THE RELEVANCE OF ARABIC IN ISLAMIC STUDIES: LINGUISTIC IMPLICATIONS FOR UNDERSTANDING THE QUR'AN AND HADITH

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ABSTRAK

Bahasa Arab memainkan peran mendasar dalam memahami sumber utama ajaran Islam, yaitu Al-Qur'an dan Hadis. Sebagai bahasa wahyu, struktur linguistik bahasa Arab yang kompleks memerlukan pemahaman mendalam guna memastikan interpretasi teks Islam yang akurat. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis sejauh mana kemahiran dalam bahasa Arab berkontribusi terhadap pemahaman teks Islam serta dampak keterbatasan linguistik terhadap pemahaman ajaran Islam. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kajian pustaka dengan pendekatan deskriptif-analitis untuk menelaah berbagai referensi yang relevan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa keterampilan bahasa Arab, seperti tata bahasa (nahwu), morfologi (ṣarf), dan semantik (dalālah), memiliki peran krusial dalam memahami makna kontekstual teks. Kesalahan dalam memahami struktur linguistik dapat menyebabkan misinterpretasi terhadap ayat-ayat Al-Qur'an dan Hadis. Oleh karena itu, diperlukan strategi pembelajaran bahasa Arab yang efektif, inovatif, dan berkelanjutan guna meningkatkan kualitas pemahaman terhadap ajaran Islam. Integrasi teknologi dalam pembelajaran bahasa Arab juga menjadi solusi untuk memperluas akses serta mempercepat proses pemahaman. Dengan demikian, penguatan literasi bahasa Arab menjadi langkah strategis dalam menumbuhkan pemahaman Islam yang komprehensif, moderat, dan kontekstual.
Kata kunci: Bahasa Arab; Pemahaman Islam; Studi Linguistik; Al-Qur'an; Hadis

ABSTRACT

The Arabic language plays a fundamental role in understanding the primary sources of Islamic teachings, namely the Qur'an and Hadith. As the language of revelation, the complex linguistic structure of Arabic requires deep comprehension to ensure accurate interpretation of Islamic texts. This study aims to analyze the extent to which proficiency in Arabic contributes to the understanding of Islamic texts and the impact of linguistic limitations on the comprehension of Islamic teachings. This research employs a literature review method with a descriptive-analytical approach to examine various relevant references. The findings indicate that Arabic language skills, such as grammar (nahw), morphology (ṣarf), and semantics (dalālah), play a crucial role in comprehending the contextual meanings of texts. Inaccuracies in understanding linguistic structures can lead to misinterpretations of Qur'anic verses and Hadith. Therefore, effective, innovative, and sustainable Arabic language learning strategies are necessary to enhance the quality of understanding Islamic teachings. The integration of technology in Arabic language learning also serves as a solution to expand access and accelerate the comprehension process. Thus, strengthening Arabic literacy becomes a strategic step in fostering a comprehensive, moderate, and contextually relevant understanding of Islam.
***Keywords**: Arabic Language; Islamic Comprehension; linguistic Studies; Qur'an, Hadith*

INTRODUCTION

Arabic holds a central position in Islam as the language of its sacred texts, namely the Qur'an and the Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) (Isbah, 2023). The Arabic language plays a crucial role in understanding Islamic sources, including the

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Qur'an, Hadith, and other classical works. As the original language of divine revelation, a deep understanding of Arabic is essential for accurately interpreting Islamic teachings. Many scholars argue that mastering Arabic not only aids in comprehending sacred texts but also in explaining the cultural and historical contexts underlying them (Ali, A. 2021).

Islamic sources, particularly the Qur'an, are written in Arabic, a language rich in meaning. Each word and phrase can carry multiple nuances, depending on context and grammatical structure. A person's limitations in the Arabic language can hinder their ability to deeply understand Islamic teachings. Therefore, the ability to analyze Arabic texts is crucial to avoiding ambiguity and misinterpretation. Furthermore, many Islamic literary works authored by great scholars throughout history require Arabic proficiency for comprehensive study and access.

Mastery of Arabic not only facilitates access to sacred texts but also enables an understanding of the underlying nuances and contexts related to daily religious practices (Pera Aprizal, 2021).Arabic language education, offered at various levels from preschool to higher education, supports this understanding. Moreover, strong Arabic proficiency allows individuals to grasp the deeper meanings within the Qur'an. Explicit instruction on high-frequency vocabulary in Arabic learning has been shown to positively impact the comprehension of Qur'anic verses, particularly in specific surahs (Zaini et al., 2021).

The clarity of meaning in the Qur'an often cannot be achieved without a deep knowledge of Arabic grammar and syntax. Classical Arabic, the original language of the Qur'an, has a structure distinct from modern Arabic (Alobaidi et al., 2015). This presents a challenge for those unfamiliar with classical Arabic, as misunderstandings can lead to misinterpretations of Qur'anic and Hadith injunctions (Che Mat et al., 2022). Furthermore, inadequate grammatical analysis may result in semantic loss in the interpretation of Qur'anic verses and Hadith, as reflected in research by Abdelaal and Rashid on the challenges of translating the Qur'an, which can lead to a loss of meaning (Abdelaal & Md Rashid, 2016). Informative Arabic texts significantly impact reading proficiency, thereby strengthening comprehension of Qur'an-based instructional materials (Hidayad & Rusli, 2024).

In the modern era, with the increasing global interest in Islamic studies, Arabic language proficiency has become more relevant than ever. This study seeks to address the following questions; What role does the Arabic language play in understanding the Qur'an and Hadith?; What are the consequences of limited Arabic comprehension in interpreting Islamic texts?; How can linguistic approaches contribute to a deeper understanding of the Qur'an and Hadith?

RESEARCH METHOD

This research employs the literature study method, which involves obtaining information from journals or books relevant to the research theme. The research approach used is descriptive analysis. Data collection is conducted through document exploration, where data is gathered from various sources such as the Qur'an, Hadith, tafsir books, books, and journals on Arabic linguistics. The author then analyzes the findings based on the available data sources. This type of research is also known as library research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Status of the Arabic Language in Islam

Arabic is the only official language in all Arab countries, including Libya, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Maghreb, Egypt, and other regions within the same territory. Al-Ghalayain stated that Arabic consists of phrases used by Arabs to express their feelings and thoughts (Furoidah, 2020). Arabic is the language chosen by Allah to communicate with His servants, as He revealed the Qur'an and Hadith to Prophet Muhammad. Therefore, Allah SWT revealed the Qur'an in Arabic:

اِنَّآ اَنْزَلْنٰهُ قُرْاٰنًا عَرَبِيًّا لَّعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُوْنَ

"Indeed, We have sent it down as an Arabic Qur'an so that you may understand."
(Q.S. Yusuf [12]:2)

Due to its uniqueness, Arabic has distinct characteristics that differentiate it from other languages, such as differences between masculine and feminine forms in singular, dual, and plural structures; grammatical and verb changes that adapt to the subject associated with the verb; I'rab, which refers to changes in word endings in certain situations such as nashab, jazm, rofa', or jar in both nouns and verbs; and Tashrif, which involves changes in words into different forms based on pre-existing standards (Abdullah, n.d.).

The holy Qur'an is the word of Allah and serves as a guide for humanity, revealed in Arabic (Sulfikar & Nurul Fawzani, 2023). As the word of Allah, the Qur'an is distinct from ordinary human language. As a guide to life, humans must strive to understand its verses correctly. In this context, Qur'anic verses require interpretation. A person can comprehend the Qur'an more easily if they have extensive knowledge of Arabic and Arabic linguistic sciences. Umar bin Khattab radhiallahu 'anhu stated:

تَعَلَّمُوا الْعَرَبِيَّةَ؛ فَإِنَّهَا مِنْ دِيْنِكُمْ

"Learn Arabic, for it is part of your religion."

Arabic is one of the means by which humans can understand the meanings of the Qur'an (Haruna, 2019). Mastery of Arabic is crucial for deep understanding and interpretation of the Qur'an. Studying Arabic to fully understand the Qur'an and Hadith is obligatory, as a lack of Arabic proficiency makes it difficult to comprehend them perfectly. Those who master Arabic will find it easier to understand the Qur'an and Hadith (Dewi, 2016).

In interpreting the Qur'an, several aspects of the Arabic language play an essential role, including:

1. One of the causes of misinterpretation of the Qur'an is the inability to read, write, and understand Arabic.
2. Arabic proficiency is a crucial factor in understanding and interpreting the Qur'an. Scholars agree that a person must have a strong command of Arabic to interpret the Qur'an correctly. Mujahid stated that no one should speak about Qur'anic verses unless they are a believer who masters Arabic.
3. Studying Arabic and its linguistic sciences is an indispensable necessity for understanding and interpreting the Qur'an.

Arabic proficiency helps individuals understand Islamic legal terms and their

applications in daily life. Therefore, Islamic educational institutions must actively teach Arabic as an integral part of religious education.

وَلَقَدْ نَعْلَمُ اَنَّهُمْ يَقُوْلُوْنَ اِنَّاَ يُعَلِّمُهُ بَشَرٌ ۗ ر لِسَانُ الاذِيْ يُلْحِدُوْنَ اِلَيْهِ اَعْجَمِيٌّ وَهٰذَا لِسَا ن عَرَب مُّب

"And We certainly know that they say, 'It is only a human being who teaches him (Muhammad).' The tongue of the one they refer to is foreign, while this (Qur'an) is in clear Arabic language." (QS. An-Nahl [16]:103)

Arabic originated as the language of the inhabitants of the Arabian Peninsula. The Qur'an, written in Arabic, exhibits an astonishing structure and eloquent phrasing that captivates the hearts of the Arabs. Undoubtedly, the Qur'an was revealed to people who valued eloquence, fluency in speech, and the beauty inherent in their language. The Qur'an, as the sacred word of Allah SWT, serves as a guide for humanity. Unlike human speech, the Qur'an conveys divine messages. As a guide to life, human understanding must align with its essence. Therefore, the interpretation of Qur'anic verses is essential (Dewi, 2016).

Similarly, understanding Hadith requires Arabic proficiency (Nasution & Lubis, 2023). Arabic enables a more accurate interpretation of Hadith by understanding the meaning of words in their historical and cultural contexts. Hadith is the second source of Islamic teachings after the Qur'an, encompassing various aspects of life and the teachings of Prophet Muhammad SAW. Therefore, Arabic, as the original language of the Qur'an and Hadith, contains intricate meanings that are not always easily translated into other languages. Analyzing the original Arabic texts is crucial for achieving accurate understanding and interpretation.

Islamic sources beyond the Qur'an and Hadith are also predominantly in Arabic. For example, Ar-Rahiq al-Makhtum is not only studied for its Arabic text but is also rich in Islamic educational foundations and methods taught by the Prophet to the early generations (Hunainah, Ikhwansyah, et al., 2023). Arabic language education helps researchers not only in communication but also in understanding the cultural and social contexts during the Prophet Muhammad SAW's time, which played a significant role in the transmission and reception of Hadith (Gajah et al., 2023). Therefore, proficiency in the Arabic language is essential for academic research on Hadith, ensuring that the research conducted is both valid and in-depth. Amzaludin emphasizes that mosques and Islamic educational institutions should play an active role in teaching Arabic as part of religious education. This not only aids in understanding the Qur'an and Hadith but also helps shape the character and morality of learners (Amzaludin et al., 2023).

The Implications of Limited Arabic Proficiency in Islamic Studies

Limited Arabic proficiency significantly affects the study and interpretation of religious texts. Arabic, as the language of the Qur'an and Hadith, provides the key to understanding Islamic teachings deeply. A lack of Arabic skills hinders individuals from directly accessing religious sources, leading to potential misinterpretations of Islamic teachings (Ridwan, 2023). Research shows a strong correlation between Arabic proficiency and students' Qur'anic memorization performance, demonstrating how understanding the language enhances retention and comprehension of sacred texts (Nidia et al., 2022; Zubaidillah, 2018). The lack of proficiency in the Arabic language among students can also hinder the

development of their communication skills, which are essential in the context of social and academic interactions (Annisa & Safii, 2023).

Arabic understanding is not only linguistic but also involves ethical, cultural, and educational aspects. Studies indicate a positive relationship between students' Arabic proficiency and their understanding of Qur'anic verses (Karim et al., 2018). This means that proficiency in the Arabic language is closely related to the understanding of the Qur'an. A deep understanding of the Qur'an involves education that can bring to life the values contained within the text, going beyond mere reading skills (Murtadlo et al., 2023).

In the educational landscape, the importance of the Arabic language is reinforced by innovative learning models, such as multiliteracy learning based on local wisdom, which has proven to be effective in enhancing Arabic language proficiency in higher education institutions (Hadiyanto et al., 2020). Proficiency in the Arabic language also contributes to diplomatic skills and international relations, highlighting its relevance in a broader context, which also includes lessons from the Qur'an in social and foreign interactions (Huda & Afrita, 2023).

When it comes to implementation, teachers and educators are expected to equip students with strong Arabic language skills. Students who study Arabic demonstrate improvements in Qur'anic memorization, indicating the positive effects of structured Arabic language learning (Nidia et al., 2022). Regular reading habits can enhance students' proficiency in Arabic (Marina, 2022). Therefore, efforts to understand and implement Arabic in various aspects, including teaching, should be continuously strengthened.

Finally, the difficulties in learning Arabic, as stated by Muid et al., often become a hindrance to the practical application of this knowledge in religious practices, particularly among students studying in the pesantren context (Muid et al., 2023). Despite these challenges, continuous efforts in Arabic language education and contextual understanding remain essential. Alongside this, the emergence of various innovative Arabic teaching methods, ranging from conventional learning to the use of digital technology , presents new opportunities for students to deepen their understanding of the language. In turn, this enables them to comprehend Islamic sources more effectively. To achieve a more comprehensive understanding of the Qur'an and Hadith, ultimately shaping an educated and knowledgeable Muslim generation, these efforts cannot be overlooked.

Efforts to Enhance Arabic Language Comprehension in Islamic Studies

Efforts to enhance Arabic language comprehension in Islamic studies need to focus on various aspects of learning. One strategy that can be implemented is the development of learning programs integrated with language practice outside the classroom, as well as the creation of an inclusive and innovative learning environment (Annisa & Safii, 2023; Islamy et al., 2024). This also includes the utilization of technology and digital media in the learning process, which can boost students' motivation and their ability to communicate in Arabic (Faiz & Afrita, 2024; Safitri et al., 2022).

Furthermore, it is crucial to involve relevant stakeholders, such as the government and educational institutions, in providing resources and infrastructure that support Arabic language learning (Islamy et al., 2024). The role of pesantren, boarding schools, Islamic universities, educational institutions, and leadership training centers (Hunainah et al., 2024) in teaching Arabic will further solidify the development of the Arabic language for

practical application.

Tabel 1: Findings

Aspect	Description
Findings	1. Proficiency in the Arabic language (nahw, ṣarf, dalālah) significantly influences the understanding of Islamic texts. 2. Misinterpretations of linguistic structures can lead to errors in understanding Islamic teachings. 3. Innovative Arabic language learning is necessary to enhance a moderate and contextual understanding of Islam. 4. The utilization of technology can accelerate and expand access to Arabic language learning. 5. Strengthening Arabic literacy is a strategic step in building a more comprehensive and relevant understanding of Islam.
Recommendation	Integrating Arabic linguistic approaches into Islamic studies through innovative and interactive methods and strategies.

Efforts to enhance Arabic language comprehension within the field of Islamic studies are essential, as they serve not only to improve linguistic proficiency but also to ensure accurate interpretation and deeper engagement with primary Islamic sources such as the Qur'an and Hadith, thereby requiring a strategic, interdisciplinary approach that integrates innovative pedagogy, linguistic analysis, and institutional support for sustainable and meaningful learning outcomes (Yunita et al, 2024). Arabic language education also needs to be oriented toward preparing students to face challenges in the digital era. Educators are expected to enhance their competencies, develop relevant and engaging teaching materials, and implement student-centered approaches ((Burhanuddin, 2024; Faiz & Afrita, 2024) that are also child-friendly (Nasarudin et al., 2024). For example, the use of media such as Smart TVs and interactive educational applications can serve as effective tools to attract students' interest and improve their understanding of Arabic language and religious content.

Arabic language education should also be oriented towards preparing students to face challenges in the digital era. Educators are expected to enhance their competencies, develop relevant and engaging teaching materials, and implement student-centered approaches (Faiz & Afrita, 2024; Safitri et al., 2022). The ideal Arabic language education should also be integrated with character education values and serve as an implementation of the Character Education Strengthening Program (PPK), as found in the Arabic-language book *Al-Akhlak lil-Banin* (Hunainah, Usop, et al., 2023; Ramdhani et al., 2017).

To overcome these limitations, teaching innovations such as interactive learning

environments, language games, or group discussions can be introduced to ensure that students, especially beginners, feel more comfortable and motivated to learn (Ilmiani et al., 2022; Falah et al., 2024). In addition, Arabic language teachers must fully understand and fulfill their roles in the classroom (Laila Agustina et al., 2023). Effective self-directed learning follows the proper procedures, consisting of planning, implementation, and evaluation, as previous research has shown that speaking skills can be improved with the help of academic self- regulation (Hunainah, 2024; Hunainah, Hasanah, et al., 2023).

Emphasizing the development of communication skills and active student engagement in the learning process is expected to enhance Arabic language comprehension and have a positive impact on Islamic studies (Nidia et al., 2022; Ridwan, 2023). Therefore, limitations in Arabic language proficiency have profound implications for studying Islam. Addressing these challenges requires a multidimensional, innovative, and collaborative approach to enhance comprehension and ensure more effective and meaningful learning outcomes.

CONCLUSION

A robust Arabic language education is fundamental to the field of Islamic studies, as Arabic serves as the primary medium through which the Qur'an and Hadith are understood and interpreted. Inadequate proficiency in Arabic can result in misinterpretation of religious texts and potentially lead to incorrect religious beliefs and practices. Therefore, this study advocates for the wider accessibility of Arabic language education within the Muslim community. Scholars and educators must design and implement effective, innovative, and technology-enhanced pedagogical strategies, supported by educational institutions, to foster deeper linguistic competence.

Moreover, integrating a linguistic approach within Islamic studies curricula is essential for advancing learners' comprehension of religious texts beyond superficial translation. Such an approach encourages a more nuanced and contextualized understanding of scriptural meanings. The ultimate goal of this effort is to cultivate a generation of Muslims who are not only linguistically proficient in Arabic, but also capable of applying their understanding meaningfully in both their religious observance and broader social engagement.

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