

Arabic as a Sacred language or Arabic as a Foreign Language?
a survey of Muslim Student's Belief in non-Islamic Higher Education in Indonesia

No. Abstract: ABS-ICOLLITE-23100

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INTRODUCTION

- ❑ Language is a symbol for communicating and transferring information from the speaker to the message recipient. It is a function of Language as communication. In addition, Language is also a vehicle for religion in transferring values or ideology.
- ❑ Some language became a sacred Language because of its function as a medium for expressing divine power and conveying religious teachings.
- ❑ Several studies have been conducted on learning Arabic in Indonesia and research on Arabic for non-Muslims in public schools and learning Arabic in Islamic universities in Indonesia.
- ❑ Unlike previous research, this study analyzes aspects that have not been studied before regarding students' beliefs in non-Islamic Higher education about Arabic Language.
- ❑ The focus of the question in this research is how the belief of students at non-Islamic higher universities in Indonesia relate to Arabic. Do they think Arabic is just a sacred language, or is Arabic a foreign language used in communication?

LITERATURE REVIEW

- ❑ Sociology of Language and Religion (SLR) by Tope Omoniyi and Joshua A. Fishman (2006) : language and religion have, at different times and in different contexts, affected the way people live, the way they create and perceive their own identity and that of others.
- ❑ Haeri (2013) states that linguistically, Muslims use the Classical Arabic Language to read sacred texts, perform prayers, and perform other religious duties.
- ❑ Balraj et al. (2020): Language is a tool for conveying religious messages.
- ❑ Yasir Suleiman (2003): languages, including Arabic, has two functions: 1) the language as instruments of communication; 2) language as a symbol and identity of a group.
- ❑ Saleh Al-Osaimi & Martin Wedell (2014): beliefs have affective, social and religious dimensions besides a cognitive dimension.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative case study approach, and data were collected using a simple random sample survey technique. The respondents were Muslim students at non-Islamic higher education in Jakarta, Makassar, Bogor, and Bandung who enrolled in non-Islamic and non-Arabic language study programs.

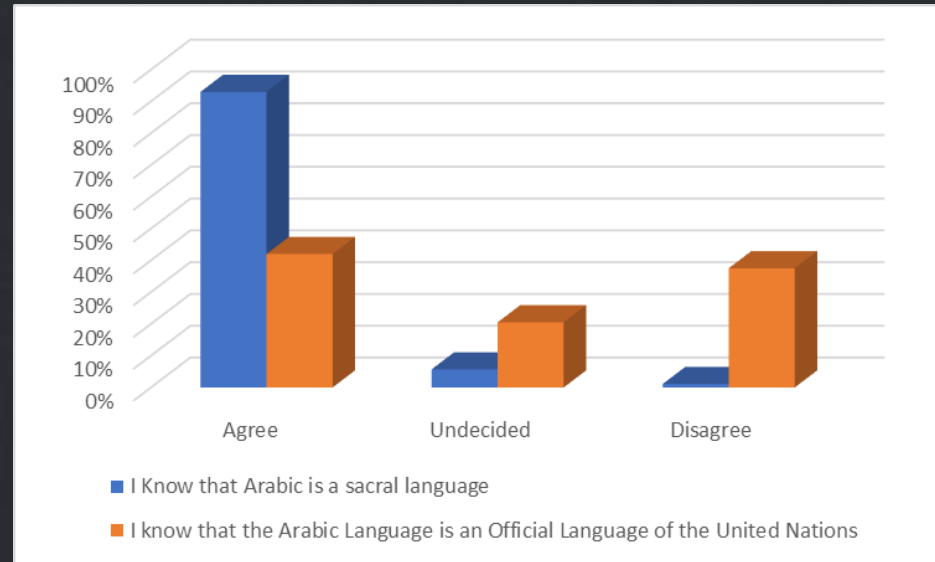
The respondents were 88 students in non-Islamic Higher Education, such as Universitas Negeri Jakarta, Universitas Hasanuddin, Universitas Negeri Makassar, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Institut Pertanian Bogor, who enrolled in study programs in Psychology, Mathematics, Medical, Economics, and Engineering.

Secondary data in this study are articles and literature related to the topic. Secondary data is used to corroborate the findings from the questionnaire data.

Research questions: ***What is students' belief in non-Islamic Higher Education regarding Arabic as a sacred and foreign language?***

FINDING AND DISCUSSION (1)

The comparison of survey results on non-Islamic higher education students related to Arabic is as follows:



- ❑ 42% of respondents said they know that Arabic was one of the official languages of the United Nations. In comparison, 37.5% said they did not know that Arabic was one of the official languages of the United Nations, and 20.5% of respondents were undecided. It is different from their belief regarding Arabic as a sacred language, in which 93.2% of respondents said that they know that Arabic is a sacred language.
- ❑ Even though the official Language is Bahasa Indonesia, Indonesian Muslims are deeply concerned about classical Arabic by studying the Al-Qur'an. Even though they are not proficient in Arabic language skills, such as istima' (listening), kalam (speaking), qira'ah (reading), and kitabah (Writing), not all Indonesian Muslims have mastered it. However, Indonesian Muslims have skills in reading the Al-Qur'an in classical Arabic.



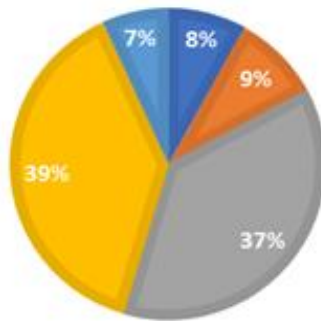
FINDING AND DISCUSSION (2)

- ❑ Most respondents stated they studied the al-Qur'an, classical Arabic, from an early age. And 54.5% of respondents said they could read the Al-Qur'an fluently, and 9.1% said they were very fluent in reading the Al-Qur'an.
- ❑ The respondent's family has formed a habit of reading the Al-Qur'an. As many as 33% stated that the respondent's families habitually read the Al-Qur'an together.
- ❑ Forms of habits in the family in reading the Al-Qur'an together, as follows: 1) reading the Al-Qur'an together after Magrib prayer, 2) During the month of Ramadan, 3) Reading al-Ma'tsurat every morning, 4) reading Yasin every Thursday night.
- ❑ The majority of respondents, as much as 73.9%, stated that they have a routine for reading one of the surahs of the Qur'an. Such as: Al-waqi'ah, Yasin, Al-Fatihah, Al-Kahfi, An Nas, Al-Ikhlash, Al-Insyirah, Al-Qadr, Ar-Rahman, Al-Mulk, Al-Naba, As-sajadah.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION (3)

DO YOU AGREE WITH THE OPINION THAT "IT IS ENOUGH FOR A MUSLIM TO BE ABLE TO READ THE AL-QUR'AN WITHOUT LEARNING ARABIC"?

Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree



Based on the respondents' answers, it is known that the opinion of studying the al-Qur'an without learning Arabic has varied answers. Notably, 37% of respondents were undecided about their opinion, 8% stated that they strongly agreed, and 9% agreed.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION (4)

- ❑ The interest in learning Arabic for communication skills, like any other foreign language: 64.8% said they were interested. Meanwhile, 6.8% said they were uninterested, and 28.4% said they were unsure or undecided.
- ❑ According to respondents, the urgency of mastering Arabic is: 1) to understand religious teachings; 2) to fulfill religious obligations; 3) to be able to communicate with the Arab community; 4) to be able to work in the Middle East.



CONCLUSION

- ❑ in Indonesian Student's belief in non-Islamic higher education, Arabic is considered a sacral language. And this is a result of the social culture in the Indonesian Muslim Family, which has a habit of learning classical Arabic to study al-Qur'an and other Religious studies. And the belief that mastering classical Arabic for reading al-Quran is a religious obligation.
- ❑ So, while Indonesia has the largest Muslim population in the world, it cannot yet popularize Arabic as a foreign language or a communication language.
- ❑ This finding has important implications for developing an Arabic learning model that fits the characteristics and needs of Indonesian people.
- ❑ Learning Arabic to understand religious teachings is important, but learning Arabic for communication purposes is urgent. So, Arabic does not stop at its function as a symbol but continues to develop its function as a means of communication tool.
- ❑ This research has shortcomings and limitations, it is hoped that further research can reach a wider range of respondents, and it is hoped that further research can be carried out on the perspectives of non-Muslim communities in Indonesia regarding Arabic.

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