

The Second Meeting of the Association of East Asian Arabists

The Middle East in East Asia, East Asia in the Middle East

Dates:

16, 17 and 18 April 2026

Venue:

In person

National Taiwan University, Taipei

Or Online: For details see the Conference Schedule under each day

Zoom: For details see the Conference Schedule under each day

Introduction

Association of East Asian Arabists

Association email address:

AEAAInternational@gmail.com

Association of East Asian Arabists (AEAA) is a forum with three sets of objectives. First and foremost, it welcomes scholars from East Asia specialized in Arabic, Islamic and Middle Eastern studies and invites them to critically reflect on the pedagogy of teaching Arabic to speakers of East Asian (or Southeast Asian) languages at different levels, to share their research priorities, agenda, approaches, and methodologies, and to discuss any problems arising from their professional careers. Second, the Association fosters sharing experiences and mutual enrichments in two aspects of pedagogy and curriculum design in the East Asian (and Southeast Asian) context(s): Arabic language pedagogy; enhancement of the curricular connection between language and content courses; and the challenges of Arabic language teaching in the digital age. Finally, and most importantly, the Association will build a support network for East Asian (and Southeast Asian) scholars around the world. The Arabists of East Asian (and Southeast Asian) backgrounds face triple marginalization. In North America, Europe and the Middle East, they are pushed out both by North American and European orientalist and scholars of Arabic and Islamic backgrounds. In East Asia (and perhaps even Southeast Asia), the fields they partake in are marginal to mainstream disciplines and areas of study. AEAA offers space for them to engage with each other's research and teaching and career concerns. The Association will engage its members through regular online and in person meetings, workshops, lectures, and reading sessions, and trigger further questions for discussion and opportunities for future collaboration such as annual meetings.

Background

The Arabic language, which originated from the sixth-century north Arabia, became the lingua franca of the Near East with the spread of Islam, transforming Middle Eastern languages along the way. The Arabic language and its literary productions are highly imbued with religious ideas and cultural norms of Arabs. Students from East Asian (and Southeast Asian) linguistic, cultural, and religious backgrounds without adequate prior knowledge of the region and religion would encounter challenges when they study more advanced texts.

The cultural barrier and lack of relevant knowledge also impede them from appreciating the literary conventions, rhetorics, and poetics of the Arabic language (as well as Persianate and Turkic languages).

While language teaching itself is inseparable from introducing the peoples and societies using the language, the need to combine both into a systematic curriculum is hardly realized in Taiwan. At present, Arabic, Islamic and Middle Eastern studies in East Asia and elsewhere outside the Arabic speaking world follows the agenda and pedagogy of either Orientalism or pre-modern knowledge traditions of the Arabic-Islamic world. A coherent curricular structure that takes into consideration the lingual and cultural backgrounds of East Asian (and Southeast Asian) students is currently missing.

Third, technology exerts an unneglectable impact on language teaching. As online Arabic classes and learning tools abound, the efficiency of the traditional teaching methods is called into question. Furthermore, students' dependence upon technology products such as translation tools and AI programmes for their coursework also undermines the validity of the traditional way of evaluation.

Call for Participation

The Association invites participation in the Association's second meeting to take place in April or May 2026 (exact date to be agreed) in Taipei at the National Taiwan University. It invites presentations on the broad themes. Participants are free to choose their topics and modes of engagement from the following broad areas of intellectual inquiry.

1. Civilizations and Histories
2. Religions, Faith Cultures and Living Traditions
3. Encounters and Exchanges (lingual, cultural, literary, political, and social)
4. Political, developmental and global challenges
5. Language research and pedagogy

Participants are encouraged to reflect on the challenges students and scholars of East Asian backgrounds face in teaching and researching Arabic, Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies.

Language pedagogy

- What are challenges in teaching Arabic to speakers of East Asian (and Southeast Asian) languages?
- What distinguishes Arabic texts written by East Asian (and Southeast Asian) academic from those used in the Arab world, Europe and North America?
- How do East Asian (and Southeast Asian) languages, cultures and knowledge traditions play a role in textbook objectives and design?
- Are East Asian (and Southeast Asian) learning environments Arabic friendly?
- What role does new technology, such as digitization and AI, play in textbook design and classroom pedagogy?
- Can social media, IT, and AI help to foster a better interconnected Arabic language world for East Asian students?

Teaching Arabic, Islamic Middle East in the Humanities and Social Sciences

- What are the challenges of teaching Arabic-Islamic culture, history, literature, politics and religion to students of East Asian backgrounds?
- What role do local knowledge traditions play in how Arabic, Islamic and Middle East studies are received by East Asian students?
- How do teaching teams manage the diverse knowledge traditions (Arab, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Indian, Indonesian, European, North American, etc.) in which they are trained?
- What are the objectives and anticipated outcome of degree programmes?
- Are there sufficient textbooks in East Asian (and Southeast Asian) languages?

Research and Academic Careers

- Facing triple marginalisation, what are the difficulties and challenges for East Asian (and Southeast Asian) Arabists in terms of their research?
- What would East Asian (and Southeast Asian) Arabists do differently outside European knowledge traditions, such as Orientalism, and academic convention?
- How can they do research creatively, and foster interests in Arabic, Islamic and Middle East Studies in academe and among a general audience?
- What might some strategies be for East Asian Arabists to adopt to generate impact in local research cultures?

The Meeting will in addition host a graduate student forum and reflect on the following issues and challenges students from East Asian background face in their pursuit of Arabic, Islamic and Middle East Studies.

- Where do students choose to pursue MA and PhD degrees? Locally, in the Arab world, in other East Asian countries, in Europe or North America? Why?
- What might some of the challenges students face? Mastery of Arabic and research languages? Adjusting to new research traditions? Disciplinary training? Marginalization and isolation?
- Do PhD students publish while pursuing their degrees? What are the challenges?
- What do they think of their career prospects?
- How can AEAA help?

Participants will be provided with accommodation and local hospitality for the duration of the meeting. MA and PhD students may apply to the Association for additional financial assistance.

If you are interested email us at <AEAAInternational@gmail.com>.

Ouyang Wen-chin (歐陽文津)

Sumi Akiko (鷺見朗子)

Su I-Wen (蘇怡文)

Tsung Pei-Chen (叢培臻)

Conference Schedule

Day 1: 16 April 2026

10 am to 5:30 pm

In-Person Venue: NTU Humanities Conference Room 244

Zoom:

<https://soas-ac-uk.zoom.us/j/91818376236?pwd=spD9nkd9BomqNsAywgIU6jJ6yuws6J.1>

Research Directions

09:30-10:00 Registration

10:00-10:10 Welcome (Wen-chin, I-Wen, Akiko, Pei-Chen, Pui Bun)

10:10-11:00 Presentation 1 (presentation 30-40 mins; Q & A 10-20 mins)

Speaker: Rei Hakamata (MA student, Ibn Haldun University, Turkey)

Chair: Wen-chin Ouyang

What is a *Bâhnâme*?: Reconsidering Genre Classification through *Dafîü'l-gumûm ve Rafîü'l-humûm*

This paper seeks to redefine the Ottoman *bâhnâme* genre through an analysis of Deli Birader's sixteenth-century work *Dafîü'l-gumûm ve Rafîü'l-humûm*. In premodern Islamicate societies, texts containing sexual knowledge—often labeled as “erotology” in modern scholarship—were widely produced, yet they remain understudied, particularly within Ottoman studies. Among these, the *bâhnâme* genre presents significant classificatory ambiguity.

In Arabic intellectual traditions, sexual knowledge was commonly categorized under *ilm al-bâh*, which was later transmitted into the Ottoman context. Ottoman works associated with this field were broadly labeled *bâhnâme*, encompassing medical treatises, sexual manuals, literary texts intended to stimulate desire, and various hybrid forms. Due to this generic hybridity, however, there is no scholarly consensus on the genre's boundaries. Modern scholarship frequently classifies texts as *bâhnâme* solely on the basis of sexual content, regardless of their contemporaneous reception.

A representative example is *Dafîü'l-gumûm ve Rafîü'l-humûm*, which is often treated as a *bâhnâme* in modern studies, despite having been received primarily as a literary work in its own time. The text was explicitly composed to entertain readers through sexual humor and lacks the systematic medical organization typical of instructional *bâhnâme* texts. Its inclusion within the genre, therefore, substantially alters the scope and definition of *bâhnâme*.

This paper argues that the *bâhnâme* genre must be defined in relation to contemporary classification frameworks. By reconstructing Ottoman genre classifications through sources such as Ibn Nadîm's *al-Fihrist*, Taşköprizade Ahmed Efendi's *Miftâhu's-sa'ade*, and Aşık Çelebi's *Meşâ'irü's-şu'arâ*, and by comparing *Dafîü'l-gumûm ve Rafîü'l-humûm* with texts conventionally labeled as *bâhnâme*, this study proposes a historically grounded redefinition of the genre and its internal structure.

11:00-11:10 Break

11:10-12:00 Presentation 2 (presentation 30-40 mins; Q & A 10-20 mins)

Speaker: Sepideh Afrashteh (Postdoctoral Researcher, Ryukoku University, Kyoto, Japan)

Chair: Sumi Akiko

Boundless Compassion Across Traditions: Comparing Allah and Amida Buddha in Islamic and Jōdo Shinshū Thought

This paper examines a central point of comparison between Islam and Japanese Pure Land Buddhism: the devotional figures of Allah and Amida Buddha. Although Buddhism is generally regarded as a non-theistic tradition, the Pure Land school—especially Jōdo Shinshū, which centers on faith (shinjin) in Amida Buddha—exhibits theological features that, in many aspects, resemble theistic religions, particularly through its emphasis on grace, faith, and salvation. The analysis clarifies essential theological and ontological distinctions while highlighting resonances between the two traditions. In Islamic theology, Allah is both the personal Creator—accessible through the 99 divine names—and the transcendent, eternal reality. In Jōdo Shinshū, Amida is the compassionate manifestation of Suchness (tathatā), who, after fulfilling the bodhisattva Dharmakara’s vows, became Amida Buddha and embodies salvific qualities symbolized by the twelve lights. Despite foundational differences, notable parallels emerge. This paper focuses on two key attributes: Amida’s Comprehensive Compassion (muen no daihi) and Infinite Life (muryōju), alongside Allah’s All-Encompassing Grace (al-Rahmān) and Eternal Life (al-Ḥayy). These attributes exemplify shared visions of boundless compassion, actualized through timeless existence, which transcend doctrinal boundaries. By emphasizing these resonances, the paper contributes to the growing field of Buddhist-Islamic dialogue and offers fresh insights into how both traditions articulate universal themes of transcendent compassion and spiritual liberation.

12:00-13:10 lunch boxes

13:10-14:00 Presentation 3 (presentation 30-40 mins; Q & A 10-20 mins)

Speaker (online) Chu, Hsiao-Chi (Affiliated Fellow, Taipei National University of the Arts, Taiwan International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS), Universiteit Leiden, The Netherlands)

Chair: Ng Pui Bun

How do East Asian researchers negotiate their positionality when their primary disciplinary training lies outside traditional area studies, specifically within the arts, curatorial practice, or humanitarian work?

This sharing critically examines the methodological pathways available to East Asian researchers navigating Palestinian and Middle Eastern studies. Drawing on fieldwork in Palestine and Jordan since 2018 and the advocacy initiatives Refugee Path (難民路徑) and Refugee Week Taiwan (台灣難民週) (est. 2021), I argue that limited Arabic proficiency, often framed as a constraint, can open alternative, epistemologically meaningful routes into

displaced communities' knowledge. These routes centre not on texts, but on bodies, food, space, and shared practice.

This reflection stems from a tension in my early research. My MA dissertation (Palestinian Archival Memory at the Table: Cookbooks in diasporic contexts, SOAS, 2021) analysed Palestinian food literature through theories of memory (Nora, Halbwachs) and everyday life (de Certeau). While this textual approach illuminated how recipes function as archives of exile and resistance, it also exposed the limits of text-centred inquiry: it was heavily mediated by diasporic, English-writing authors and my own inability to fully access Arabic-language food culture.

Simultaneously, a parallel, non-textual mode of knowledge production emerged. Fieldwork in Jerusalem and the West Bank during Ramadan from 2018 brought encounters that resisted textualisation, such as sharing iftar with Palestinian families, learning the choreography of communal meals (where the commensality of musakhan or maqluba carries its own embodied semantics), and navigating "food wars" embedded like a falafel postcard claiming it as "Israel's national snack." Observing not as a linguist but as a witness at the table, I experienced de Certeau's "tactics"—knowledge operating precisely at the margins of institutional language.

Informed by these encounters, Refugee Path and Refugee Week Taiwan have built a participatory platform since 2021. Combining food workshops, oral testimonies, visual storytelling, and co-writing, we engage Taiwanese and Asian audiences with narratives of forced displacement. Here, food and art function as epistemological interfaces: spaces where communities encounter Middle Eastern experiences through shared practice rather than linguistic access. In Assmann's terms, the platform enacts "communicative memory" publicly rather than archiving it privately.

Ultimately, I propose this shift is not simply a compensatory strategy. Building on my current research into Palestinian textile and food practices as embodied decolonial archives, I argue that participatory arts and material culture analysis offer a methodologically rigorous alternative to text-centric traditions. Rather than a deficit, limited Arabic proficiency becomes a productive disruption. It creates space for "the right to memory", which is a right recovered not merely through language, but through smell, taste, and the intimate act of eating together.

14:00-14:10 Break

14:10-15:00 Presentation 4 (presentation 30-40 mins; Q & A 10-20 mins)

Speaker: Yuki Okabe (Project Assistant Professor, Kobe University, Kobe, Japan)

Chair: Ouyang Wen-chin

Bombing the City: Aerial and Artillery Violence in the Lebanese Civil War

Aerial bombardment and artillery shelling were central features of violence during the Lebanese Civil War (1975–1990), particularly in urban centers such as Beirut. Repeated attacks on densely populated residential areas produced widespread destruction, high civilian casualties, and large-scale displacement. In episodes such as the 1981 bombardment of Beirut, violence extended across entire urban spaces, affecting both eastern and western sectors and forcing tens of thousands of civilians to flee. These patterns suggest that bombardment

functioned less as a precise military instrument than as a form of area-based violence experienced collectively by civilian populations. This paper examines the dynamics and consequences of aerial and bombardment violence by integrating military records from Lebanese and Israeli sources with personal accounts of victims. By juxtaposing operational perspectives with lived experiences, the study reconstructs how such attacks were conducted, perceived, and remembered across different communities. Focusing on the Lebanese case, the paper argues that bombardment reshaped civilian environments and social relations at the urban level, embedding violence into everyday life. Understanding these dynamics highlights how air power in civil war contexts operates not only through strategic intent but through its cumulative impact on civilian populations.

15:00- 15:40 coffee, tea break

15:40-16:30 Presentation 5 (presentation 30 to 40 mins; Q & A 10-20 mins)

Yuki Sawaguchi (Ph.D., Hitotsubashi University, Tokyo, Japan)

Chair: Ng Pui Bun

The Myth of the Secular Army: Operationalizing Religion and "Orientalist" Violence in the Post-October 7 Israeli Military

Israel has historically curated an image of itself as an outpost of "Western secular rationality" in the Middle East, distinguishing its identity from the region to secure legitimacy within the liberal international order. However, the unrestricted violence in Gaza following October 7, 2023, has irrevocably shattered this façade. This paper interrogates the "religionization" of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) not merely as an erosion of secular values, but as a strategic management of identity fractures, deployed to sustain the state's war machine.

Drawing on military directives and soldiers' testimonies, I argue that the military command, confronting institutional disintegration, functionally outsources combat motivation to ideological enclaves. This creates a reciprocal relationship: the command capitalizes on religious units to ensure "lethality" (*katalniyut*)—establishing body counts as the primary metric of success—while soldiers utilize this autonomy to operationalize biblical rhetoric (e.g., *Amalek*) for moral impunity.

Crucially, this mechanism relies on a selective reconfiguration of "religion" itself. Military discourse appropriates Judaism as a source of moral agency, while simultaneously adopting an Orientalist perspective that frames Islamic adversaries as "irrational fanatics" stripped of strategic rationality.

By deconstructing this epistemic asymmetry, the study reveals how the IDF's ostensibly "secular" identity operates as a "strategic fiction"—one that redefines religion to bypass ethical constraints and legitimize violence in a time of crisis.

16:30-16:40 Break

16:40-17:30 Presentation 6 (presentation 30-40 mins; Q & 10-20 mins)

Speakers: Ouyang Wen-chin (Professor, SOAS University of London) **and Ng Pui Bun**

(PhD student, National Taiwan University)

Chair: Sumi Akiko

Reconfiguring Chinese Muslim Identity in East Asian: Islam, Death Rituals, and Cultural Negotiations

This joint presentation examines the complex positionality of Chinese Muslims in China and Malaysia through close readings of rituals in *A Muslim Funeral* (穆斯林的葬禮, 1987), a long novel by Huo Da (霍達), and “Never Mention It Again” (別再提起, 2002), a short story by Ho Sok Fong (賀淑芳). Within the broader theme of “The Middle East in East Asia, East Asia in the Middle East,” they reflect on how Islam, often understood as a Middle Eastern religious tradition, is reconfigured in China and Southeast Asia through local histories, ethnic politics, and lived experiences. By focusing on a literary text rather than doctrinal or historical sources, we highlight how alternative epistemological approaches—particularly those grounded in narrative, memory, and embodiment—can illuminate the tensions and contradictions surrounding identity politics among Chinese Muslims, our cases, in China and Malaysia.

We begin with Malaysia. “Never Mention It Again” revolves around a dispute over the religious identity of a deceased man and the appropriate funeral rites to be performed. While his family identifies him as ethnically Chinese and does not recognize him as a Muslim, state religious authorities intervene, asserting his status as a Muslim based on official documentation. This intervention results in the removal of the body from the family and its reclassification within Islamic burial procedures. Through this narrative, the writer exposes a deeply contested terrain in which legal authority, religious orthodoxy, and familial memory collide.

We then turn to China. *A Muslim Funeral* begins with a funeral and ends with two in the Liang family, famous for their mastery in the craft of jade. The first two funerals are completed without a hitch. The final one caused a conundrum. For the male protagonist of the novel, Han Ziqi (韓子奇), the Chinese name for Ibrahim, the orphan boy adopted by Liang Yiqing (梁奕清), who grew up to be a master jade craftsman, and got himself entangled with both daughters of Liang, revealed himself to be Han not Hui on his death bed.

In the Malaysian context, the figure of the Chinese Muslim, a small minority among the Muslims in Malaysia, embodies an “in-between” positionality shaped by the intersection of ethnic identity (Chineseness) and religious affiliation (Islam). This sharing pays particular attention to death as a critical moment in which such identities become sharply contested. The corpse emerges as a site of authority and struggle, where competing claims—by the family, the state, and religious institutions—are negotiated through physical control over the body. At the same time, the story’s striking depiction of bodily processes—particularly the unexpected discharge from the corpse—introduces a moment of rupture. This unsettling image not only exposes the absurdity of the situation but also gestures toward a form of resistance against institutional authority and its attempts to impose order.

In addition to its engagement with identity and power, the narrative also foregrounds the politics of memory. The injunction to “never mention it again” reflects not only personal trauma but also a broader social mechanism of silencing. The conflict over the deceased’s identity remains unresolved, leaving behind a fragmented and contested memory that resists closure. In this sense, the story resonates with what Jan Assmann terms “communicative memory”—a

form of memory transmitted through lived experience, affect, and interpersonal relations, rather than institutional archives.

In the Chinese context, the observation of Muslim funeral rights is equally an assertion of identity and site of memory. Its public display calls attention to Chinese Muslim's cultural difference and their insistence on it. In private practices, it is remembrance of origins and of course histories. However, as the stories of the members of the Liang family which span three generations show, this identity is fragile. The more than one-thousand-year history of Han-Hui co-existence in China, what guarantees do the Hui have that their shared experience of living did not extend to entanglement and back and forth conversation? Is memory, given its openness to fabrication, even trustworthy as an anchor for identity politics?

18:00 dinner for conference participants

Day 2: 17 April 2026
10 am- 5:30 pm
In-Person Venue: NTU Humanities Conference Room 244
Zoom:

<https://soas-ac-uk.zoom.us/j/94783584155?pwd=Wp0Ikuj7TJMY7DCAVYP62qaKaCzNV9.1>

Language Pedagogy

09:30-10:10 Registration

10:10-11:00 Presentation 1 (presentation 30-40 mins; Q & A 10-20 mins)

Speaker (online): Haodong Bai (MPhil student, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, England)

Chair (online): Tsung Pei-Chen

Arabic Language Pedagogy and Islamic Humanities in China: An Autoethnographic Study of Its Conditions and Challenges

Arabic is one of the world's most widely used languages, spoken by an estimated 400 million people across the West Asia and North Africa region as well as in global diaspora communities. However, the English academic field still knows relatively little about how Arabic is taught in non-Anglophone contexts, such as China. As someone who completed a Bachelor of Arts in Arabic Language and Literature, audited MA programmes in both Arabic Language and Literature and Arabic Translation and Interpreting, and served as a teaching assistant and Arabic language tutor for undergraduate and postgraduate students at Beijing International Studies University, this research aims to explore Arabic pedagogy and Islamic humanities in China through an autoethnographic approach that does not employ quantitative methods or large-scale data processing but instead focuses on a single case, my own experience as both learner and instructor in China, as a lens through which to reflect on broader questions of educational planning. Building on the established field of TESOL, Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages, a term that is not only widely used but also indicates a degree awarded by universities across the Anglophone world, I shift my attention to what I call TASOL, Teaching Arabic to Speakers of Other Languages, as a Chinese who speaks Arabic. In this research, I examine what Arabic language education in China looks like from the undergraduate to the postgraduate levels, identifying both its strengths and the areas in need of improvement, particularly in comparison with provision in the UK. In doing so, I aim to contribute not only to TASOL more broadly but also, more specifically, to discussions concerning East and Southeast Asian learners, which inevitably intersects with how Islam is understood.

11:00-11:10 Break

11:10-12:00 Presentation 2 (presentation 30-40 mins; Q & A 10-20 mins)

Speaker: Rei Hakamata (MA student, Ibn Haldun University, Turkey)
Chair (online): Tsung Pei-Chen

From Grammar-Centered Learning to Communicative Practice: Structural Constraints in Arabic Education for Japanese Learners

This paper examines structural constraints in Arabic-language education for Japanese learners through a comparative analysis of Japanese- and Saudi-produced textbooks. The analysis draws on the author's experiences studying Arabic in both Japan and Saudi Arabia, as well as teaching beginner-level Arabic to Japanese adult learners.

Arabic education in Japan has traditionally emphasized grammatical accuracy and written forms, with instruction largely designed for self-study rather than interactive classroom practice. Widely used textbooks, such as *New Express Arabic*, prioritize detailed grammar explanations and short scripted dialogues, while offering limited opportunities for sustained speaking and writing. As a result, learners are often introduced to complex grammatical systems before developing sufficient phonological awareness or oral competence, thereby hindering long-term language acquisition.

In contrast, Arabic textbooks produced in Saudi Arabia, including *al-'Arabiyya bayna Yadayk* and materials developed by the Abjad Center, are designed for instructor-led and immersive learning environments. These materials emphasize listening and speaking skills, presuppose constant interaction with teachers and peers, and incorporate communicative tasks from an early stage. This comparison highlights a structural divergence between grammar-centered instruction in Japan and output-oriented education in Saudi Arabia, reflecting differences in access to immersion and native-speaking instructors.

The paper argues that the primary challenge lies not in learner aptitude but in educational design. It further suggests that recent advances in AI technologies may partially mitigate these structural constraints by supporting speaking and writing practice in non-immersive contexts. While AI cannot replace immersive instruction, it may serve as a supplementary tool to enhance communicative competence within self-study-oriented learning environments.

12:00-13:10 lunch boxes

13:10-14:00: Presentation 3 (presentation 30-40 mins; Q & A 10-20 mins)

Speaker: Kaoru Yamamoto (Associate professor, Faculty of Policy Management, Keio University, Tokyo, Japan)

Chair: Ng Pui Bun

Challenges and Prospects for the Arabic Language Proficiency Test in Japan.

In 2025, the Sheikh Fatima Arabic Learning Center was established at Keio University to promote Arabic and advance Arabic education in Japan. One of the center's activities is to establish a reliable and valid Arabic proficiency test in Japan. In my presentation, I will report on the achievements and prospects of this project, focusing on:

① The social and educational significance and objectives of establishing an Arabic proficiency test in Japan, and

② A survey and comparative analysis of major proficiency tests conducted in Western and Arab countries.

I hope to discuss the Arabic proficiency assessment systems in Asian countries with other participants.

14:00-14:10 Break

14:10-15:00 Presentation 4 (30-40 mins; Q & A 10 – 20 mins)

Speakers: Akiko Sumi (Ph.D., Professor, Kyoto Notre Dame University, Kyoto, Japan) and (online) Katsunori Sumi (Ph.D., Professor, Nagoya Institute of Technology, Nagoya, Japan)

Chair: Wen-chin Ouyang

Interest in Arab culture for Arabic language learners in Japan: A predictor of starting, sustaining, and excelling in learning Arabic language

In 2025, the instruction of the Arabic language in Japan's public education system marked its centenary. However, empirical research on the learning and teaching of the Arabic language is surprisingly scarce, both globally and particularly in Japan. Likewise, there is a paucity of Arabic student surveys that is grounded in a robust theoretical frameworks. Given the current situation, it remains questionable whether the teaching and learning of Arabic can be effectively enhanced and improved. For the enhancement of Arabic teaching and learning, it is a matter of great urgency to accumulate findings through rigorous research. We have focused on Arabic learners' interest in Arab culture and conducted several empirical studies. First, this presentation discusses theoretical implications of interest in Arab culture for learning Arabic. Second, the Japanese measure of interest in Arab culture titled the 'Interest in Arabic Culture Scale (IACS),' which we developed, is introduced. Third, an overview of our several research on interest in Arab culture among Arabic learners in Japan. These have primarily focused on the correlations or influential relationships with orientations, learning motivation, autonomy in motivation, and various learning outcomes, including basic psychological need satisfaction and performance. Lastly, current issues and future directions for research on interest in Arab culture.

15:00- 15:40 coffee, tea break

15:40-17:30 **Graduate Student Forum (Chair: Ouyang Wen-chin)**

18:00 dinner for conference participants

Day 3 18 April 2026
10 am-12 pm

In-Person Venue: Department of History Conference Room 220

Zoom:

<https://soas-ac-uk.zoom.us/j/97754489365?pwd=H1hcdrg58o9srHDWYd86WJq2WfPKAr.1>

Open Forum: **The Future of AEAA**
Chairs: Ouyang Wen-chin and Sumi Akiko