

# ARABIC LEARNING PARADIGM IN STRENGTHENING THE QUR'ANIC STUDIES AT PTKIN IN SOUTH SULAWESI: MUHAMMAD ARKOUN'S SEMIOTIST CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE

**Muhammad Rusydi**

State Institute For Islamic Studies, Bone  
Jl. Cokroaminoto Watampone Kabupaten Bone Sulawesi Selatan  
Email: rusydi.iainbone@gmail.com

**Suhadi**

State Institute For Islamic Studies, Bone  
Jl. Cokroaminoto Watampone Kabupaten Bone Sulawesi Selatan  
Email: chady77@gmail.com

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## **Abstract**

*This research focuses on analyzing the Arabic learning paradigm in strengthening the Qur'anic studies through Muhammad Arkoun's semiotist critical perspective. This research is descriptive qualitative research using in-depth interviews, participatory observation, documentation, and reference tracing as the collection method for some data sources like managers, lecturers, academic documents, scientific literature, etc. at PTKIN in South Sulawesi. The collected data was then processed through 1) editing, 2), classifying, 3) analyzing, 4) and concluding. The results show it was already running on the correct paradigm. In general, it can be said that there are two types of Arabic learning applied, which in this case is Arabic as MKDU, General Basic Course, with an orientation on Ta'lim al-Lugah al-Arabiyah li al-Agradh al-Khassah and Arabic learning in various special programs like intensive Arabic learning, whether based on ma'had al-jamiah or not. The learning process cannot be separated from Arabic learning, both of which are taught in an interdisciplinary study cycle. The construct of the study refers to three levels: the historical-anthropological level, the linguistic-semiotic level, and the theological-religious level. In the process, Arabic learning is used as a medium to accommodate various practical-methodical frameworks of the interpretation of the Qur'an considering the position of Arabic in this context as the language of the Qur'an. A more contextual and historical understanding of the Qur'an can only be realized when the Arabic with its various historical dimensions as summarized in the various scientific frame that builds it is also studied comprehensively and holistically.*

**Keywords:** Arabic Learning Paradigm, Qur'anic Studies, Muhammad Arkoun's Semiotist

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Arabic learning in the higher education institution environment continues to show developments. The developments provide optimism that its existence is a need for academic development that is immanent with the scientific paradigm of a higher education institution. Consequently, Arabic learning must have a strong orientation as the axiomatic frame of the scientific paradigm is

being developed. In response to this, Muhib Abdul Wahab suggested that the orientation of Arabic learning can be classified into, 1) religious orientation, 2) academic orientation, 3) professional orientation, 4) and ideological orientation (Wahab, 2008: 106, Hermawan, 2011: 94).

From the various learning orientations above, it can be seen that there is a combination of normative and historical dimensions of Arabic as the language of the

Qur'an which is the magnum opus of Islamic teachings. It is appropriate to say that Arabic learning does not only refer to its epistemological framework but also to the substance of Arabic itself as the language of science (Noor, 2018:20, Bulkisah, 2012: 312) These various orientations, in essence, can be positioned as orientations that are systemically interwoven. Adding the orientation of Arabic learning, Rusydi Ahmad Thuaimah argues that the orientation of Arabic learning cannot be separated from the reasons that underlie a person to learn it, which in this case are, a) religious motivation b) social motivation, c) and motivation academic. Therefore, to be able to support efforts to extract laws or various religious teachings contained in various works of Islamic literature, mastery of Arabic is very necessary (Thuaimah, 1989: 31-32, Hamidah, 2019: 36). The orientation of Arabic learning varies along the institution developed scientific vision. Hence, the paradigm of Arabic learning cannot be separated from the paradigm of the developed scientific vision of the institution.

Muhammad Arkoun's attention to semiotics as a study of signs was stated by Ajahari Muhammad Arkoun saw that Islamic studies should not be separated from semiotic critical perspective or the study of signs. His ability to make semiotics a study in reading the Qur'an has opened a path of study for scientists to see Islam more comprehensively and holistically. In that context, two *sunnatullah* signs describe how signs become something that cannot be separated from human life, which in this case are, 1) this world was created by Allah as part of the signs of Allah's power, 2) the books of revelation that were revealed amid human life are a collection of signs that show meaning (Ajahari, 2016: 260).

In its development, the study of signs is a study that has flexibility along with the dialectical process. It occurs between itself and a discourse it marks or the locus of space and time in which the sign is used, so it is very natural when Fiske argues that the birth of meaning is the result of the unification of various aspects that in this case are signs, codes, and culture (Fiske, 1990: 40) Humans who are referred to as homo symbolicus can find and understand the world around them through symbols. The same thing when they

think, behave, and act then what they do cannot be separated from the media of symbols (Cassirer, 1994: 23).

Muhammad Arkoun's semiotist critical perspective in strengthening the Qur'anic studies at PTKIN in South Sulawesi is interesting to do. This effort can orient the study of the Qur'an is not trapped only in a closed study in a text frame. Muhammad Arkoun's offer in the interpretation of the verses of the Qur'an can be a model for Qur'anic studies. This offers dialectics on what is in the Qur'an (*māfī al-Qur'an*) and what is around it (*mā haūla al-Qur'an*) in four steps which in this case are *kalamullah*, Qur'anic discourse, closed official corpus, and interpreted corpus (Arkoun, 1994: 38-39) Muhammad Arkoun's semiotist critical perspective, in its development, has become an alternative corpus in transforming normative values in the Qur'an into orientation to Qur'anic studies. The alternative corpus has ontological, epistemological, and axiological connections to the paradigm of Arabic learning that has a strong relationship with each other. This research article focuses on analyzing the Arabic learning paradigm in Qur'anic studies at PTKIN in South Sulawesi as well as its construction in strengthening the Qur'anic studies through Muhammad Arkoun's semiotist critical perspective.

## Literature Review

Muhammad Arkoun is one of the figures who have great attention to the development of Islamic scholarship. This figure which is famous for the development of text studies, especially in religious texts, was born in Algeria in an area called Tourirt-Mimoun Kabilia to coincide on February 1, 1928. His birthplace is an agrarian area where many people live from agriculture, plantations, handicrafts, etc. The mention of the community in the area with *Berber* is a name that is usually attached to the population who inhabit the northern part of Africa who initially still use non-Arabic languages. Over time, they then use Arabic as their daily communication language (Ghafur, 2002:168).

The culture that forms the background of their daily life determines the pattern of their thinking. It is very sensitive to the various cosmic phenomena that surround him,

including in this context the use of Arabic which underlies the transformation of social values around him. In response to this, Nur Kholik Ridwan said that the environment and surrounding culture are the determining factors as well as the source of one's ideas in understanding human civilization in a wider context (Ridwan, 2019:31).

In relation to semiotist critical perspective in Muhammad Arkoun's interpretation of *manhaj*, Zaglul Fitrihan Djalal divides it into three levels which in this case are, 1) historical-anthropological level which sees how the Qur'an is understood as a text that always has a dialectic with the social culture that surrounds it and the historical framework that underlies it, 2) linguistic-semiotics level which sees how the Qur'an is understood as a sign system that revolves around the langue area while in the parole area of God as the first communicator of time, only God understands the meaning, 3) and theological-religious level who sees how the Qur'an is understood as a transcendental value with a theological-religious character. In developing his *manhaj* interpretation, Muhammad Arkoun provides two systemic stages in interpreting the Qur'an which in this case is the stage of critical linguistic analysis and the stage of critical relationship analysis (Djalal, 2016: 9-15).

The Qur'an is the words of God which is bound to the historical reality that surrounds it. The words of God are then transformed into Arabic text (Arkoun, 2005:41, Rasid and Djafar, 2019:54) The position of Arabic as the language used by God to communicate with humans becomes an object of its own study that is interesting to study. Arabic is a language that has historical roots that are full of anthropological dimensions from Arab society as the first speakers who also received the Qur'an for the first time. In response to this, A. Muzakki and Syuhadak argue that when revelation is spoken of by God from a theocentric dimension to an anthropocentric dimension which is then transformed into Arabic text, in the process, the language of the Qur'an becomes an object of study and makes humans the subject of the study (Muzakki and Shuhadak, 2006:30; Umroh, 2017:51).

## RESEARCH METHOD

This research is a descriptive qualitative research. It elaborates empirical data related to the paradigm of Arabic learning in strengthening the Qur'anic studies at PTKIN in South Sulawesi through Muhammad Arkoun's semiotist critical perspective. The informants consisted of the managers of PTKIN in South Sulawesi, in this case UIN Alauddin Makassar, IAIN Bone, IAIN Parepare, and IAIN Palopo, who are the policymakers of Arabic learning and Qur'anic studies as well as lecturers who teach the scientific frame of Arabic learning and Qur'anic studies as the leading pawns in the effort to strengthening the Qur'anic studies by assessing the paradigm of Arabic learning at PTKIN in South Sulawesi. The total number of informants was twenty four people from the higher education institution managers and lecturers from the Arabic learning and the Qur'anic studies who were chosen by purposive sampling as well as snowball sampling. In the process of data collection, researchers used data collection techniques consisting of in-depth interviews, participatory observation, documentation, and reference tracing.

The collected data was then processed using several structured stages which in this case are, (1) editing as a process of re-examining the data obtained to see the completeness, clarity, suitability, and relevance of other data for the purpose of all data (Nazir, 2003: 346), (2) classifying as a process of reducing existing data by compiling and classifying the data obtained into certain patterns or certain problems to facilitate the discussion (Moleong, 2006: 204), (3) analyzing as a process of summarizing data in a form that was easy to understand and easy to interpret so that the relationship between research problems could be studied and tested (Moh. Kasiram, 2008: 128), (4) and concluding as a process of concluding the data obtained after being analyzed to obtain by an answer to the reader for the anxiety of what was described in the background of the problem (Nana Sudjana and Awal Kusuma, 2008: 28).

## DISCUSSION

### Arabic Learning Paradigm in Qur'anic Studies at PTKIN in South Sulawesi

In relation to the Arabic learning paradigm in the Qur'anic studies at PTKIN in South Sulawesi, it is found that Arabic learning at some of these campuses has a different orientation. It can be separated in its position as an MKDU learned in a formal lecture and as a foreign language studied in an intensive learning activity with non-formal learning as can be found at each PTKIN in South Sulawesi. This phenomenon proves that there is considerable attention on accelerating Arabic learning so that formal lectures are still combined with non-formal learning through various intensive learning activities with various implementation orientations. However, an empirical fact that is quite a challenge for Arabic lecturers is in relation to the ability of students who are still very low in Arabic competence. This was reinforced by Muhammad Yahya who stated that the weak input, which might also be related to the lack of maximum and structured Arabic development activities carried out, made their ability to speak Arabic at a basic level (Yahya, Interview, 16/08/2021).

In line with Arabic learning as MKDU at PTKIN in South Sulawesi, it was found that Arabic is learned in regular Arabic learning which is studied by almost all majors or study programs as well as in the form of special courses for departments and study programs that have an Arabic background which in this case is Arabic Language Education as well as Arabic Language and Literature. In response to this, Muhammad Saleh Syamsuri who is the Head of the Department of Arabic Language and Literature at UIN Alauddin Makassar stated that Arabic learning as MKDU in various departments or study programs at PTKIN in South Sulawesi, in general, is carried out to strengthen Arabic as a language that plays an important role in scientific transformation, which of course, cannot be separated from its various linguistic components.

The linguistic components are language elements in Arabic which consist of vocabulary (*mufradat*), grammar (*qawā'id*), and pronunciation (*makhārijul hurūf*) as well as language skills consisting of speaking skills (*mahārah al-kalām*), listening skills (*mahārah al-istima*), writing skills (*mahārah*

*al-kitābah*), and skills reading (*mahārah al-qira'ah*) (Syamsuri, Interview, 12/09/2021) In line with what Muhammad Saleh Syamsuri stated, Kartini as the Head of Arabic Language Education Study Program at IAIN Palopo stated that Arabic learning in its position as MKDU has its own peculiarities where students in faculties with educational backgrounds such as Faculty of Tarbiyah, Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training, and others, the department or study program developed is Arabic Language Education Department or Arabic Education Study Program with a lot of reference to the emphasis on Arabic learning competencies with all the educational theories in pedagogical, andragogical, and heutagogical locus. Meanwhile, at the Faculty of Adab and Humanities, Arabic learning is carried out by emphasizing the strengthening of Arabic literary studies to reveal Arabic stylistics in both its ethical and aesthetic framework (Kartini, Interview, 01/10/2021).

The dynamics of the orientation of Arabic learning as MKDU, also cannot be separated from the position of Arabic as a language skill that is oriented towards efforts to uncover the sources of knowledge recorded in various existing scientific literature. In other words, the orientation of Arabic learning as MKDU has the character of *Ta'lim al-Lughah al-Arabiyyah li al-Agrādh al-Khassah* or Learning Arabic for Specific Purposes. In response to this, Kaharuddin Ramli stated that Arabic learning as an MKDU in several departments or study programs should be a capital for them in reviewing various kinds of literature according to their scientific background.

The efforts made can be understood as a pragmatic mindset based on the principles of efficiency and effectiveness in Arabic learning which can be said to be quite difficult for students who do not study in a major or study program with an Arabic background such as the Arabic Language Education Department, Arabic Language Education Study Program, Arabic Language and Literature Department, or Arabic Language and Literature Study Program if they want to study it as a whole. Limited ability or limited time to learn Arabic in various dimensions of learning must be focused on strengthening their scientific background. In other words, students in

departments or study programs such as Islamic Family Law are given Arabic vocabulary related to Islamic Family Law, students in departments or study programs such as Islamic Economics are given Arabic vocabulary related to Islamic Economics, and so on so that they are not too burdened to learn Arabic which has a very broad scope of material. In learning Arabic vocabulary, for example, as the most basic activity, students are simply taught Arabic vocabulary that they commonly use in daily communication, especially in their scientific field (Ramli, Interview, 24/09/2021).

The same thing was also stated by Hastang who is the Secretary of the Arabic Language Education Study Program at IAIN Bone who stated that Arabic learning in its position as MKDU needs to be positioned proportionally which in this case more emphasis that is placed on reviewing various kinds of literature that are adapted to the background the scientific background of each student. In the process, students are directed to learn various vocabulary, terms, popular expressions, and others according to their scientific background which is the main characteristic of *Ta'lim al-Lughah al-Arabiyyah li al-Agrādh al-Khassah* or Arabic learning for special purposes (Hastang, Interview, 18/09/2021) This is reinforced by what Mardan stated that Arabic learning is a way to strengthen scientific integration in Islamic religious universities, including in this case in South Sulawesi (Mardan, Interview, 12/09/2021).

In the researcher's search for reading Arabic texts used in two different faculties within IAIN Bone, which in this case is the Faculty of Tarbiyah and the Faculty of Islamic Economics and Business, it appears that there are constructive efforts made by lecturers in presenting Arabic reading as a source of learning by paying attention to the model of *Ta'lim al-Lughah al-Arabiyyah li al-Agrādh al-Khassah* or Arabic Learning for Special Purposes. In responding to the use of various Arabic learning materials that refer to *Ta'lim al-Lughah al-Arabiyyah li al-Agrādh al-Khassah* or Arabic learning for this specific purpose, A. Marjuni stated that constructive steps are needed in promoting quality. Learning Arabic at UIN Alauddin Makassar, which is included in this context, is what can be found in various departments, many of

which do not have an Arabic background or even a religious background.

"This is important to pay attention to considering that students who come from majors with a background in religious sciences, such as the Department of Islamic Religious Education, the Department of Tafsir Hadith, the Department of Islamic Broadcasting Communication, the Department of Islamic Family Law, and others are the departments offered at the university under the auspices of the Islamic Religious Universities, many are still overwhelmed when it comes to learning Arabic. Therefore, an anticipatory step is needed which in this case requires simplification of the material presented which in this case is adjusted to the scientific background of the students" (A. Marjuni, Interview, 12/09/2021)

In relation to Arabic learning which is studied as an intensive learning activity that is studied in the context of non-formal learning, it can be seen that each PTKIN in South Sulawesi, in this case is UIN Alauddin Makassar which develops the Foreign Language Learning Intensification Program (PIBA) which is a continuation of several intensive Arabic learning programs that have been implemented previously such as the Matriculation Program, the Enlightenment of Faith and Life Skills Program, Character Building Program, and others, IAIN Bone which develops Arabic learning which develops the *Mumtaz* Program which is a contemporary method of learning Arabic developed by several experts of Arabic learning such as Alimin Mesra, Saifuddin Zuhri, and others, IAIN Parepare which develops FASIH as the center for the development of reliable human resources which is based on foreign language mastery, and IAIN Palopo which develops MBTA as the program to assess the method of reading and writing the Qur'an.

Based on the researchers' research on the implementation of Arabic learning with the various programs, it can be seen that each PTKIN has developed *ma'had al-jamiah* as one of the forums for its development. In response to this, Muhammad Junaid as the builder of *ma'had al-jamiah* at IAIN Bone

stated that learning Arabic using the *Mumtaz* method applied to *ma'had al-jamiah* helps students understand Arabic easily because of the very active, innovative, creative, effective, and fun learning. In fact, students who are previously antipathetic to Arabic learning because their abilities are still minimal become motivated to learn Arabic. Various popular songs in their daily lives are used as tools to memorize Arabic morpho-syntactic formulas (Interview, 06/08/2021) What Muhammad Junaid put forward is a phenomenon of the Arabic learning paradigm developed using contemporary learning methods as a necessity if Arabic wants to advance in terms of learning interactions both in the pedagogical, andragogical, and heutagogical scope.

The same thing was also stated by Iqbal Hasanuddin that Arabic learning held in the FASIH Program is directed to strengthen students' Arabic communication skills through various popular expressions used in everyday life. In addition, Arabic learning in the FASIH Program is synergized with learning other competencies which in this case is reading and writing the Qur'an so that Arabic learning is positioned as a pillar of Qur'anic studies where Arabic cannot be considered only as a language in direct communication but also as a language that is cross-cultural communication that is able to explore the immanent transcendental meaning in the Qur'an (Hasanuddin, Interview, 24/09/2021) In the observations of researchers, the FASIH Program is widely associated with various student development programs at *ma'had al-jamiah* IAIN Parepare included in this context is Arabic learning which is mostly associated with the orientation of Qur'anic studies.

In relation to intensive Arabic learning at IAIN Palopo, the MBTA Program has an orientation to strengthen students' understanding of the Qur'an. From the name of the program, which in this case is the MBTA, a Program of Qur'anic Reading and Writing Method, it can be understood that the main orientation in the process is how to strengthen students' understanding of the Qur'an. Responding to this, Dewi Purwana stated that students who take part in the MBTA Program, especially in *ma'had al-jamiah*, are directed to Qur'anic studies which in this case are BTQ and its interpretation. In

the process, they are directed to raise empirical examples in everyday life such as in the case of women's leadership. Students are also directed to learn Arabic by focusing on reading and not on speaking (Purwana, Interview, 01/10/2021)

### **Arabic Learning Paradigm in Strengthening the Qur'anic Studies at PTKIN in South Sulawesi through Muhammad Arkoun's Semiotist Critical Perspective**

The construction of the Arabic learning paradigm in strengthening the Qur'anic studies at PTKIN in South Sulawesi through Muhammad Arkoun's semiotist critical perspective, shows that Arabic learning is one way to reveal the immanent meaning of the Qur'an, both explicitly and implicitly. This cannot be separated from the orientation of Arabic as a language that is identical to the Islamic scientific tradition as expressed by several prominent Islamic thinkers who are identical to Arabic education experts such as Rusydi Ahmad Tuaimah, Mahmud Yunus, Azhar Arsyad, and others. The same thing was also stated by Mardan that Arabic learning plays a very important role in Qur'anic studies because the Qur'an is written in Arabic. The Arabic learning is directed to examine the contextual dimensions of the Arabic language so that in turn it has implications for the Qur'anic studies which is also contextual in the position of the Qur'an as an Arabic text (Mardan, Interview, 12/09/2021).

Putting forward by the Mardan, Ruslan DMT stated that learning the Qur'an cannot be separated from Arabic, where the language is chosen as God's medium to communicate with humans. Arabic learning is not enough just to be understood from studying the Qur'an in a monodisciplinary locus. It must be studied by using an interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary integration paradigm (Ruslan DMT, Interview, 14/08/2021). Referring to the semiotist critical perspective of interpretation offered by Muhammad Arkoun, there are three levels of understanding related to the text of the Qur'an written in Arabic which is then linked to how to strengthen the paradigm of Arabic learning in the Qur'anic studies at PTKIN in South Sulawesi which in this case are:

### ***The historical-anthropological level***

On this historical-anthropological level, the Qur'an is understood as a text that always has a dialectic with the socio-cultural that surrounds it and the historical framework that underlies it. The revelation of revelation in the midst of human life has dimensions that are full of historical-anthropological values. This is illustrated, for example, in looking at the long range of the revelation of the Qur'an, which in this case is approximately 23 years or in line with the apostolic period that Muhammad developed. In response to this, Usman argued that an understanding of the Qur'an is not enough just to read from the existing text but it is necessary to carry out a reflective conformation with the historical-anthropological reality that underlies it. The efforts of the Qur'an to provide clarifications on various problems that arose in the life of Arab society at that time became evidence that the Qur'an could not be separated from various historical-anthropological reality-based phenomena (Usman, Interview, 24/09/2021) What Usman stated earlier can be understood from several examples of verses in the Qur'an that refer to its *asbabun nuzul* which are a direct response of the Qur'an to an event. This can be found in QS. al-Kafirun/109:1-6:

قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا الْكَافِرُونَ لَا أَعْبُدُ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ وَلَا أَنْتُمْ عِبُدُونَ  
مَا أَعْبُدُ وَلَا أَنَا عَابِدٌ مَا عَبَدْتُمْ وَلَا أَنْتُمْ عِبُدُونَ مَا  
أَعْبُدُ لَكُمْ دِينُكُمْ وَلِيَ دِينٌ

The translation:

*Say: "O disbelievers. I will not worship what you worship. And you are not a worshiper of the God I worship. And I have never been a worshiper of what you worship. And you have never (also) worshiped the Lord I worship. To you is your religion, and to me is my religion."*

It is described in its historical-anthropological framework that QS. al-Kafirun/109:1-6 was revealed as a response to the invitation of the Quraysh group who were worried about the development of the Prophet Muhammad's *da'wah* which offered the theistic-monotheistic concept of monotheism. In stemming the *da'wah* movement which was considered to be endangering the existence of the pagan tradition by worshipping

idols which they had been doing so far, they invited the messenger of God along with all his people to cooperate with each other, in this case, is done by taking turns worshipping each other's God. In responding to this invitation, Allah SWT gives guidance to the Prophet Muhammad not to fulfill the invitation by giving an affirmation like what is in the QS. al-Kafirun/109:1-6.

In response to this, Kartini described that the repetition of the verses in the Qur'an above is interesting to be approached with a historical-anthropological approach which sees that when a verse is repeated in the Qur'an, it can be said that there is an emphasis on normative theological message in it as in QS. al-Kafirun/109:1-6 where the second verse to the fifth verse means "*I will not worship what you worship. And you are not worshipers of the God I worship. And I have never been a worshiper of what you worship. And you have never (also) become worshipers of the God I worship.*" From the verse above, at least, it can be understood that Muslims in the issue of monotheism have a strong primordial commitment to the monotheistic creed of monotheistic creed and should not open space for mixing up different beliefs, shared with other faiths, especially those with a polytheistic dimension. Cooperation in the profane muamalah area is fine, but cooperation in the area of creed, especially when it has touched the very fundamental and private faith chambers, cannot be justified (Kartini, Interview, 01/10/2021) In Muhammad Arkoun's reading of the verse, in the verses of the Qur'an, it is understood that he is trying to see it from two perspectives, which in this case is a text that is in the realm of the normative-ideal concept of God and a text that is in the area of human understanding that is historical-dynamic.

In relation to strengthening the paradigm of Arabic studies in the orientation of Qur'anic studies, it can be understood that humans need to reread the normative-theological messages in the verses of the Qur'an while emphasizing the need for clear and firm boundaries related to an area where humans can cooperate with others, especially when dealing with issues of belief which are considered very sacred and sacred because it involves the primordial commitment of humans, especially Muslims, to only worship God (Allah swt) The use of the above verse in

the context of Arab society, which at that time was colored by a very high competitive spirit by each religion to defend what they believed in, it was very natural when the Qur'an was described in QS. al-Kafirun/109:1-6 is very firm in providing a dividing line between those who are called believers and unbelievers who will not be able to cooperate with each other in terms of worshiping what each believes to be God.

But along with the time when the lives of religious people have begun to liquefy and even open spaces for dialogue with each other among religious adherents, the immanent normative-theological message in the verse needs to be re-examined because of the different historical-anthropological backgrounds between the past. when QS. al-Kafirun/109:1-6 was revealed when the same surah and verse were studied in the present context. There is a response from the majority of Muslims who do not want to cooperate with those who do not share the faith because they are influenced by the QS. al-Kafirun/109:1-6 can be addressed by making Arabic learning as a forum for forming an inclusive attitude in understanding the QS. al-Kafirun/109:1-6 above.

The word "*al-kafirun*" which may have been in the past is considered as a call that explains the difference between the two sides of a servant's faith which in this case is contrary to the believer, but when in the contemporary context according to his historical-anthropological critical perspective it is considered a call that hurts those outside the religion of Islam, the call "*non-Muslim*" as a substitute for the word "*kafir*" which is considered rude earlier can be a consideration. Here Arabic plays a very strategic role because the Qur'an is written in Arabic.

In response to this, Muh. Arif Pamessangi stated that Qur'anic studies that are supported by a comprehensive mastery of Arabic can reduce the understanding of the verses of the Qur'an which can lead to a destructive level in the very plural locus of social life. Furthermore, he proposed an example of understanding the verse which can lead to radical actions when understood unilaterally, which in this case is QS. al-Fath/48:29:

مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ مَعَهُ أَشِدَّاءُ عَلَى الْكُفَّارِ  
رُحَمَاءُ بَيْنَهُمْ تَرَاهُمْ رُكَّعًا سُجَّدًا يَبْتَغُونَ فَضْلًا مِنَ  
اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانًا سِيمَاهُمْ فِي وُجُوهِهِمْ مِنْ أَثَرِ  
السُّجُودِ ذَلِكَ مَثَلُهُمْ فِي التَّوْرَةِ وَمَثَلُهُمْ فِي الْإِنْجِيلِ  
كَزَرْعٍ أَخْرَجَ شَطْأَهُ فَآزَرَهُ فَاسْتَغْلَظَ فَاسْتَوَى عَلَى  
سُوْقِهِ يُعْجِبُ الزُّرَّاعَ لِيَغِيظَ بِهِمُ الْكُفَّارَ وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ  
آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ مِنْهُمْ مَغْفِرَةً وَأَجْرًا عَظِيمًا

The translation:

*Muhammad is the messenger of Allah SWT. and those who were with him were harsh to the disbelievers but merciful to one another. you see them bowing 'and prostrating seeking Allah's bounty. and His pleasure, their signs appear on their faces from the marks of prostration These are their characteristics in the Torah and their characteristics in the Gospel, namely, like a plant that sprouts, the shoot makes the plant strong, and it grows big and stands upright. Straight above the point; the plant pleases the cultivators because Allah wants to irritate the hearts of the disbelievers (with the power of the believers). Allah promises those who believe and do righteous deeds among them forgiveness and a great reward.*

When the meaning of the phrase "*asyiddā ala al-kuffār*" is understood with mono-discipline-based Arabic skills, what happens then someone will tend to understand it by acting harshly. They tend to be radical towards infidels, then it can be considered as people who are with the messenger of God. This will be counter-productive to the spirit of Islam brought by the Prophet Muhammad which is full of universal civilizational values such as love, compassion, justice, humanity, and others. The word "*al-kuffar*" in the verse at its historical-anthropological level can be understood as a name for those who are hard on the messenger of God, so it must also be addressed vigorously as a form of self-defense that is balanced and proportionate. But in the current context when the spirit of inclusiveness is strengthened in the frame of religious tolerance, a more inclusive understanding is needed where Arabic learning has a strategic role in realizing this.



### ***The Linguistic-semiotic level***

At the linguistic-semiotic level, the Qur'an is understood as a sign system that dwells in the langue area while in the parole area of God as the first communicator of revelation where only God understands its meaning. In this process, understanding the verses of the Qur'an can be an ongoing process as long as humans still show a strong commitment to studying the Qur'an itself. Every letter, word, phrase, sentence, verse, and other as the embodiment of a corpus bound in the frame of the Arabic manuscripts are a thousand signs that encourage the spirit of interpretation of mankind. The spirit of interpretation, of course, may differ from each other in terms of form even though these differences may be only dwelling on the skin area without ignoring the ontological, epistemological, or axiological contacts in the substantive area.

In understanding the Arabic learning paradigm in strengthening the Qur'anic studies, it can be seen from the style of the language of the Qur'an. The style is very identical to the style of language that was widely used by Arabs in the early days. This cannot be separated from their position as the first communicant community where the language style of the Qur'an as a sign system at the linguistic-semiotic level must adapt to the language style of the initial communicant community. Consequently, it can be understood easily such as by providing close parables with their daily life as illustrated in the following verses:

a. QS. al-Kahfi/18:45

وَأَضْرَبَ لَهُمْ مَثَلًا الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا كَمَا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فَاخْتَلَطَ بِهِ نَبَاتُ الْأَرْضِ فَأَصْبَحَ هَشِيمًا تَذْرُوهُ الرِّيْحُ ۗ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مُّقْتَدِرًا

The translation:

*And give them (humans) an example of the life of this world as rain that We send down from the sky, then the vegetation on the earth becomes fertile, then the plants dry up and are blown away by the wind. And Allah is almighty over all things*

b. QS. al-Jumu'ah/62:05

مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ حُمِّلُوا التَّوْرَةَ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَحْمِلُوهَا كَمَثَلِ الْحِمَارِ يَحْمِلُ أَسْفَارًا ۚ بُنِيَ مَثَلُ الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ

The translation:

*The parable of those who carried the Torah to him and did not carry it is like that of a donkey carrying thick books. Very bad example of people who deny the verses of Allah. And Allah does not guide unjust people.*

In accelerating the Qur'anic studies, especially in understanding the verses as above, it is necessary for Arabic learning that is able to reveal the stylistics of the language of the Qur'an which in this case can be done through one of the scientific clusters of Arabic learning that in this case is *balaghah* science. Arabic learning in this context is not enough to only be understood as a communication language that is limited to the area of Arabic elements or Arabic language skills, but far from that the study of Arabic is full of various scientific clusters as described by Muhibb Abdul Wahhab that the study of Arabic consists of several families. science such as tool science in the form of *ilm al-nahw* and *ilm al-sharf*, *ilm al-lughah* in the form of *ilm al-lughah al-nazhari* *ilm al-lughah al-tatbiqi*, *ilm al-ashwat*, *ilm usul al-nahwi*, *ilm al-dilalah*, and *fiqh al-lughah*, *ilm al-furu'* in the form of *ilm al-imla'*, *ilm al-insya'*, *ilm al-tarjamah*, and *ilm al-mutalaah*, and others (Wahab, 2008: 15).

The hierarchy of Arabic scientific frame in Qur'anic studies must be developed comprehensively and proportionally so that the understanding of the Qur'an as a sign system at the linguistic-semiotic level can be understood by approaching the parole of God when humans move in the langue region. In describing these efforts, Muhammad Saleh Syamsuri stated that Arabic learning in strengthening his study paradigm in the orientation of the Qur'anic studies can be done by referring to the *uslub-uslub* of the language of the Qur'an which is very rich so that students are accustomed to understanding the style of language the Qur'an itself (Syamsuri, Interview, 12/09/2021)

### ***The theological-religious level***

At the theological-religious level, the Qur'an is understood as a transcendental value with a theological-religious character whereas Muhammad Arkoun tries to understand it as an attempt to move the Qur'anic studies on a

wedge that is outside the general characteristics of theology. This religious belief requires a fatalistic attitude in accepting the Qur'an, or more accurately it is said to be a mushaf, which is closely related to human primordial commitment to knowledge, faith, and worship in a taken for granted locus. For Muhammad Arkoun, reading the text of the Qur'aatin its theological-religious level must place humans as active subjects in reading and interpreting the verses of the Qur'an in Arabic. In other words, humans must position themselves as active subjects in the process of reading and interpreting the Qur'an.

Accordance with what has been described in Gadamerian hermeneutics that the true meaning of a text lies in what is understood by the reader and not in the author's intention as is believed by intentionism hermeneutics. In this context, Muhammad Arkoun's reading at the theological-religious level does not encourage a fatalistic attitude but instead encourages a deterministic spirit in the meaning of a text where humans as readers must be active in dialectics in interpreting the elements of the Arabic language in which the Qur'an is written. The actual effort does not mean reducing the religious theological quality of a reader when this level is understood as a character-based formal object because the Qur'an itself gives many signs for humans to accelerate their thinking potential, but when understood as a material object, the theological-religious level more on the area that Muhammad Arkoun entered as an area known as a strong normative dimension to be further dialectic with the historical dimension that surrounds it.

In relation to Arabic learning in strengthening the Qur'anic studies, an Arabic learning paradigm is needed that is able to accelerate students' understanding of the Qur'an as a guide in human life which is broader than just studying Arabic linguistic problems which are monodisciplined. In response to this, Muh. Arif Pamessangi stated that Qur'anic studies are directed to form an inclusive attitude toward religion. In this process, Arabic has a very strategic role in supporting a comprehensive and holistic study of the Qur'an (Pamessangi, Interview, 01/10/2021) In providing a clearer framework for the process at the religious theological level, Iqbal Hasanuddin argues that the

Arabic learning should be done no longer talking about learning Arabic or learning about Arabic but in the process of using Arabic as a tool in understanding the Qur'an, what needs to be done then is learning through Arabic (Hasanuddin, Interview, 24/09/2021)

## CLOSING

Muhammad Arkoun's semiotist critical perspective refers to three levels of Qur'anic studies by making Arabic as one of the objects of study which in this case is the historical-anthropological level, the linguistic-semiotic level, and the theological-religious level. Through the three levels of semiotist critical perspective offered by Muhammad Arkoun, efforts to accelerate the Arabic learning paradigm in strengthening the Qur'anic studies can be carried out comprehensively and holistically. In the process, there is a triadic relationship from the cultural dimension at the historical-anthropological level, the language dimension at the linguistic-semiotic level, and the religious dimension at the theological-religious level.

The Arabic learning paradigm in strengthening the Qur'anic studies at PTKIN in South Sulawesi shows that Arabic learning has various dimensions of learning, in this case, learning that is carried out in the form of MKDU and learning that is carried out through various intensive Arabic learning. The existence of Arabic as the language of God's choice to communicate with humans through the Qur'an makes Arabic and its learning has strong relevance to the Qur'anic studies. Therefore, it can be said that the success of the Qur'anic studies is largely determined by a set of paradigms that underlie Arabic learning as an axiomatic framework in learning Arabic, learning about Arabic, and learning through Arabic. The Arabic learning phenomenon indicates Muhammad Arkoun's offers in his semiotist critical perspective which provides an axiomatic framework in reading texts that can be an alternative study to strengthen the Qur'anic studies through a reorientation of the Arabic learning paradigm based on the perspective.

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