach, it would appear that when orality enters modern contexts, such as digital platforms, it may well prompt future research toward a range of methodological innovations able to grasp new aspects of oral traditions. The intersection of orality with cultural identity and resistance undergirds the continued relevance of oral practices in current global discourse.

Study Limitations

With this systematic review, while much valuable insight is derived on the function of orality within the tradition of Arabic literary criticism, a limitation in several regards should be noted: most of the reviewed studies rely on qualitative research methods for extracting deep interpretive insights, perhaps to the detriment of more quantifiable patterns or general trends in the domain. The small number of quantified data constrains the generalization of findings across different cultural and temporal contexts. Also, this review relies mainly on the publications of three data providers, Scopus, ISI, and Wiley, which, though comprehensive in their coverage, may miss critical contributions from regional sources or those less commonly indexed. This limited focus would tend to create incomplete perspectives on the research landscape, especially given the heavy oral traditions characteristic of less-widely-published academia or non-English publication outlets. Finally, the

fluctuation in the number of studies published over the years-especially the decline since 2012-points toward gaps in research activity that might indicate shifting academic priorities or challenges in accessing specific archival materials related to orality.

Academic Implications

The implication of these findings is academic and concerns the study of classical Arabic literary criticism and, broadly, the study of oral traditions in literature and culture. First, the profound influence orality has on literary interpretation, as exemplified in these studies, suggests that more significant stress needs to be laid on orality in such contexts in future research as a framing device that informs Arabic literature and other oral-based traditions. In these respects, the researchers could gain even more from further interdisciplinarity by adopting historical, sociolinguistic, and technological perspectives that revisit the many faces of orality's role in literary development. For example, considering oral traditions' influences on sacred and secular texts in classical Arabic literature may lead to a deeper understanding of how spoken word and written word symbiotically influenced one another. Furthermore, the implications of orality on linguistic variation, cultural preservation, and identity formation allow new avenues into how it can be considered pertinent to contemporary literary discourse, particularly in those contexts where oral traditions still play a critical role.

Another important implication is that this field should have more methodological diversity. As the review shows, the reliance on qualitative methods in most studies provides profound insight into selected cases yet limits the possibility of broad generalization and comparison across cultures and time. Such an approach would further encourage quantitatively, and mixed-methods approaches to step alongside traditional qualitative analysis, enriching the academic discourse with a broader data-driven perspective on the patterns and significance of oral traditions. As an example,

quantitative approaches could show how specific oral narratives are passed down through generations or quantify the impact that oral traditions have on contemporary literature in digital contexts. Further, cross-cultural studies could compare orality's role in Arabic literature to either African or Indigenous oral traditions in consideration of shared themes and unique divergences. Finally, given the increasing importance of the intersection between oral traditions and digital technologies, scholars should examine how these shifting practices shape persistence and transformation in linguistic and cultural heritage to keep scholarship informed about changes in how orality is presently practiced and understood.

Conclusion

This systematic review identifies the pivotal role of orality in framing classes of Arabic literary critique, illustrating how vital oral traditions have been in transmitting, interpreting, and preserving texts in Arabic literature. The main findings are that orality is inextricably linked with written formats, especially within religious texts like the Qur'an, where oral renderings have profoundly influenced textual variants and their interpretive renditions in literature. The review would also underline the centrality of oral traditions in preserving cultural identity through poetry and folklore, as elaborated upon in both Yemeni and Moroccan literary traditions. Moreover, orality is essential in maintaining linguistic variation, such as dialects, and preserving cultural heritage in diaspora communities.

The contributions stand at two poles in this review, where the comprehensive thematic analysis undertaken herein was meant to bring together diverse studies to show a holistic view of orality's influence on Arabic literary criticism. The review focuses on the junction between oral and written traditions to better understand how orality has preserved cultural and religious identity through the generations. Results also reveal that qualitative methods have dominated

the field, reflecting the complexity and multifaceted nature of orality, and point to a future research agenda that needs to incorporate more quantitative and interdisciplinary approaches. This review contributes to the

academic discourse by reinforcing orality as significant in Arabic literature in the classical age and promoting future consideration within the evolving digital age and across varied cultural contexts.

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