

POINTS OF LINGUISTIC STUDIES AND LANGUAGE TEACHING PERTINENT TO ISLAMIC VALUES

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Abstract

This paper reveals the points of linguistic studies and that of language teaching which are relevant to Islamic values. Introduction: Interdisciplinary discussions on linguistic underpinnings including functional linguistics and language teaching principles, and Islamic perspectives have insufficiently been explored. Hence, the study focusing on such a relation gains significance. Using an exploratory descriptive method, the data of this study were collected by exploring the linguistic axioms and language instructional principles which are relevant to Islamic knowledge conveyed in Qur'anic verses and *Hadits*. Having been collected, they were analyzed by thematic scrutiny, described, and concluded. The findings show that the linguistic points that are associated with Islamic values are the Divine source of language origin, the endowment of language acquisition devices, the compliance with maxims of quality and quantity in cooperative principles, that of politeness rules, and the existence of language variants. Concerning language teaching, the ideas that are appropriate to Islamic values include the importance of communicativeness and collaboration, the comprehensibility of instructional language, content-bound materials, and effective and efficient strategies.

Keywords: Islamic Values, Language Teaching Principles, Linguistic Notions

INTRODUCTION

As a Divine guidance for human beings to gain happiness and mental-spiritual prosperity in their lives in the world and the Hereafter, Islam contains norms, values, and teachings which rule and regulate all affairs of human life. To be an effective way of life, Islamic values are conveyed through various means and activities, including ones dealing with language-oriented purposes, such as linguistic studies and language education activities. A question arises as to which linguistic themes and language instruction tenets are coincident with Islamic principles so that those who are concerned with linguistic studies and/or language instruction are also capable of inculcating Islamic morals. Besides, finding a rendezvous between linguistics and language teaching and Islamic principles can become a valuable foundation to develop the effort of Islamizing sciences.

Studies have been carried out attempting to reveal religious notions in various linguistic data. To cite some of them, Annahlia, Edward & Fauzi (2020) analyzed Zakir Naik's speech to discover illocutionary acts about Islam's view on terrorism and jihad. Elewa & El-Farahaty (2022) conducted a corpus study focusing on linguistic gender forms and deontic modality in Islamic legal translation. Jahangir (2021) unfolded the Islamic etiquette of disagreements among different schools of thought. Furthermore, Pramoolsook & Dalimunte (2020) used systemic functional linguistics to study the configurations of legal genres in Islamic law and jurisprudence textbooks. Samaie & Malmir (2017) using a corpus-assisted Critical Discourse Analysis, demonstrated the

portrayal of Islam and Muslims in US news media. Al-Wasim (2021) studied Sibawaih's linguistic thought and its significance in Islamic studies.

Despite the use of varied methods, such as corpus-based, discourse analysis, or even critical discourse analysis, those studies were limited to revealing Islam-bound contents conveyed in linguistic data. That implies an imbalanced point of view in the sense that Islamic values were covered within a broader construct of linguistic phenomena. Only Husin (2022) tried to integrate linguistics and religious studies, putting both in equal positions. In sum, the previous studies have not been sufficiently conclusive.

Therefore, this present study gains significance as it fills up the niche that has been left unoccupied by previous research. This study focuses on both sides, viz. linguistic studies and language instruction on one side and Islamic principles on the other side, as a parallel level and viewed as comparable counterparts. In short, this study aims at revealing the linguistic and language teaching points that are relevant to Islamic values. This focus on a fair view of both parallel variables (linguistic–language teaching studies and Islamic values) regarding them at equal levels and not downgrading one over the other is important because it represents an impartial and unbiased scientific attitude. Hence, it is easier to invent a technical term such as Islamic linguistics or Islamic language teaching as a result of the more foundational Islamization of sciences rather than just a superficial integration of Islam and sciences. This study is hoped to contribute a model to make Islamic values the main resource to develop general sciences, such as linguistics and language teaching.

Some theoretical reviews underlie this study. As a study of language, linguistics encompasses a wide range of topics covering both formal and functional branches of linguistics (Ayomi, 2021; Baker & Croft, 2017; Newmeyer, 2017; Thompson, 2013). The formal branch of linguistics includes phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics (Yule, 2010), whereas the functional one consists of sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, pragmatics, discourse analysis, and critical discourse analysis. Formal branches of linguistics refer to the study of those aspects of language that are separable and independent, and context-free units of language. Functional linguistics is the study of language in use, i.e., when it is used functionally for communication. It is always context-bound, meaning that in its analysis, language can never be detached from its contexts.

Issues in the study of language cover a broad range of topics, such as the origin of language, namely how language first came into existence in human life (Yule, 2010). In the area of Psycholinguistics, among the prominent issues is how language is acquired and what mental instrument is responsible for its operation, viz. Language Acquisition Device (Chomsky, 2006). Linguistics also includes the rules of how to conduct a conversation, called conversational maxims or cooperative principles by which conversants normally obey, i.e. quality, quantity, manner, and relation (Grice, 1989). For some purposes, those rules may be violated. Inobservance to any of them may ruin the cooperativeness of the conversation.

In addition to those mentioned rules, in using language, communicants are constrained by social norms, one of which is the need to preserve social harmony. That is done by complying with the politeness rule (Brown & Levinson, 1987). A speaker should

avoid a face-threatening act when s/he is engaged in a communicative event. Maintaining and respecting someone's face (personal image and honor) during the conversation is the main rule that must be obeyed.

Moreover, the existence of language variants as a sociolinguistic phenomenon is undeniable due to the presence of groups of societies and their various dynamics. Consequently, each variety should be treated fairly, and no one language or variant is regarded as better than another. Each is equally good as far as it is compatible with its existing context. Besides, the speakers of different languages need not only to respect but also to cooperate and collaborate. Those previously enumerated linguistic issues are potentially compatible with Islamic values, and so are the following language teaching points.

Language instruction is a system consisting of interrelated components, namely teaching objective, material, strategy, and medium of instruction. The terminal objective in language teaching is learners' acquisition of communicative competence, namely the ability to use language not only grammatically but also in a socially acceptable way. Teaching material either pedagogical or authentic (Tomlinson, 2011) refers to what the learners learn (visually, auditorily, audio-visually, or multimodally).

The teaching materials are to be presented to the learners using strategies. The strategies would be effective when they are appropriate to the characteristics of the learners, the learning targets and conditions, and the available facilities. One of which is the use of modified language produced by the teachers adjusted according to the level of learners' competence so that teachers' speech is comprehensible to the learners. Comprehensible input is effective in promoting learners' language acquisition (Krashen, 2013).

In short, this study aims to reveal the linguistic points and language teaching principles which are compatible with Islamic values by first, exploring the linguistic issues and language instructional topics which people in those areas popularly discuss; then, matching them with the Islamic principles extracted from Qur'an, Hadits, and other religious sources. Finally, the researchers described the congruence between the two.

METHOD

This study exerted an exploratory descriptive method. This is consistent with the purpose of this study because the data were collected by exploring the linguistic focal points and language teaching tenets and describing them which are relevant to Islamic views. The data source was books, papers, and other reading forms on linguistics and language teaching as well as al-Qur'an and Hadits as the main sources of Islamic values. Those data sources were selected based on their thematic relevance as a result of personal understanding and subjective interpretation. Their validity was triangulated by intensive collaborative discussion between researchers.

The data of linguistic points and language teaching topics were collected first, by reading books and references about them to list the linguistic and language teaching issues. Second, those issues were examined to unveil their contents represented by topics. Third, the topics were discovered in the Islamic sources. Having been collected, the data were then analyzed by matching the thematic notions in linguistics and language teaching

with that in the Islamic sources. They were then described by explaining the paralleled concepts of linguistics and language teaching and Islamic values.

The instrument employed to collect and analyze the data was a human instrument namely the researchers themselves because all of the research procedures including collecting and analyzing data were performed by the researchers exerting their cognitive, affective, and psycho-motoric capacities. The validity of data was triangulated by the two researchers' intensive discussion and agreement of understanding of the ideas. The research procedures consisted of observation of data sources by in-depth reading and comprehension, identification of data by interpreting and listing issues, description by explaining the discovered themes, and conclusion by summarizing implied points.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Origin of Language

One of the points discussed in the study of language is related to the origin of language, namely how language is believed to exist for the first time in human life. Despite various theories concerning how language came into existence in human life such as natural sound source, social interactions source, and physical adaptation source (Yule, 2010), the strongest belief is the Divine source, namely language exists because it is given by God to human beings.

Language is an instrument used by human beings to communicate among themselves. Since the first human believed to have been born in this world is Adam, such a communicative instrument was endowed to Adam. This is consistent with the Islamic belief as stated in the Qur'anic verse, (*al-Baqarah:31*),

وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الْأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا

“And He taught Adam all the names.” The names in this context refer to the words of language or the knowledge of everything in the universe, by which Adam was capable of living on this earth. In sum, the linguistics-related concept about the origin of language is pertinent to Islamic value that has been declared in the Qur'an, the Islamic Holy book.

Language Acquisition Device (LAD)

As it is believed that language is God's gift to Adam, the first human being ever to live on the earth, a question arises as to what and how language was endowed to Adam given the fact that there are now various languages existing on the earth. Did Allah teach Adam a language like a teacher teaches it to his/her students? If so, what language and how did He teach it?

In Psycholinguistics, Second Language Acquisition theory explains that it is possible for a human being to acquire and develop a communicative skill in using language because s/he has in her/his brain an innate capacity to process a language operation, namely called Language Acquisition Device (Pinker, 2019; Chomsky, 2006). This is a part of the brain that is responsible for acquiring and operating language ability. This device is believed to be an inborn capacity given by God to facilitate human beings to carry out language-related activities. Without this God's gift, it is hardly possible for

learners to acquire and learn a language, hence barely incapable of conducting language-using interactions.

This has been clarified in the Qur'anic verse which says that,

ثُمَّ سَوَّاهُ وَنَفَخَ فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِهِ وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ قَلِيلًا مَّا تَشْكُرُونَ

“Then He made him complete and breathed into him of His spirit, and made for you the ears and the eyes and the hearts; little is it that you give thanks” (*as-Sajdah:9*).

With God's blessings of the hearing ability of the ears, the seeing facility of the eyes, and the thinking capacity of the hearts, people are facilitated to interact with their physical and social environments through the use of language. In short, human beings are inherently provided by God with a capacity in their brain to create and develop an instrument by which they communicate. Therefore, it could be inferred that what was given by God to Adam was not a language but rather an inborn internal capacity as a device to create, maintain, and develop a language, which is called Language Acquisition Device (LAD).

Maxim of Quality

In one of Grice's cooperative principles (1989), people normally communicate compliant with the maxim of quality. The formula says, “Do not say what you believe to be false. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence. Be honest, don't tell lies.” Inobservance of this rule either by violating or flouting it is not only condemned linguistically but also ethically, morally, and socially.

This principle is in line with Islamic teaching in that believers should not speak unless it is true. That is explicitly stated in the Qur'anic verse,

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَ قُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا

“O you who believe! Keep your duty to Allah and fear Him, and speak (always) the truth” (*al-Ahzab:70*)

It implies that telling lies or hoaxes is strictly forbidden. That is not only according to linguistic norms but also to Islamic rules.

Maxim of Quantity

Another cooperative principle that conversants normally obey is the maxim of quantity (Grice, 1989). It says, “Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

Speak as much as it is needed.” It implies that when someone is asking a question, it must be responded to proportionally, as much as it is needed. There is no point in giving answers more or less than is asked. When it is too much, the conversation would be boring and not efficient, but when it is too meager, the needed information might not be sufficient and satisfactory.

This principle also applies in Islamic norm. Hadits from Ibnu Umar says,

عَنِ ابْنِ عُمَرَ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ لَا تُكْثِرُوا الْكَلَامَ بِغَيْرِ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ فَإِنَّ كَثْرَةَ الْكَلَامِ بِغَيْرِ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ قَسْوَةٌ لِلْقَلْبِ وَإِنَّ أْبْعَدَ النَّاسِ مِنَ اللَّهِ الْقَلْبُ الْقَاسِي

“From Ibnu Umar, Rasulullah SAW said, “Don’t talk too much without remembering Allah, because talking too much without remembering Allah will harden the heart, and the farthest person from Allah is one whose heart is hardened” (*H.R. Tirmidzi*).

Politeness

Linguistic politeness refers to the use of language that does not evoke face-threatening acts (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Verbal interaction is constrained by social norms in that both parties of interlocutors (addressor and addressee) should preserve each other’s self-image so that the speech and its response do not cause any offense. It implies a close relationship between language use and the establishment and maintenance of social harmony. The politeness rule says, “Be polite. Mind your tongue.”

This interactional rule is consistent with the Islamic value which requires Muslims to be careful in speaking in order not to induce some fault to the interlocutors. As is said,

سَلَامَةُ الْإِنْسَانِ فِي حِفْظِ اللِّسَانِ

“The safety of a person depends on the ability to guard the tongue.”

This value implies that communicants need to be careful in producing speech, such as by practicing politeness so that social relationships and harmony are maintained.

Language Variants

Each regional or social community has its language varieties, manifested in terms of dialects, accents, styles, registers, or slang (Lőrincz, Lőrincz, & Török, 2021). Communicative situations may also entail different language variations, such as frozen, formal, consultative, casual, or intimate (Joos, 1976). Due to the existence of those different varieties determined by diverse spatial, social, and situational contexts, the linguistic axiom says there is no one language better than another. Accept differences.

This goes in line with the Islamic value stated in the Qur’anic verse,

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ خَلْقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافُ أَلْسِنَتِكُمْ وَالْوَأْنِكُمْ ۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّلْعَالَمِينَ

“And among His Signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the difference of your languages and colors. Verily, in that, are indeed signs for men of sound knowledge” (Ar-Ruum:22). In sum, as the diversity of creatures (races, languages, communities, cultures) is one of the signs of God’s Mightiness, they must be accepted as natural, hence, respected in this worldly life. The above are some of the linguistic points which are relevant to Islamic values. The following are the language teaching principles that could be appropriated to Islamic tenets.

Communicative Competence

The primary terminal objective of language teaching and learning is the acquisition of communicative competence which covers grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competencies (Faradilla & Rukmini, 2019). Language learners are required not

only to be able to produce grammatically correct sentences but also to be able to get the meaning across effectively so that what they say is exactly understood as intended.

The importance of such an effective transfer of message is consistent with a religious saying which says, “If language is not clear, what is said is not what is meant. If what is said is not what is done, what should be done remains undone. If what should be done remains undone, morals and art will deteriorate. If morals and art deteriorate, justice will go astray. If justice goes astray, people will stand helplessly in confusion” (Wahab, 1989).

Communication and Collaboration

Among the 21st-century skills is the ability to communicate and collaborate. These skills recommend that in the pursuit of their life goals, learners are capable of cooperating with others regardless of gender, race, nationality, or society. People must always get connected with others.

This educational objective is in line with the Islamic teaching as stated in Qur’anic verse,

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا ۚ إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَىٰكُمْ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ

“O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, so that you know each other. Verily the most honored of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things)” (*al-Hujuraat: 13*).

Medium of Instruction (Teacher Talk)

The input hypothesis says learners’ acquisition is promoted when they are exposed to a sufficient quantity of comprehensible input (Krashen, 2013). In a foreign language teaching context, teachers play an important role as the main provider of comprehensible input to the learners. Consequently, teachers should use the target language as a medium of instruction during their teaching activity in the classroom, and their language needs to be modified and adjusted according to the level of the learners’ competence. Thus, the teachers’ talks are comprehensible to the learners, hence promoting language acquisition and learners’ language competence.

This use of the comprehensible language principle is relevant to an Islamic value as suggested by Ali bin Abi Thalib that a speaker should adjust the language according to the addressee’s competence,

خَاطِبُوا النَّاسَ عَلَىٰ قَدْرِ عُقُولِهِمْ

“Talk to people in line with their minds”

Instructional Materials

Teaching materials are prepared and presented by the teachers and learned by the learners. They can be pedagogic or authentic (Tomlinson, 2011). Pedagogic materials, such as textbooks, are designed intentionally for instructional purposes. Authentic

materials are those which are intended not for teaching but can be used for instructional purposes such as texts from newspapers or magazines.

Concerning this, teachers can prepare and/or select the materials by which learners always “read” Islamic teachings and values to know and internalize them. In a language teaching context, such a material has twofold functions, i.e. to improve learners’ language competence and to develop their knowledge and understanding of Islamic teachings.

Islam urges in the Qur’anic verse,

اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ

“Read in the name of your Lord, Who Created” (al-‘Alaq:1). It implies that whatever materials are taught to the learners, they must have Islamic-teaching-oriented content.

Instructional Strategies

There is no panacea in the method, meaning that there is no one method that is good for all. Each context requires a unique strategy. Therefore, in a language instructional setting, to optimize the effectiveness of the teaching process, teachers need to exert strategies and conduct varied activities appropriate to the existing conditions. The instructional strategy should be appropriate to the characteristics of the learners, the teaching objectives, the materials, and the prevailing facilities.

This principle goes in line with the dakwa strategy explained the Holy Qur’an,

ادْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجَادِلْهُمْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ

“Invite (mankind, O Muhammad SAW) to the Way of your Lord (i.e. Islam) with wisdom and fair preaching, and argue with them in a way that is better” (*an-Nahl:125*).

It also implies that the dakwa strategy ought to be suitable for the target, the audience, and the present circumstances.

The findings of this study unraveling a rendezvous between linguistics topics, language teaching principles, and Islamic values can be taken into consideration in developing a method of endeavor in the process of Islamization of sciences. So far, there has been a strong eagerness to revitalize the Islamic spirit to be a foundation of developing sciences. Islamic values are sourced from the Divine revelation. Therefore, they must be taken as the resources of all truths including scientific realities. In other words, Islamic values should be taken as the sources of inspiration to develop sciences rather than sciences are advanced just to justify the religious faith.

Islam is a way of life. Its holy reference, Al-Qur’an, is the main source of guidance for human life (al-Baqarah:2), and together with Hadits, people will never go astray if they follow or obey both of them (H.R. Al-Hakim). It implicates that Islamic values conveyed by both references underlie all human efforts including the advancement of sciences and all other social, political, economic, and cultural aspects of human life.

Islamizing sciences is more substantial than just integrating Islam and sciences. Islamizing sciences means developing sciences based on Islamic values. For example, inspired by the Qur'anic verse al-Baqarah:31,

وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الْأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا

“And He taught Adam all the names.” Adam is believed to be the first human being ever created by Allah on earth. As a human being, he must have used a verbal instrument to communicate and interact with his environment. Informed by that verse, linguists draw an inference that human language is originally Divinely sourced. Then, discussion over human language triggered the interest in the emergence of linguistics. In short, linguistics arises inspired by the Qur'anic verse, hence, its development is founded on an Islamic spirit.

Now that sciences exist in our lives, and it is impossible to put the Jeannie back into the bottle, meaning that it is impossible to stop their advancement or deny their existence, what can be done is to understand them and develop them further in an Islamic perspective and realize their functions in term of technological manifestations with Islamic spirit. Thus, their presence is not only beneficial to human life but also useful to raise worldly welfare, universal justice, and social prosperity.

CONCLUSION

Based on the previous findings and discussion, it can be concluded that some linguistic issues and language teaching points are discussible from an Islamic perspective. The rendezvous between linguistics, language teaching, and Islamic values can be taken into consideration as a foundation to develop the effort of Islamization of sciences, not merely conducting an interdisciplinary, integrated study of sciences and Islamic principles. In other words, Islamic values should become the source of inspiration and motivation to advance sciences rather than just developing sciences to justify religious truths.

The engagement between linguistics and Islamic teachings is revealed to be manifested in terms of the belief in the Divine origin of language, the admittance over the existence of language acquisition device as an inherent internal instrument within the human brain, the need for the compliance with quality and quantity maxims, and that of politeness rules, as well as the fair and respect behavior among speakers of different language variants.

Concerning language teaching issues and Islamic values, the compatibility lies in need for communicative competence, communication and collaboration, the management (viz. adaption and adoption) of teaching materials, and the exertion of effective strategies, including the use of modified teacher talk to attain comprehensibility.

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