

Designing a Curriculum and Lexically Based Bilingual (Arabic-English) Teaching Materials for Basic Islamic Studies

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Abstract: This study, using an action research design, aims at designing a curriculum and developing lexically based bilingual (Arabic-English) teaching materials for three Islamic senior high schools in Malang. The newly developed materials were brought into experimentation: 25 research subjects in the Study Program of Arabic Language Teaching (15 undergraduate students from Universitas Negeri Malang and 10 graduate students from UIN Malang) joined a training of trainers (TOT) using the new materials. According to these teacher-students, the results of TOT are satisfactory and encouraging. They enjoyed teaching the new materials; for they are simple and easy to teach, well-organized under religious themes of Islam, and interesting to both teachers and learners. As for the feedback, they gave three suggestions: (1) the materials should be developed for all proficiency levels; (2) references to Qur'anic dictionaries and books on *Tafseer* (Qur'anic Interpretation) should be added to materials for advanced students; and (3) simple language games and songs should be added to all materials for enrichment and refreshing purposes.

Keywords: curriculum design, lexically based bilingual (Arabic-English) teaching materials, basic Islamic studies

One of the significant influences of the globalization is the emergence of fierce competition among nations in the world. This condition has pushed the country to face two big challenges, both regionally and internationally. AFTA which commenced in 2015 and the global free trade in 2020 have respectively become major issues in the Ministry of Research, Technology, and Higher Education's strategic plan 2025, which states that education is geared to yield smart and competitive Indonesian generations.

This strategic plan is subdivided into four short-term plans, each with a specific goal: the 2005-2009 plan: improving capacity and adjusting to modernization; the 2010-2014 plan: providing better services; the 2015-2019 plan: gaining regional competitiveness; and the 2020-2024 plan: gaining international competitiveness. Universities as crucial parts of the Ministry of Research, Technology, and Higher Education's and as executors of education should be the ones which are most concerned with this plan. This means that the university's strategic plan should be made in accord with the ministry's policy in order to make their graduates ready to face the above mentioned challenges.

The SWOT analysis of the Faculty of Letters, State University of Malang reveals that two study programs, i.e., English Language Teaching (ELT) Program and Arabic Language Teaching (ALT) program, have successfully obtained the grade "A" from National Accreditation. These two study programs should have the opportunity to implement Asian Universities Network Quality Assurance (Suharmanto and NurulMurtadho 2013). Therefore, research and scientific publication in these two study programs should be conducted to meet quality assurance in research.

Studies pinpoint to the woeful fact that Arabic language teaching in Indonesia of all levels—from *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah* or Islamic Elementary School (Khasairi et. al., 2002)

through *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* or Islamic Junior Secondary School (Khasairi & Kholisin 2003) up through *Madrasah Aliyah* or Islamic Senior Secondary School (Maslichah et. al., 2002)—has been plighted by a strain of problems that urgently demand solution. The above predicament instigated a study entitled ‘*The Effectiveness of Vocabulary-Based Arabic Language Teaching for Madrasah Ibtidaiyah*’ by Murtadho & Irhamni (2003). The study, sponsored by Development for Undergraduate Education (DUE-Like) Batch III project, involved fourth grade students of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah in their first semester.

In teaching English as a foreign language, teachers face several problems: lack of motivation among students, inadequate time allotment, inadequate instructional resources and materials, and oversized classes of students. To overcome these problems is actually the responsibility of the educational system. However, the teachers also have to use their creativity to be aware of the limitations and constraints, and collectively make an effort to address and find ways to deal with the frustration these problems bring about (<https://neeyhapuzee.wordpress.com/2011/08/08/problems-in-teaching-english-as-foreign-language-in-indonesia/>).

Three Islamic private schools (i.e. SMA Sabilillah Blimbing Malang, SMA Darul Qur’an Singosari which is affiliated to *Pesantren* (Islamic Boarding Education), and Madrasah Aliyah Maarif Singosari under the auspicious Ministry of Religious Affairs) are willing to make their students more about Islamic teachings through a language curriculum. Therefore, this research aims at designing a curriculum and developing lexically based bilingual (Arabic-English) instructional materials for basic Islamic studies. The expected outcomes are: (1) a language curriculum, (2) teaching materials in the form of flashcards depicting Arabic-and-English vocabularies for basic Islamic studies, and (3) a guide book for teaching the newly developed materials.

THEORETICAL ASSUMPTIONS AND PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Successful mastery of a foreign language through classical instruction, according to Sadtono (1983:1), must rely on time-honored and ironclad principles as follows: (1) extensive in-class instruction, (2) high frequency of drills and real language usage (3) relatively small-sized class of 10-15 students, and (4) teachers with excellent language mastery and teaching competence. The teaching of Arabic at all levels of schooling in Indonesia is confronted by sheer obstacles that directly contradict the above principles.

The common problems associated with the teaching of Arabic in Indonesia are: (1) very minimum teaching-learning sessions with the exception of language department classes, (2) low frequency of language drill and real usage, (3) oversized classes of 40 students, and (4) teachers with mediocre language mastery and inadequate teaching competence (Khasairiet. Al., 2002; Khasairi & Kholisin 2003, Maslichah et. al., 2002). This predicament instigated a study entitled ‘*The Effectiveness of Vocabulary-Based Arabic Language Teaching for Madrasah Ibtidaiyah*’ by Murtadho & Irhamni (2003). The study was funded by Development for Undergraduate Education (DUE-Like) Batch III project.

The lexical approach to second language teaching, according to Lewis (Moudraia 2001), has received interest in recent years as an alternative to grammar-based approaches. The lexical approach concentrates on developing learners’ proficiency with lexis, or words and word combinations. It is based on the idea that an important part of language acquisition is the ability to comprehend and produce lexical phrases as unanalyzed wholes, or “chunks” and that these chunks become the raw data by which learners perceived patterns of language traditionally thought of as grammar.

Very basically, a lexical approach to teaching means the primary focus is on helping students acquire vocabulary. This movement away from a grammar-based syllabus largely began in 1993 with the publication of “the Lexical Approach” by Michael Lewis. It was called an approach to differentiate it from a method. What it focuses on are structures made up of words, meaning that the actual paradigm shift was away from individual words to clusters of words, or lexical chunks as they are commonly referred to. This new idea about the structural nature of the language does not exclude grammatical structures but instead recognizes that the language has far more structures than those that occur in the grammatical syllabus (Lackman:2).

The basic principle of the lexical approach, then, is: “Language is grammaticalised lexis, not lexicalized grammar” (Lewis 1993). In other words, lexis is central in creating meaning, and grammar plays a subservient managerial role. If you accept this principle then the logical implication is that we should spend more time helping learners develop their stock of phrases, and less time on grammatical structures.

In recent years, the entire world has witnessed an upsurge of interest in the Arabic language. An important factor of this interest is the increasing number of Muslims and non-Muslims who need to understand Islam. Over the past few decades, this interest has been growing steadily (Mohamed 2003: v). High schools under the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Indonesia have both Arabic and English as compulsory subjects, which are not synchronized. Therefore, designing a curriculum of lexically based bilingual (Arabic-English) instruction for basic Islamic studies is needed to make students aware of using these two languages in dealing with their religion as well as strengthening their character building.

Presented in Table 1 is a sample of lexically based Arabic-and-English teaching materials, designed for one semester by Murtadho (2014). In each session, the teacher introduces five new words and along with their occurrence in lexical chunks.

Table 1. A sample of One-semester Instructional Materials

Session	/Seeking refuge in Allah/ استعاذة Lexical chunk of				
1	ملك ملك الناس	الفلق رب الفلق	رب رب الناس	العياذ و العياذ بالله	أعوذ أعوذ بالله
	King The King of men	The daybreak The Lord of daybreak	Lord The Lord of men	Seeking refuge I am seeking refuge in Allah	I seek refuge I seek refuge in Allah
2	ربكم عذت بربكم	عذت عذت بربي	ك أعوذ بك	الرحمن أعوذ بالرحمن	اله اله الناس
	Your Lord I sought refuge in your Lord	I sought refuge I sought refuge in my Lord	You I seek refuge in You	The Merciful I seek refuge in the Merciful	God The God of men
3	أعيذها أعيذها بك	همزات همزات الشياطين	الرجيم الشيطان الرجيم	الشيطان من الشيطان	استعذ استعذ بالله
	I seek refuge for her I seek refuge for her in You	Incitements The incitements of the devils	The expelled / the accursed Satan, the expelled (from the mercy of Allah)	Satan/devil from Satan	Seek refuge Seek refuge in Allah
4	Review 1, 2, 3 Language games or test				

RESEARCH METHODS

Research Design

The study was conducted using an action research design, which is appropriate with the aims of the research and will guarantee for the success in reaching the intended quality assurance. The design consists of four steps; they are planning, implementing, observing, and reflecting, as depicted in Figure 1.

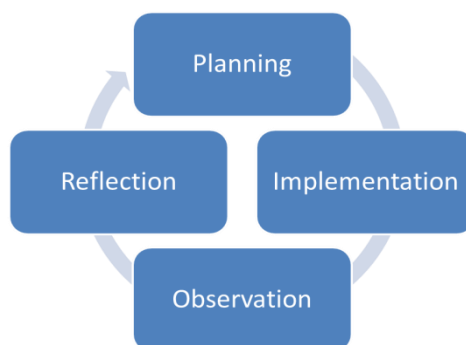


Figure 1: The four steps in doing Action Research

Planning

In order to improve the quality assurance of teaching Arabic and English in three senior high schools in Malang, five activities were conducted: (1) a review on Arabic and English curricula, (2) designing a new curriculum, (3) developing teaching materials in the form of flashcards and a guide book for teaching Arabic-and-English, (4) experimentation, and (5) feedback.

Implementation

The implementation stage was conducted in the Study Program of Arabic Language Teaching at State University of Malang. This was done by implementing the plan, that is by conducting training of trainers on implementing the proposed curriculum and teaching materials of lexically based bilingual (Arabic-English) instruction for basic Islamic studies.

Observation

After the implementation of the supportive training and the improvement of the facilities as required, the overall teaching-learning process using the proposed curriculum and new teaching bilingual materials were carefully noted and recorded. Then the results were analyzed and set out for reflection.

Reflection

The reflection was intended to discuss results obtained from the observation in order to maintain or improve the overall teaching-learning process. If the results are satisfactory and meet the requirements of lexically based bilingual (Arabic-English) instruction for basic Islamic

studies, then this process should be maintained. However, if the results failed to meet the requirements, another plan should be made to improve the process.

Research Subjects

There were 25 research subjects: 15 undergraduate students of the Study Program of Arabic Language Teaching at Universitas Negeri Malang (UM) and 10 graduate students of the same study program at the Islamic State University (UIN) of Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. These research subjects joined a teacher training, or training of trainers, on implementing the proposed curriculum and teaching new bilingual materials through in four meetings during the month of November 2016.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Referring to the previous section, this section covers four sub-sections: (a) a review on Arabic and English curricula, (b) designing a new curriculum which comprises objectives, didactic concepts, and assessment, (c) developing teaching materials in form flashcards and a guide book for teaching Arabic-and-English, and (d) experimentation and feedback.

A Review on Arabic and English Curricula

A brief review on Arabic and English Curricula of Senior High Schools under the Directorate General of Primary and Secondary Education of both the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Ministry of Religious Affairs reveals the following:

1. The Arabic curriculum in Indonesia for all levels of education: elementary school (*Madrasah Ibtidaiyah*), secondary school (*Madrasah Tsanawiyah*) and senior high school (*Madrasah Aliyah*) aims at mastering the four language skills for verbal communication.
2. Similarly, the English curriculum in Indonesia for all levels of education: elementary school (*Madrasah Ibtidaiyah*), secondary school (*Madrasah Tsanawiyah*) and senior high school (*Madrasah Aliyah*) also aims at mastering the four language skills for verbal communication.
3. Neither the Arabic nor English curriculum for the Islamic schools mentioned above aims at developing language skills related to basic Islamic studies.

Designing a Curriculum for Lexically Based Bilingual (Arabic-English) Instruction

As suggested by Mohamed (2003), this curriculum is based on *Aqidah* 'faith', *Syari'ah* 'Islamic jurisprudent' and *Akhlak* 'morality' and contains commonly used Islamic vocabularies: a selection of Qur'anic verses, Prophetic sayings, and other original texts citing Qur'anic chunks, phrases, or verses. It adopts the holistic approach in teaching reading, which simply teaches common simple words and phrases before teaching the alphabetical symbols and isolated sounds. From the onset, its primary concern is meaning and understanding rather than form, grammar, or morphology. This curriculum is designed for teenage students, i.e., adolescents and adults. The general objectives are three-fold, stated below with the assumptions following.

1. Arabic is taught via Islamic contents, which will enable students to understand basic principles of Islam in pure Arabic, along with its English translation, by way of practicing the four language skills in both languages.

2. Essential words and basic sentences in Arabic are carefully selected to help students understand basic concepts of Islam and Islamic cultures. Accordingly, as noted above, the teaching materials for the lexically based bilingual (Arabic-English) instruction are comprised of Arabic expressions (words, phrases, and short sentences) along with their English translations.
3. Since the curriculum is designed as such, the students will accomplish three things at the same time: learning Arabic, learning English, and learning basic principles of Islam.

The researchers made up a sample of a one-semester plan of lexically based Arabic-and-English instructional materials (see Table 2) under the theme *Aqidah* 'Faith', comprising new words and lexical chunks to be introduced subsequently in 14 sessions, followed by two review sessions: the first is intended to review the materials presented in sessions 1 through 7, and the second to review the materials presented in sessions 9 through 15.

Table 2. A Sample of Instructional Materials under the Theme *Aqidah* 'Faith'

Session	New Words and Lexical Chunks
1	<p>إله God الهـي my God الهـك your God الله إله الناس Allah is God of mankind</p>
2	<p>خالق creator خالقي my creator خالقك your creator الله خالق الناس Allah is the Creator of mankind</p>
3	<p>رب Lord ربي my Lord الله ربك Allah is your Lord الله رب الناس Allah is Lord of mankind</p>
4	Review session 1-3
5	<p>رسول Messenger محمد رسول الله Mohammad is a Messenger of Allah إبراهيم و يوسف رسولان من الله Abraham and Joseph are Messengers of Allah إبراهيم و يوسف و محمد رسل من الله Abraham, Joseph and Mohammad are Messengers of Allah</p>
6	<p>نبي Prophet محمد نبي الله Mohammad is a Prophet of Allah إبراهيم و يوسف نبيان من الله Abraham and Joseph are Prophets of Allah إبراهيم و يوسف نبيان من الله Abraham and Joseph are Prophets of Allah إبراهيم و يوسف و محمد أنبياء من الله Abraham, Joseph and Mohammad are Prophets of Allah</p>
7	<p>عبد worshipper محمد عبد الله Mohammad is worshipper of Allah إبراهيم و يوسف عبدان لله Abraham and Joseph are worshippers of Allah إبراهيم و يوسف و محمد عباد الله Abraham, Joseph and Mohammad are worshippers of Allah</p>
8	Review session 5-7
9	<p>كتاب Book القرآن كتاب الله Al-Qur'an is a Book of Allah التوراة و الإنجيل كتابان من الله The Torah and the Gospel are Books of Allah التوراة و الإنجيل و القرآن كتب من الله The Torah, the Gospel, and al-Qur'an are Books of Allah</p>
10	<p>دين religion الإسلام دين الله Islam is the religion of Allah الإسلام دين التوحيد Islam is a religion of monotheism إن الدين عند الله الإسلام surely the accepted religion of Allah is Islam</p>

11	<p>I accepted رَضِيتُ I accepted Allah as my Lord رِبَا الله I accepted Islam as my religion دِينَا I accepted Mohammad as my Prophet نَبِيَا</p>
12	Review session 9-11
13	<p>say قُل Say: Allah is One اِلهٌ اَحَدٌ I seek refuge in the Lord of people اَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ النَّاسِ I seek refuge in the Lord of the Daybreak اَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ الْفَلَقِ</p>
14	<p>created خَلَقَ He created jinn from fire خَلَقَ الْجِنَّ مِنْ نَارٍ He created angel from light خَلَقَ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةَ مِنْ نُّوْرٍ He created men from mud خَلَقَ الْاِنْسَانَ مِنْ طِيْنٍ</p>
15	<p>in the name of Allah بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ Every time, say in the name of Allah Before doing everything, say in the name of Allah After doing everything, say in the name of Allah</p>
16	Review session 13-15

Developing Lexically Based Bilingual (Arabic-English) Teaching Materials

1. Designing Flashcards

Designing flashcards is based on a certain theme, covering new words and lexical chunks which have been stated in the curriculum. The researchers have designed flashcards for one semester entitled “Faith”, which contains four lessons. Each lesson contains three new core words for three meetings; each meeting presents 1 word as the core and puts it in 9 lexical chunks. Sessions 1 through 3 are spent presenting new words and their use in lexical chunks; and the fourth session is spent for a review, which may contain language games. The designed flashcards under the theme “Faith” may well be described as follows:

- Lesson One : Lord رب – Creator خالق God اله
Lesson Two : Worshipper عبد – Prophet نبي Messenger رسول
Lesson Three : Say قل Religion دين Book كتاب
Lesson Four : Was willing رضي Understood مَفْ Read أَرَق

For a sample of flashcards, see the Appendix.

2. Designing a Guide Book

For a class taught weekly (one session per week), the total number of meetings for one semester is 16 (or 8 meetings for one half of the semester). As a guideline the researchers set up 6 points to help the teachers comprehend the overall teaching-learning activities, so that the one-semester plan of teaching lexically based Arabic-and-English materials can be carried out effectively.

- In every session, 1 word as a core under a particular theme is introduced, along with 9 other words and their use in 9 lexical chunks.
- There are four sessions in one month; the first three sessions are spent introducing new materials, and the fourth session is spent for the review.
- This means that every month, the students learn $(9 \times 3 =) 27$ new words and new lexical chunks; and in one semester or four months they learn $(27 \times 4 =) 108$ new words and lexical chunks.
- Based on the assumption that bilingual Arabic-English instruction is carried out in 6 consecutive semesters (from grade I to III), it follows that the students will learn and hopefully master a total number of $(108 \times 6 =) 648$ new words and lexical chunks.

- e. On the flashcard, every single word is written in red and the lexical chunk is written in black.
- f. In every meeting, the students in a class are divided into pairs; and then one set of flashcards containing words and lexical chunks are to be given to each pair of students.

As for the actual teaching practice in the classroom, considering the results of the experimentation, the researchers suggest that the following five steps should be taken:

- a. Before the class begins, the teacher should make sure that a set of flashcards (containing 9 new words and lexical chunks) should be ready for use. Recall that each pair of students needs a set of flashcards; and thus the number of sets needed by each class must be prepared in advance.
- b. In introducing the new material, the teacher takes the flashcards one by one in order. S/he reads aloud each word and each lexical chunk in the card 3 times, asking the students to repeat after her/him. Then s/he raises questions in Arabic about the meaning of the words and lexical chunks in Indonesian, to make sure that the students are not simply parroting, but saying expressions in Arabic (and English) while understanding the meaning.
- c. In the next step, the teacher leads the class to a question-and-answer session about the content of the lesson, to demonstrate to the students how to practice communicating orally in both foreign languages. First, the question-and-answer is carried out in Arabic, as shown in the following example:

من إلهك ؟	الله إلهي
من إلهي ؟	الله إلهك
من إله الناس ؟	الله إله الناس
إذن، الله إلهي، الله إلهك، الله إله الناس، لا إله إلا الله وحده	

- d. When the students have been fluent enough in practicing speaking the Arabic part, then the teacher moves to the question-and-answer in English, as shown in the following:

Who is your God?	Allah is my God
Who is my God?	Allah is your God
Who is God of mankind?	Allah is God of mankind
So, Allah is my God, Allah is your God, Allah is God of mankind. There is no God but Allah alone.	

- e. Since the objective of teaching both foreign languages is to help students acquire communicative ability, for the remaining time of the session, the students practice asking questions and giving answers in pairs, using the flashcards given by the teacher to each pair.

From the above five-step classroom instruction, it should be clear that in teaching both Arabic and English, the emphasis is first to be given on the mastery of spoken language, i.e., listening and speaking. This is in line with the fact that mastering a language means having the ability to communicate orally, before eventually moving to learning reading and writing.

Experimentation and Feedback

For the experimentation for the teaching materials, training of trainers (TOT) was conducted in four sessions during November 2016. There were 15 undergraduate students of the Study Program of Arabic Language Teaching at State University of Malang and 10 graduate students of the Islamic State University of Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. These research subjects joined a teacher training on implementing the proposed curriculum and newly developed teaching materials.

During the training, all of the participants enjoyed the process and were delighted with the teaching materials. Their comments on the curriculum and teaching materials are considered important, and they are reported as follows:

1. The teaching materials are simple and relevant to the needs of students learning at Islamic high schools; they are interesting to both teachers and students and organized in a systematic way.
2. The use of flashcards (as a medium of instruction) makes the teaching techniques effective and lively; and as a result this makes it easy for the students to learn Arabic and English and also to practice communicating orally in both foreign languages.

In addition, the research subjects who joined the TOT were also inventive and critical; and so, for the feedback, they suggested the following improvements:

1. The curriculum and teaching materials should be designed for all levels: elementary, secondary, and advanced levels.
2. More references to Qur'anic dictionaries and books on Tafseer (Qur'anic Interpretation) should be used for advanced learners.
3. Language games should be added to the review section to enrich the materials and to allow the students to have fun while learning both foreign languages, and also to help the teacher to make an easy match between the review and the materials which s/he has presented in the previous lessons.
4. Islamic simple songs in Arabic and English should be added for the purpose of both providing a refreshing classroom atmosphere and enriching vocabularies.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

One of the most important objectives in the 2013 Curriculum is character building. This research entitled "Designing a Curriculum of Lexically Based Bilingual (Arabic-English) Instruction for Basic Islamic Studies" matches the objective of character building nicely since it is designed on the basis of *Aqidah* 'Faith', *Syari'ah* 'Islamic Jurisprudent' and *Akhlak* 'Morality' in Islam. Taking character building at the outset, this action research was seriously and carefully conducted, and the set-up objectives were well accomplished. The success in designing the language curriculum along with developing lexically based bilingual materials (in the form of sets of flashcards) and providing a guidebook for teachers is primarily due to two factors. First, the new materials are academically familiar with the research subjects and psychologically intimate to them. That is, the materials are oriented toward Islamic themes and the research subjects are all Muslims. Secondly, from observing group discussions among the research subjects during the TOP, it is justifiable to conclude that presenting Arabic together with English gives an impression of having religion go hand in hand with modernity.

As the researchers take a close look at the experimentation, all of the research subjects enjoyed the TOT and were delighted with the simplicity of teaching materials as well as the interesting teaching techniques that will probably make it easy for Islamic high school students to communicate verbally with each other in simple Arabic and English. On the basis of the

satisfactory results from the experimentation, we the researchers suggest that, when our proposed curriculum has been implemented and our newly developed teaching materials have been taught for one whole semester, the three Islamic high schools should carry out a comprehensive assessment, to see both the advantages and the drawbacks. This feedback will lead to necessary improvements, to make sure that the curricular objectives (i.e., an effective way of teaching-and-learning Arabic and English while simultaneously underlining basic concepts of Islam) are well accomplished. For future research, we suggest that more experimentation with more developed instructional materials be carried out in other Islamic high schools, to see whether the theoretical and practical value of the new curriculum is truly proven. Finally, our last suggestion is to conduct research on the relationship between lexically based bilingual (Arabic-English) teaching materials and prescriptive grammar of both languages, to ensure that students' development in language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) and their mastery of language components (i.e., vocabulary skill and grammar skill) go hand in hand in a proper way. As such, their communicative ability in Arabic and English, both in speech and writing, will also develop in a gradual and appropriate manner.

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