

## Conference Paper

# Islamization Versus Deislamization of Language a Case of Indonesian Vocabularies

**M. Firman Maulana**

Faculty of Economic, Islamic University of North Sumatra, Medan, Indonesia

### Abstract

The Islamization of language could not be deniable when Islamization process is carried out in any cultures. Arabic language is being charged with Divine inspiration in the form of Revelation so that Arabic becomes the noblest one among the humankind's language and it is the only divinely inspiration living language. The Islamic key concepts as represented by its worldview is encompassing some vocabularies which are use in any languages such as the words *Allah* (God), *Rasulullah* (Messenger), *Jannah* (Paradise), *Akhirah* (The Day After), iman (belief), adl (justice), etc. In Indonesian language for example, these basic Arabic vocabularies also used as key concepts in understanding of Islam. However, because of social dynamic and developing era of politics, economics or culture in Indonesia delislamization of language takes place as well. In fact, changing meaning of the key concepts of Islam and shifting paradigm of thoughts cause to devastating of Muslim's religiosity.

Corresponding Author:

M. Firman Maulana  
 mofiml99@gmail.com

Received: 13 March 2018

Accepted: 10 April 2018

Published: 19 April 2018

Publishing services provided by  
 Knowledge E

**Keywords:** delislamization, key concepts, language, worldview.

© M. Firman Maulana. This article is distributed under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution License](#), which permits unrestricted use and redistribution provided that the original author and source are credited.

Selection and Peer-review under the responsibility of the AICLL Conference Committee.

## 1. Introduction

In discussion on Islamization of knowledge (IOK) we will at least refer to two proponent Muslim scholars, are Syed M Naquib al-Attas and Ismail Raji al-Faruqi. Both Muslim scholars are perceived as the triggers of Islamization of knowledge as they have ignited and raised the term Islamization of knowledge as mainstream discourses especially in the Muslim world since 1970s [8]. They are not just popularizing the term Islamization of knowledge into scientific discourse but also they show creative works as intellectual jihad whether in the form of workshops, national and international seminars or conferences, and printing books of Islamic issues. Their works also contribute to establishing higher education institutions such as International Islamic University (IIU) in Malaysia and Pakistan, establishing ISTAC (International Institute of Islamic Civilization) in Malaysia and IIIT (International Institute of Islamic Thought) in

 OPEN ACCESS

Herndon, Virginia (USA) and in many different countries such as in Uganda, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Pakistan, Nigeria, United Kingdom (UK), Indonesia, etc.

The Islamization of knowledge is *jihad* of intellect, or intellectual movement in attempting to response to the scientific development which is secular-based and positivistic in nature that of resulting and leading to the Muslim lost of their real vision and purpose of life; lost of *adab*. Al-Attas asserted further that Islamization is seen as a solution for the arrangement of the science in order to conform to the moral message of the Qur'an that does not know the dichotomous [3].

Some of Indonesian vocabularies such as *amanah*, *iman*, *ihsan* are derived from Islamic literatures based on divine revealed knowledge. Hence, the meaning of these words does not just appear for communication among community but the words contained noble message based on religiosity (Islam). In other words, those of all are divine words with certain meaning in accordance with the Islamic worldview. Building up of these Islamic words into local languages is a gradual process and so called, Islamization of language. However, in the light of social development, the meaning of mentioned words above has interchanged into various meaning and sometimes deviate from the true meaning of the *Qur'anic* or *Sunnah* messages, as such context so called, de-Islamization of language. Therefore, it is interesting to raise this issue of Islamization and de-Islamization, mainly in relation to some vocabularies of Indonesian language.

## 2. Literature Review

According to al-Attas (2014) the most important thing of the Islamization is the Islamization of language. Whenever the Islamization takes place it should begin with articulation and understanding of the Islamic worldview. As such, since the language is used as medium of communication of this worldview, "Islamization necessarily begins with language" (Hanief, 2009: 37).

Based on historical aspect, the Islamization issue is attached to the knowledge and hence, later on is well known as the Islamization of knowledge (IOK). Indeed, besides Islamization of knowledge, there would be other terms widely known such as Islamization of education, Islamization of curriculum, Islamization of economics, Islamization of social sciences, Islamization of language, etc. In this sense, the Islamization is carried out in specific area or discipline.

The term of Islamization of knowledge (IOK) is a form of Muslim responses to the secularism that spread up around the Muslim world. It has been realized by the Muslim scholars that the Muslim world has reached to the backwardness and crisis. In this

regard, the IOK proponents such as al-Faruqi (1982), Abu Hamid Sulayman (1993), Taha Jabir al-Alwani (1995) and al-Attas (2014) pointed out that of the root problem indeed, lies on knowledge and education as the source and fundamental of Islamic culture and civilization, and hence, from where the solution must also be found.

The crisis in such understanding is an epistemological foundation, and nevertheless, it does not mean that the knowledge is lack or ignorance *per se*, but knowledge that has been interpreted through the Western worldview and developed through methodologies that do not fall within the purview of the Islamic worldview; it is not in line with the Islamic epistemology. Therefore, IOK as expounded by its proponents such as al-Faruqi, Abu Hamid Sulayman, Taha Jabir al-Alwani and al-Attas, is an epistemological and methodological issue in response to the secular knowledge and an effort to reformulate the educational system.

The Islamization of Knowledge (IOK) to al-Attas (1997) is focused to the contemporary, modern or present day knowledge. According to him, the contemporary knowledge as it is being founded on, interpreted and projected through the western philosophical worldview in which it has caused the deIslamization of the Muslim mind and hence, what the need is to Islamize contemporary or modern knowledge [6].

In this conception, al-Attas asserted that IOK is an epistemological and methodological concern dealing with how Islamically creative minds can evaluate modern knowledge using Islamic benchmarks. In this sense Kamal Hassan (1997), the former rector of International Islamic University Malaysia, comments that at the end of the process is reconstruction or reformulation of contemporary knowledge and disciplines, either those existing or the creation of new disciplines if necessary [6].

IOK is defined as "...liberation of man first from magical, mythological, animistic, national-cultural tradition opposed to Islam and then from secular control over his reason and language" (Al-Attas, 2014: 44) and in the context of knowledge which is value-free and hence, IOK defined "the deliverance of knowledge from its interpretations based on secular ideology; and from meaning and expressions of the secular" (Hanief, 2009: 18)

The method of Islamization of Knowledge (IOK) to al-Attas (2014) consists of two steps. First, is isolation or removal of the foreign elements and key concepts from the existing body of knowledge, and secondly, the infusion of Islamic elements and key concept into it. What means by the foreign elements and key concepts that should be removed are secularism, dualism of mind and body, doctrine of humanism and the concept or tragedy especially in literature (al-Attas: 2014: 44).

Meanwhile, the other proponent of Islamization of Knowledge (IOK), is al-Faruqi who defines IOK as following:

“... to Islamize, is to recast knowledge as Islam relates to it...i.e. to redefine and reorder the data, to rethink the reasoning and relating of the data, to reevaluate the conclusions, to re-project the goals, and to do so in such a way as to make the discipline enrich the vision and serve the cause the cause of Islam (al-Faruqi, 1982: 15).

In general, both al-Faruqi and al-Attas proposed the Islamization of knowledge (IOK) as an alternative solution to the secularization or westernization which leads to the crisis and backwardness in the Muslim world. However, one and another stands in different starting points to work in Islamization. To al-Attas, Islamization of knowledge (IOK) is an intellectual response to secularization. Unlike al-Attas, to al-Faruqi the rationale for Islamization of knowledge is the malaise of the *ummah*, the product of dualistic educational system and the inability of the traditional Islamic methodology to be more relevant to times (Hussain, 2009: 58)

Al-Faruqi's method of the IOK is expressed in term of five unities: the unity of Allah, of creation, of truth, of life, and of humanity. These five principles constituted the epistemological foundation of an Islamic methodology of Islamization of knowledge. Later on, for realization and achieving the objectives of the Islamization, al-Faruqi opined further that there should be work-plan or general strategy. The stressing of the work-plans is on the system of education with ultimate aim of integrating the two educational systems; western and the existing Muslim education. The al-Faruqi's IOK work-plan consist twelve steps as following.

1. Mastering of the modern disciplines.
2. Discipline survey
3. Mastering Islamic legacy (the anthology)
4. Mastering of Islamic legacy (stressing on analysis on how Islamic legacy contribute.
5. Establishment of the specific relevance of Islam to disciplines
6. Critical assessment of the modern discipline
7. Critical assessment of the Islamic legacy
8. Survey of the ummah's major problems
9. Survey of the problems of humankind
10. Creative analysis and synthesis

11. Recasting the disciplines under the framework of Islam
12. Dissemination of Islamized knowledge [5].

The al-Faruqi's work-plan as mentioned above resulted critics especially to the opponents of the IOK such as Fazlur Rahman, Hoodboys, Ziauddin Sardar, Yasien Mohamed, Seyyed Nasr (Yusuf, 2009). The work-plan that suggested by al-Faruqi become problematic and lead to devastating criticism as he puts the mastery of modern knowledge as the first step prior to the mastery of Islamic legacy and establishing of the relevance of Islam to Western discipline. Sardar (1988) in this regard comments that the al-Faruqi's method with his work-plan is like "putting the cart before the horse" (Hashim & Rossidy, 2009: 131). Later on, revising and explanation done by Abu Hamid Sulayman and Taha Jabir who are Muslim scholar from IIIT School. Meanwhile, another revising was also done by Safi (1993) and Ragab (1995) from International Islamic University Malaysia school.

Concerning methodology of IOK, the other Muslim scholar from IIIT School, Taha Jabir al-Alwani (1995) proposes six discourses as the steps to present the IOK process, are: Discourse 1 and 2 is articulating the Islamic paradigm of knowledge and developing a Qur'anic methodology. Discourse 3 is a methodology of dealing with the Qur'an, while, for discourse 4 is a methodology for dealing with the Sunnah. Discourse 5 is reexamining the Islamic intellectual heritage and discourse 6 is dealing with the Western intellectual heritage [1].

In this relation, Hanief (2009) as a proponent of the Islamization of Knowledge from IIUM comments that the essence of the Islamization process is the systematic movement from the other-than Islamic ontology and epistemology to the Islamic ontology and epistemology. Working on Islamization, as Hanief (2009) added that the essential thing is to Islamizers, especially before undertaking any actual substantive, they are to take stock of Islamic ontological and epistemological assumption, and the most special importance is the Islamic worldview. In this sense, the Islamic worldview to al-Attas as delivered by Hanief (2009) is covering the Islamic concept of God, man, society, and cosmic order. Therefore, understanding the Islamic worldview is an absolute prerequisite for any attempt to Islamize a social science discipline, a subject, or even one social science concept including languages.

Furthermore al-Attas (2014) expounded that the fundamental key concepts of Islam that should be infused into the body of knowledge of any Western sciences include the concept of religion (*dien*), of man (*insan*), of knowledge (*'ilm* and *ma'rifah*), of justice (*adl*), of right action (*amal* as *adab*) and all terms that are related to them. According to him all these elements mentioned should be linked to the concept of *tauhid* [4].

### 3. Methodology

This paper is based on the analysis towards few books regarding Islamization and its process, methodology, aim and scope. Hence, this paper could be said as library research. In this sense, the paper is categorized into qualitative research whereas the data is derived from review on the related books and analysis on some related documents to represent the idea of the Islamization of knowledge (IOK), the Islamization of language and deIslamization of language.

### 4. Discussion

In discussion on language, it is inseparable with discussion on the worldview, because the language is a medium of expression such as ideas, feeling, faith and thoughts. In other words, language is a medium to communicate verbally or orally the terms and conceptions. As such Islamization is to begin with the articulation and understanding of the Islamic worldview [4]. The Islamic worldview is not a form of culture where the value system and though projecting its vision of reality and truth. It is not derived merely from culture, philosophical elements and science, but is based on original source is Revelation, confirmed by religion, and affirmed by intellectual and intuitive principle. In this sense, Islamic worldview is based on perfect religion, requiring no historical explanation.

“All the essentials of religion: the name, the faith and practice, the rituals, the creed and the system of belief were given by Revelation and interpreted and demonstrated by the Prophet in his words and model action not from cultural tradition which necessarily must flow in the stream of historicism” (al-Attas, 2007: 9).

Therefore, the characteristic of Islamic worldview is referring to the revelation which is permanently established as stated in the following:

“The Islamic worldview is characterized by an authenticity and a finality that points to what is ultimate, and it projects a view of reality and truth that encompasses existence and life altogether in total perspective whose fundamental elements are permanently established” (al-Attas, 2007: 7).

The Islamic vision of reality and truth is another phrase or term of the Islamic worldview and in Arabic word is called *“ru’yatul Islam lilwujud”*. Al-Attas opined that in Islamization process, “since language is the communicator of this worldview, Islamization necessarily begins with language” (Hanief, 2009: 37). It would then be presenting

Islamic key concepts or key words that project the reality and the truth. The word “Allah” (god), “adl” (just), “iman” (faith), and “taqwa” (afraid) for example, being replaced and used in any languages wherever Islam spread and assimilated with the other local people’s belief, cultures and races. Therefore, certain keys of Islamic concepts that represent the worldview can be found either in existing language or in many cases, new languages were created by Islam [6].

Indeed, the process of Islamization is a logical process through three interconnected concepts as Kartanegara (2010) explained, are; naturalization, secularization and Islamization. Naturalization in this context means a process of adaptation or acculturation. Secularization means a process of putting aside all spiritual dimensions, while Islamization is a process of assimilation of western science—including its adaptation and acculturation—into Islamic worldview and civilization.

The process of naturalization or acculturation is natural that human interaction occurs based on individual contact; inter social relation, inter-dialog and any other kind of human interaction. This interaction involves differences of beliefs, values, knowledge, worldview, philosophical life, culture and civilization including languages. In the aspect of language for example, it has happened everywhere throughout interaction, contacting and acculturation in social life. As illustrated, when Islamic empire spread and the Arabic was used as official language in surrounding areas or countries. The process of assimilation and adaptation happened including religious values and mainly some local words or vocabularies. This acculturation further created a special form of Arabic language beside Islam and civilization.

In Malay Archipelago (Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Southern Thailand and Brunei) also happened when the Arabic vocabularies and key concept of Islam are being absorbed, assimilated, adopted and adapted. The key concepts such as *iman* (faith), *adab* (right action), *adl* (justice) and *ilm* (knowledge) are being used at large. Furthermore, some Arabic vocabularies are adopted into Malay like the words *maktab* (office), *mesyuarat/musrawarah* (meeting), *seluar* (pants/trouser) etc. in addition, acculturation between Arabic and Malay (Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei) created a special language namely “Jawi” such as the words “jangan [جعلن] (do not) and [دن] (and). This is a form of a new language based on naturalization.

The process of Islamization of language as shown above is a process of naturalization, adaptation, assimilation or acculturation of secular language in the Muslim world based on Islamic and cultural values. In other words, Islamization takes place as an answer to encounter the secular worldview, mainly concerning to the language. In this sense, the Islamization attempts to reconstruct some vocabularies, especially the key concepts in order to be suitable to the Islamic values and principles. It might be

prevailed through reconstruction of language aspect and modifying it by infusing an Islamic value and in order to be in accordance with the *syari'ah* frame work.

In this regard, al-Attas (2014) views that Islamization was also involving first the Islamization of language, and in fact that the Qur'an itself demonstrated it when it was revealed among the Arabs. It is because "language, thought and reason are closely interconnected and are indeed, interdependent in projecting to man his worldview or vision of reality" (al-Attas, 2014: 45). Therefore, Islamization of language is *sine qua non* in process of Islamization as it is projecting the worldview.

In long run, Islamization does not merely occur in certain key concept of Islam, but it is broadened into using Arabic words at large in which some people view as Arabization. It is found in Indonesian vocabularies such as the words *kursi* (chair), *hewan* (animal), *qirhos-kertas* (paper), *Ahad* (Sunday), *Itsnaen* (Monday), *Tsulatsa* (Tuesday), *Arbi'a* (Wednesday), *Khamis* (Thursday), *Jum'ah* (Friday), *Sabt* (Saturday), *Qawi* (strong), *hukum* (law), *akbar* (stronger), *tabligh* (general study), *ta'lim* (teaching), etc.

Referring to the acculturation context, the frame work of Islamization process as mentioned by Kartanegara above; naturalization, secularization and Islamization, it could happen anywhere since Islam spread around the world. In fact, the second and the thirds come up interchangeably following the context. Some times Islamization comes up after secularization or conversely, secularization comes after Islamization and so called, "de-Islamization". DeIslamization in this context is "the infusion of alien concept into the minds of Muslim, where they remain and influence thought and reasoning. It is the causing of forgetfulness of Islam and of the Muslim/ duty to God and to His Prophet, which is the real duty assigned to his tru self; and hence, it is also injustice (*zulm*) to the self" (al-Attas, 2014: 46-47).

In Indonesian context, the Islamization process happen as it changes first the people' view point from the existing belief and culture under Buddhism, Hindus or Animism doctrine. Islam introduces the system of belief and values through conveying its world-view and using certain key concepts such as introduce term of "*Allah*" as the Creator, and it is not like the people believe in God that of physical, worldly and material in nature. The system of worship which is called "*sembahyang*" (worshiping) for example, it is derive from the word "*sembah*" (worship) and "*Hyang*" (God/Deity). Then Islam introduces the term "*shalat*" or "*salah*" as Muslims' activities in worshipping Allah.

The term Allah is not God, Deity or the other objects of worship as performed by the other believers (non-Muslim), because the concept of Allah for Muslim and the concept of God for non-Muslim is fundamentally difference. Using the word of Allah in fact, had been raised and discussed few years ago in Malay Archipelago, whether it is possible

for non-Muslim using the word “Allah”. Actually, the word Allah might be used for non-Muslim; nevertheless, it could not be the same meaning for different worldview and perception to every religion. Hence, such a way indeed, deIslamization occurs by changing the meaning of Allah into the alien meaning and is not in accordance to the Islamic view point.

Similarly, the word *adl* (fairness-justice) is already commonly used with secular understanding so that its meaning becomes equality of rights and hence in a division or in the treatment of law is not distinguished from each other because everyone has the same rights. However, the word *adl* with this meaning does not in line with the Islamic teaching. In the law of *wirasah* (inheritance) for example, Islam taught the division of inheritance between man and woman is 2:1 and hence, in this context it could be called *adl* (justice) since it is following the Islamic teaching.

Another key concept (key terms) of Islam is the word “*ibadah*” which means requisite action or worship. The word *ibadah* is also commonly used in Indonesia today by the non-Muslim without exception. In long run the word “*peribadatan*” which is derived from the word *ibadah* and pointing to any kinds of places of worship such as mosque, church and temple. Such a way, based on Islamic perspective, it has changed the meaning of *ibadah* or *peribadatan* into peculiar, secular and worldly meaning which is not in accordance with Islamic view point.

In the Islamic context, the word *ibadah* as explained by al-Attas (2014) is taken from the word *abd*, and is the correct term of reference to someone who is in realization indebted absolutely to Allah, abases himself in service to Him with all conscious and willing acts of service for the sake of Allah. In this sense, *ibadah* is not only performed vertically to Allah in particular place like the mosque, but also horizontally as in social contact among the human beings and universe since it is for the sake of Allah alone.

Therefore, the concept of *ibadah* in Islam is fundamentally different with others. As a complete way of life, *ibadah* is an ethical life for all Muslim in whole of life without discharging between worshipping Allah in particular place and beyond it. However, in long run as shown today, the word *ibadah* is used in different conception within various believers or religions; as such deIslamization of language takes place in Indonesian vocabularies with devastation among Muslim religiosity.

## 5. Conclusion

Both Islamization and deIslamization are constituted as logical process and it is natural as consequences of acculturation. Islamization of language is *sine qua non* and hence, when Islamization process occurs it will involve the Islamization of language. Moreover,

the Islamization process is projecting the minds of Muslims or their worldview in which the key concepts are introduced such as the word *jannah*, *Rasul*, *shalat*, *ibadah*, etc. In this sense, wherever Islam spread will influence the existing local languages and in many cases creating new languages like “*jawi*” as product of acculturation.

Acculturation could be natural since the human interaction occurs in social contact, inter dialog and any other kind of human interaction. This interaction involves differences of beliefs, values, knowledge, worldview, philosophical life, culture and civilization. Therefore, the Islamization and deIslamization would be interchangeable depending on which culture is dominance in certain societal life.

In this context, the meaning Islamization of knowledge is infusing of Islamic elements and key concepts into the existing language at the whole, and hence, what mean by deIslamization of language is infusing the alien concepts into the existing languages which influences thought and reason then causing of changing the meaning and shifting paradigm of people’s thought. In this sense, deIslamization means secularization and brings the Muslims into misleading and loss of Islamic vision. It will then lead them into split personality with narrow outlooks, dichotomous and secular.

## References

- [1] Al-Alwani, Taha Jabir (1995). *The Islamization of Knowledge: Yesterday and Today*. Herndon. Virginia: IIIT
- [2] Al-Attas, Syed, Muhammd Naquib, Wan Daud, Wan Mohd. Nor (2007). Kuala Lumpur: *The ICLIF Leadership Competency Model (LCM): An Islamic Alternative*. The International Centre for Leadership in Finance (ICLIF).
- [3] Al-Attas, Syed, Muhammd Naquib (1995). *Prolegomena to the Metaphysics of Islam: An Exposition of the Fundamental Elements of the Worldview of Islam*. Kuala Lumpur: ISTACT.
- [4] ——— (2014). *Islam and Secularism*. Kuala Lumpur: IBFIM.
- [5] Al-Faruqi, Ismail Raji (1982). *Islamization of Knowledge: General Principles and Workplan*. International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT). Maryland: International Graphics Printing Service.
- [6] Hanief, Mohamed Aslam (2009). *A Critical Survey of Islamization of Knowledge*. Second Edition. Kuala Lumpur: IIUM Press.
- [7] Hashim, Rosnani and Rossidy, Imran (2009). *Islamization of Knowledge: A Comparative Analysis of the Conception of al-Attas and al-Faruqi*. Intellectual Discourse 8, No.1 (2000): 19-44.

- [8] Hussain. Mohd. Yusof (2009). *Islamization of Language: The Case of Malay*. In Mohd. Yusof Hussain (ed.) *Islamization of Human Sciences*. Second Edition. Kuala Lumpur: IIUM Press.
- [9] Kartanegara, Mulyadhi (2010). *Secularization of Science and Its Islamic Answer*. Paper presented at ISTAC. Kuala Lumpur.
- [10] Sardar, Ziauddin (1988). *Islamic Economics: From Partial to Axiomatic Approach, Chapt4er 9 in Islamic Futures: The Shape of Ideas to come*. Kuala Lumpur: Pelanduk Publication.
- [11] Sulayman, Abu Hamid (1993). *Crisis in the Muslim Mind*. Herndon, Virginia, USA: IIIT.