Chapter 4
Incompatible Discrepancy Between Low Proficiency of Arabic Language and Its High Status and Prestige

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ABSTRACT

Muslims are ardent to learn Arabic and study al-Qurʾān, but many of them are not competent in manipulating the Arabic language. The discrepancy of high prestige and status of the language versus low proficiency of the learners is the target of the research in this chapter. The author calls this "incompatible discrepancy." What do they indeed do in the Arabic school and Qurʾānic school? If they are so ardent, they should be highly competent in Arabic. The process of their learning is, exactly to say, rote-learning. In schooling they just memorize phrases from al-Qurʾān and the other religious texts. They start to learn Arabic as a graphic mode. They never learn Arabic as an identity marker without sticking to the way of learning it as a graphic mode. In this globalizing world everything is going to be digitalized. On the other hand, in the Islamic world many of the things remain analog, especially the way of leaning Arabic. The globalizing world is digital while the Islamic world is analog. Digital/analog can be considered as an important perspective for the world.

INTRODUCTION

In this globalized world there are many common phenomena found on all the corners of the globe. Migration is one of them. Political uprisings, economic crises and such urgent reasons as well as searching for working places for their family lives have obliged many people to cross political borders. They have to live and work in places unfamiliar to them. In most of the cases language and culture differ from their own ones. They have to get accustomed to the new living circumstances, including new language acquisition. As migrants are older this language acquisition is more difficult to implement.

As for this new language acquisition there are at least three cases: 1) to acquire the major, mostly official, language used in the host society positively and actively 2) to acquire any, not necessarily major, of the languages spoken around them in the host society unwillingly just for their communication for their lives and stick to their own native language especially in their original native countries 3) to acquire the prestigious and highly valued language in their own culture (including religion), which they much more stick to in their unfamiliar and unstable circumstances even while they might acquire any, not necessarily major, of the languages spoken around them in the host society.

In the area of language acquisition for migrants the waves of globalization can be found: that is to say, as a result of things going on they select English for their purpose of communication with people in the host society. However this globalizing trend contradicts the third case mentioned above. So to speak migrants of the third case tend not to follow the globalizing trend.

The representative one in the third case is Muslim people. They tend to stick to their Islamic culture much more in a new unfamiliar circumstances. The prestigious and highly valued language of their own culture is Arabic. They want to learn and acquire Arabic language ardently much more than they were in their original native countries, keeping in mind that they could communicate with other Muslims in the same language Arabic. Their behavioral tendency signifies that they stick to Arabic language as an **identity marker** of Muslims. That is to say, they emphasize that they themselves are Muslims (**religious identity**) prior to their original ethnic affiliations (**ethnic identity**) such as Arab, Malay, Indonesian, Filipino and the like.

The reason why their prestigious and highly valued language is Arabic is that the sacred text al-Qurʾān is written in Arabic and the **liturgical language** in Islam is Arabic. They are eager to learn and acquire Arabic and study al-Qurʾān even outside the Islamic countries.

It is normal in this globalizing world that people generally want to learn and acquire prestigious and highly valued language such as English so that they can attain the level high enough to communicate with people native of that language.

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