

***Adab* awareness: A Case in an English language class**

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Abstract

In this 21st century, vast development is seen in globalization and technology, which indirectly influences the approach in teaching and learning. Although this development brings forth advantages to both teachers and students, it also affects them in negative ways. The reality is, in the classroom, the teacher is seen as the knowledge-giver; thus, they are also seen as the *adab*-shaper of the students in their class. *Adab* or the act of being courteous, is an Islamic etiquette that portrays good manners, which needs to be present and shown among Muslim students. Taking this issue into consideration, this paper attempts to discuss how an English language class can be an avenue for teachers to highlight the *adab* awareness among students. Using reflective practice method, this paper explores how a reading passage was used in the English language class for the teacher and students to reflect on their *adab* in lectures and classes in the university. The method allows the teacher and students to assess their thoughts and actions, for the purpose of personal learning and development. The data shows that students are aware of the *adab* in the society and that they have a role to ensure that they present their *adab* as taught by their parents, peers and teachers. They also realize that the *adab* that some teenagers portray may be negative, as it may be caused by the effect of the development of learning in the 21st century and changes in the language learning practice. It is hoped that teachers in the 21st century would continue to remind students that the *adab* in language learning is a value that would shape better future generations, especially in facing the world of globalization and technology. Thus, even in the English language class, teachers can remind the *adab* among students in order to prevent the negative attitude from conquering them.

Keywords: teaching and learning, adab, reflective practice method

INTRODUCTION

In this 21st century, vast development is seen in globalization and technology, which indirectly influences the approach in teaching and learning. According to Cator (in Rich, 2010), “technology allows for 24/7 access to information, constant social interaction, and easily created and shared digital content. In this setting, educators can leverage technology to create an engaging and personalized environment to meet the emerging educational needs of this generation. No longer does learning have to be one-size-fits-all or confined to the classroom. The opportunities afforded by technology should be used to re-imagine 21st-century education, focusing on preparing students to be learners for life”. Thus, twenty-first-century learning will ultimately be “learner-driven” (Hargadon in Rich, 2010) and is defined by modern learning using modern tools (Chen in Rich, 2010).

Although this development brings forth advantages to both teachers and students, it also affects them in negative ways. The reality is, in the classroom, the teacher is seen as the knowledge-giver; thus, they are also seen as the *adab*-shaper of the students in their class. *Adab* or the act of being courteous, is an Islamic etiquette that portrays good manners, which needs to be present and shown among Muslim students. Taking this issue into consideration, this paper attempts to discuss how an English language class can be an avenue for teachers to reflect on the *adab* among students. Using the reflective practice method, this paper explores how a reading passage was used in the English language class for students to reflect on their *adab* in lectures and classes in the university.

ADAB

According to Al-Tamimi (2012), the Arabic word for literature is *adab*, which springs from a word that means etiquette and culture and signifies politeness, sophistication and enrichment. The term *adab*, etiquette, morale and manner are commonly referred as the same thing (Abdul Majid, 2013). The concept of *adab* is parallel to the term dan aim of education in Islam which is *ta'dibi*, which refers to humans with *adab* (Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, 2001). *Adab* is often related to good manners in every action.

According to Majid (2016), Islam is a revealed religion, with Quran as a book of revelation, the constitution and book of guidance. She adds, the value of a being depends upon the ethics – the attitude, behaviour, manners and character. Ethics deals with standards that prescribe what man ought to do, addresses virtues, duties and attitudes of the individual and the society. It is also related to customs, traditions as well as beliefs and worldviews. Notably, there are other fields, such as law, human feeling and culture, which address the same subjects that ethics address. The Arabic term: *akhlaq* (singular, *khuluq*) is laterally translated into English as “ethics”. *Khuluq* comes in the Quran, two times, as:

إِنَّ هَذَا إِلَّا خُلُقُ الْأَوَّلِينَ

This is not but the custom of the former peoples²

وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ

And indeed, you are of a great moral character.³

Another Arabic word which is employed as a literally interchangeable to *akhlaq* is *adab*. *Adab* means manner, attitude, behavior, and the etiquette of putting things in their proper place, which also entails a holistic meaning of good with sensitivity and understanding (Majid, 2016).

NAQLI AND AQLI IN USIM

In this 21st century learning, there is a need for a paradigm shift in the way knowledge is viewed. In the Mecca's 1977 First World Conference on Muslim Education, it was collectively agreed that there is a need to integrate the Revealed knowledge (Al-Quran and Hadith) with the acquired knowledge (worldly knowledge). This is termed by Al-Faruqi (1982) as ‘Islamisation of Knowledge’. According to Al-Attas (1980), the concept of the university (*kuliyyah-jamia'ah*) is one of the important elements of the Islamic system of education. Other components include ‘the concept of religion (*din*); the

concept of man (*insan*); the concept of knowledge (*ilm* and *ma'rifah*); the concept of wisdom (*hikmah*); the concept of justice (*adl*); and the concept of right action (*amal* and *adab*)” (Al-Attas, 1980, p. vi).

USIM is one of the few tertiary institutions that is devoted in upholding the Islamic education together with the modern ‘wordly’ knowledge, alongside the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) and other state university colleges like Selangor International Islamic University College (KUIS) and others. It embraces the philosophy of “The integration of naqli and aqli knowledge combined with the honourable qualities are the thrust in nurturing a noble generation and a knowledgeable society”; the vision of “Integrating Naqli (revealed) and Aqli (human) knowledge to transform and create value for country, ummah and humanity”; and the mission – “Committed to be an advanced knowledge institution based on Islamic Studies, and to spearhead new knowledge using cutting edge technologies to produce innovations, which can transform the country, the ummah and humanity” – within the theme of being “the Leader in the Integration of Naqli and Aqli Knowledge” (Official Portal of USIM, 2016). USIM has come up with its Model of Integration of Naqli and Aqli (Wan Mohamad Nasir, 2015). The model was established after a series of discussion, workshops and seminars, and formally verified in 2014 (Wan Mohamad Nasir, 2015).

There are four levels in the model: Mustawa 1 (Ayatisation), Mustawa 2 (Comparison), Mustawa 3 (Adaptation) and Mustawa 4 (Integration). Mustawa 1 deals with the revelation of knowledge through Quran, hadith and Islamic texts; Mustawa 2 deals with the comparison of approaches between Islamic knowledge and conventional knowledge; and Mustawa 3 deals with the process of selecting, filtering, adapting and using principles, values and framework which do not contradict Islam. In Mustawa 3, adaptation can be embedded by incorporating Islamic values in teaching-learning activities, through assignments or projects which deals with teaching-learning activities towards Islamic worldview, or through extramural activities which uses activities that extend beyond the classroom. The last level is Mustawa 4, which combines and applies various disciplines of knowledge that are not in conflict with Islamic principle. The Model of Integration of Naqli and Aqli (Wan Mohamad Nasir, 2015) is presented in Figure 1.

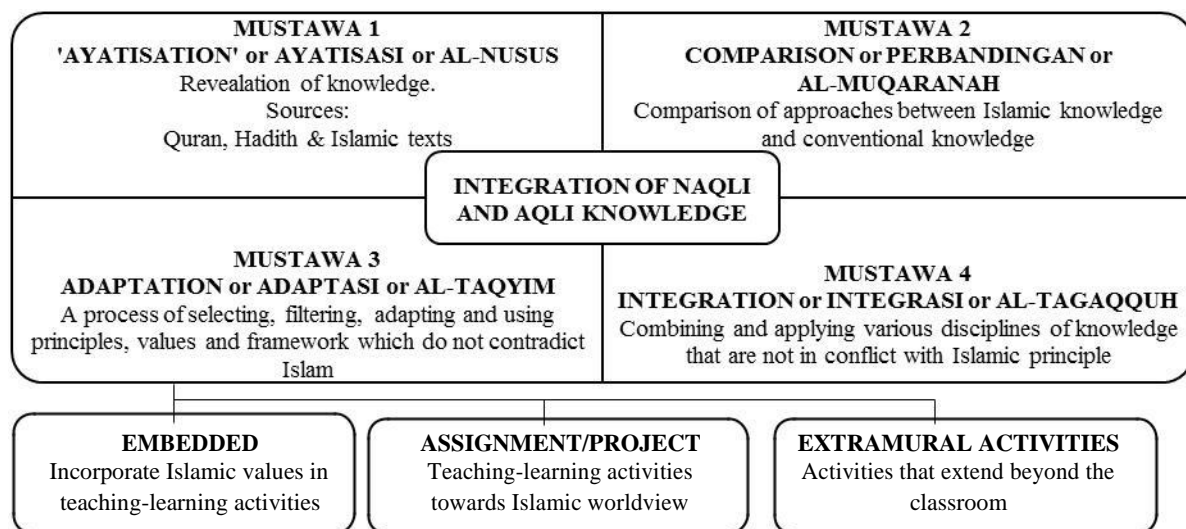


Figure 1: USIM’s Model of Integration of Naqli and Aqli Knowledge (Wan Mohamad Nasir et. al., 2015, p. 52)

This study will adopt a small part of USIM’s Model of Integration of Naqli and Aqli, specifically Mustawa 2, in discussing its integration in one of the lessons in the BIA2012 classes.

NAQLI AND AQLI IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE CURRICULUM

As Kim (2002, 30) suggests, teaching a foreign language is not confined to developing the learner's language skills (reading, writing, speaking and listening). It should also raise their cultural awareness that is indispensable in the use of the foreign language. In the field of language teaching, the understanding of cross culture enables students to grasp the comprehensive skills of the target language, especially for English Language Teaching (Serliah Nur, 2014). When culture is brought into the language classroom, there will indirectly be an incorporation of *adab* into the lesson.

English courses at USIM are University Compulsory (Wajib Universiti – WU) courses, which means that it is part of the curriculum structure for all undergraduate programmes in USIM. There are five (5) levels of English course at USIM (refer to Table 1). Students will enrol into the courses based on their Malaysian University English Test (MUET) result, in which they have to complete 6 credit hours for English courses, equivalent to three courses throughout the period of their studies. BIA2012 English for Communicative Purposes (ECP) is the second level, whereby students are expected to apply appropriate language skills, grammar and vocabulary in their tasks, apply a range of learning strategies to acquire new knowledge of the language to increase skills in understanding and using English, as well as analyse information in a variety of texts. With these expectations, the researchers decided to explore the integration of naqli and aqli in one part of the skills taught, which is through Reading skill. The level of naqli and aqli integration that will be explored in Mustawa 2, as highlighted in Table 1.

Table 1: Levels of English course in USIM

Course	Mustawa (Naqli & Aqli)			
	M1	M2	M3	M4
BIA1012 General English Proficiency	√	√		
BIA2012 English for Communicative Purposes		√	√	
BIA3012 English for Academic Purposes		√	√	
English for Specific Purposes	BIS4012 English for Science & Technology		√	√
	BIS4022 English for Professionals		√	√
	BIS4032 English for Business & Commerce	√		√
	BIS4042 English for Legal Professionals	√	√	
	BIS4052 English for Medical & Health Professionals		√	√
BIS5012 English for Research Purposes	√	√		

METHODOLOGY

The research design employed in this study is qualitative in nature, by adopting the reflective practice method. This method allows teachers and students to assess their thoughts and actions, for the purpose of personal learning and development. According to Plowman (2015), reflective practices are methods and techniques that help individuals and groups reflect on their experiences and actions in order to engage in a process of continuous learning. Reflective practice enables recognition of the paradigms – assumptions, frameworks and patterns of thought and behaviour – that shape our thinking and action. By trying out methods of reflection and personal inquiry we can nurture greater self-awareness, imagination and creativity, as well as systemic, non-linear modes of thinking and analysis (Plowman, 2015).

The participants in the study involved forty-five (45) BIA2012 students, who come from 3 different groups. As these 3 groups are taught by the same teacher, the teacher ensures that the groups learn the same topic or skill from one week to another throughout the semester. For this study, the researchers looked at one reading passage under Reading Skill.

THE READING PASSAGE

The lesson is taken from Savvy English Book 2, the textbook used for the BIA2012 English for Communicative Purposes class. The text is the first reading comprehension text in Chapter 2 under Reading Comprehension. The particular text used in relation to the study is 'Freedom for Teenagers'. This text focuses on students' reading skills, specifically reading comprehension. Generally, by the end of the reading comprehension practices, students should be able to enrich their vocabulary, understand the passage, and identify the main ideas in the passage.

There are five (5) paragraphs in the passage. The first paragraph informs readers that teenagers face a phase of trials and tribulations, as well as a period of confusion and stress, which could be dangerous if left unattended. In the second paragraph, readers are informed of the advances that exist in the 21st century, which change teenagers from being controlled by their parents to teenagers who demand total freedom to do what they want. In the third paragraph, readers are informed of the increase in social pressures that teenagers face as parents are busy working towards job advancement and material gains in order to support their children. This results in parents choosing not to intervene in their children's problems, and spending less time with their children, which may cause teenagers to be involved in unhealthy activities. In the fourth paragraph, the mass media is highlighted as a factor that causes teenagers to explore the meaning of 'independence', which portrays their immaturity in dealing with problems, and thus causing them into trouble. In the last paragraph, the readers are informed that teenagers should not be left on their own too much, as this can cause social problems among them.

As mentioned earlier, from USIM's Model of Integration of Naqli and Aqli Knowledge (Wan Mohamad Nasir et. al., 2015, p. 52), only Mustawa 2 was used in the study. Mustawa 2 involves comparison of approaches between Islamic knowledge and conventional knowledge. One of the examples in the integration of naqli and aqli in BIA2012 is to encourage students to compare Western views and Islamic views towards issues related to their lessons. In the case of the study, the particular lesson discussed is on reading comprehension skill. Wherever possible, students are encouraged to support their ideas with Islamic values that are related to the content of the passage. Through this activity, students are able to train themselves to refer to Islamic teaching and thinking when discussing contemporary issues academically. Other than that, class discussions trains them to communicate ethically based on the pillars of Islamic teaching and values.

ANALYSIS

While discussing the content of the passage in the class with students, the teacher embeds or incorporates Islamic values in the teaching-learning activities. This method links to Mustawa 2 of USIM's Model of Integration of Naqli and Aqli Knowledge (Wan Mohamad Nasir et. al., 2015, p. 52). In relation to this, the teacher brought in the Islamic values in relation to freedom, especially among teenagers. In the context of the text, Western values and practices among teenagers are highlighted and compared to the context of the values and practices in Islam.

In the first paragraph, it mentions that teenagers nowadays are left to themselves too much due to modernisation, social influences and mass media. The teacher discusses this with students to see whether they agree with the statement or not. Here, the teacher informs students to compare what they see is happening to teenagers in general to what they themselves do as teenagers. Students mention that although modernisation, social influences and mass media are influencing teenagers' life, as Muslims they are able to judge between what is good and what is bad, as at their age, they are able to think about positive and negative consequences in life.

The second paragraph states that some teenagers turn into egoistic and materialistic teenagers when they expect their parents to provide freedom to them. They refuse to be controlled by their parents and demand total freedom to do what they want. Some are able to support themselves by working part-time and thus do not see the need to depend on their parents as they have tasted financial independence. On the positive side, this may be good as teenagers will be able to mature earlier and fit into the society naturally. Negatively, some will turn into egoistic and materialistic teenagers as

they have experienced more than others. It is the negative consequences that is worrying for teenagers. Thus in the class discussion, students mentioned that as Muslims, they are guided by the *adab* towards their parents and the society. Thus, as teenagers, even if they have tasted financial independence, they regard their parents as a source of reference in life and in Islam. This will ensure that teenagers are always guided to do the right things in life, the society and in the religion.

In the third paragraph, the passage informs of the social pressures that teenagers face as their parents compete for better job advancement and material gains. Due to this, parents may stop to intervene in their teenagers' problems, and spend less quality time with their teenagers, resulting in the teenagers being left on their own most of the time. These may result in teenagers pursuing in unhealthy activities such as taking ecstasy pills, involving in gangsterism, committing vandalism, taking drugs, committing crime, becoming bullies, playing truant and smoking. When asked to reflect on this, students in the class mentioned that Islam deters their followers from such acts as they bring them to sins. They state that although in the modern world, parents are busy finding income for the family, teenagers are able to think of the consequences that they will face if they engage in the unhealthy activities. They realize that if they do not protect their *adab*, it will not only tarnish their image but also their parents'.

The fourth paragraph blames the effect of the mass media on teenagers being left alone. This is due to what is portrayed by the Western mass media, where teenagers are being left independent and free to enjoy life with their peers. Positively this results in teenagers becoming mature but as teenagers, they are prone to be affected by the negative side of being independent such as cohabit with the opposite sex, face relationship or financial problems, handle pregnancy issues and other social issues. These portrayals influence Malaysian teenagers in general, as they spend most of their time on social networks and exposed to the 'fun' life of Western teenagers, which they then demand from their parents. However, in the class discussion, the students in the class mentioned that although this might affect teenagers, especially those living in the city, it is also their role and the society's role to help guide these teenagers and make them aware that the Western life does not match the *adab* of a Muslim. Not only that, the society can also use the mass media to share the best *adab* of a Muslim, hoping that this will balance or maximise the influence of the mass media Islamically rather than Westernly.

Lastly, in the fifth paragraph it states that teenagers should not be left on their own too much as it could cause possible social ills. It also mentions that parents should not exert excessive control over their teenage children as teenagers might rebel against them. Although the four earlier paragraphs of the passage have discussed more of the Western views on freedom for teenagers, the concluding paragraph provides a reminder that can be applied to teenagers in general, regardless of their religion. On the whole, the passage reflects on what is happening among teenagers in the actual world, and indirectly sets a reminder that all teenagers should be aware of their *adab* in whatever they do in and in any situations there are in.

CONCLUSION

To summarize, the data shows that students are aware of the *adab* in the society and that they have a role to ensure that they present their *adab* as taught by their parents, peers and teachers. They also realize that the *adab* that some teenagers portray may be negative, as it may be caused by the effect of the development of learning in the 21st century and changes in the language learning practice. It is hoped that teachers in the 21st century would continue to remind students that the *adab* in language learning is a value that would shape better future generations, especially in facing the world of globalization and technology. Thus, even in the English language class, teachers can remind the *adab* among students in order to prevent the negative attitude from conquering them.

It is hoped that teachers in the 21st century would continue to remind students that the *adab* in language learning is a value that would shape better future generations, especially in facing the world of globalization and technology. These reminders would hopefully help to prevent the negative attitude from conquering them. To make students aware of their *adab* in life, all parties – parents, peers and educational institutions – should play their role. Parents are the closest to their children,

thus they should spend more time with their children. They should not control their children too much as this may cause them to be more aggressive. Parents should create a harmony environment at home so that children feel comfortable and secure. Nevertheless, the *adab* in the home should also be highlighted so that the children value the meaning of good manners and respect towards everyone in general.

Other than that, the role of peers is also important as they are the closest to the children and understand each others' problems and issues. Children are more prone to express their problems to their peers than their parents, thus peers should be able to provide positive advice in order to prevent their friends from taking unnecessary actions. Thus, parents should also ensure that their children mix with the right group of peers. Lastly, the role of education institutions is also important in shaping the *adab* of students. This is because most social problems that occur in the society now involve teenagers. Thus, teachers or lecturers need to be aware of their students' problems, and where possible, guide and advice them.

In conclusion, learning English is one of the most important assets nowadays. It is common to see that those who acquire more than one language have a better chance of being employed in a variety of sectors such as tourism and business. Through learning a second or foreign language, students are able to participate in various activities that are simple and fun, which can bring out their talent while communicating and exchanging ideas for the benefit of each other. Nevertheless, through English language classes, teachers can also integrate the element *naqli* and *aqli* in their teaching and learning. This will help to remind students that knowledge is not only 'worldly' but also revealed.

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