

Internalization Of Value Ecotheology Through Arabic Language Learning At Madrasah Ibtidaiyah

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Abstract

The increasingly complex environmental crisis demands an educational approach that is not only oriented towards the mastery of knowledge, but also on the formation of students' ecological awareness. In the context of Islamic education, ecotheology is one of the relevant paradigms to integrate religious values with concern for the environment. This article aims to examine the concept of internalizing Islamic ecotheological values through learning Arabic at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI). This study uses a library research approach by analyzing various literature on Islamic ecotheology, environmental education, and Arabic language learning. The results of the study show that learning Arabic has strategic potential as a medium for internalizing ecotheological values because language materials can be contextualized with environmental themes sourced from the Qur'an and Hadith. Values such as amanah, caliph fil ardh, balance (mīzān), responsibility, and concern for nature can be integrated into the objectives, materials, methods, and evaluation of Arabic language learning. The integration not only improves students' language competence, but also forms an ecological character that is in accordance with Islamic teachings. Thus, learning Arabic based on ecotheology can be an alternative to strengthening continuing education at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah.

Keywords: Internalization of values; Ecotheology; Arabic.

INTRODUCTION

The environmental crisis has become one of the most pressing global issues of the 21st century. Various phenomena such as climate change, water pollution, forest destruction, biodiversity loss, and increasing volume of waste show that the relationship between humans and nature is experiencing serious disharmony. Various international reports affirm that environmental damage is caused not only by technical and economic factors, but also by the human perspective that places nature as an object of exploitation without considering ethical and spiritual aspects.¹

In the religious context, scholars consider that the environmental crisis is actually a moral and spiritual crisis. Modern humans tend to separate the relationship with God from responsibility to nature, thus giving birth to exploitative behavior towards the environment.² Therefore, an educational approach is needed that is able to build ecological awareness while strengthening the spiritual dimension of students.

Islam has a strong theological foundation regarding the relationship between humans and nature. The Qur'an describes nature as kauniyah verses that show the greatness of Allah

¹ United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), *Global Environment Outlook 6* (Nairobi: UNEP, 2019), p. 23.

² Lynn White Jr., "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis," *Science* 155, no. 3767 (1967):pp.1203–1207.

and must be maintained in its continuity. The concept of human beings as *caliphs fil ardh* emphasizes that humans are mandated to manage the earth responsibly, not to destroy it.³ This principle became the basis for the birth of the study of Islamic ecotheology that linked divine teachings with environmental ethics.

Islamic ecotheology developed in response to the growing ecological awareness of the Islamic world. This study places nature as an integral part of the divine system that must be respected and maintained. According to Nasr, the modern ecological crisis arises because humans have lost the sacred dimension in looking at nature.⁴ Nature is no longer understood as a manifestation of God's greatness, but merely an economic resource that can be exploited without limits.

Education has a strategic position in building ecological awareness from an early age. At the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) level, the cultivation of environmental values is very important because elementary school is the most fundamental phase of character formation.⁵ The integration of ecological values into learning can form habits and mindsets that are sustainable into adulthood.

One of the subjects that has great potential to internalize ecotheological values is Arabic. As the language of the Qur'an and the main source of Islamic teachings, Arabic not only functions as a means of communication, but also as a medium of transmission of Islamic values.⁶ Learning Arabic can be an effective means of introducing environmental concepts through vocabulary, reading texts, dialogues, stories, and language activities that are oriented towards nature conservation.

However, the practice of learning Arabic at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah still tends to focus on linguistic aspects alone, such as mastery of mufradat, qawa'id, and language skills. The value dimension, especially related to ecological awareness, is still relatively under-appreciated.⁷ As a result, learning Arabic has not fully functioned as an instrument for the formation of students' ecological character.

Departing from these problems, this article aims to examine how Islamic ecotheological values can be internalized through learning Arabic at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah and formulate integration strategies that are relevant to the needs of Islamic education in the 21st century.

³ M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Mishbah*, Vol. 1 (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2019), p. 143.

⁴ Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Man and Nature: The Spiritual Crisis of Modern Man* (Chicago: ABC International Group, 1997), p. 18.

⁵ Thomas Lickona, *Educating for Character* (New York: Bantam Books, 2009), p. 54.

⁶ Ahmad Fuad Effendy, *Arabic Language Teaching Methodology* (Malang: Misykat, 2020), p. 35.

⁷ Acep Hermawan, *Arabic Language Learning Methodology* (Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya, 2021), p. 41.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a type of library *research* with a qualitative-philosophical approach, which emphasizes the interpretation of the text in depth and the tracing of the relationship between the concept of Islamic ecotheology and Arabic language learning at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah.⁸ Data sources are divided into primary sources, including the Qur'an (especially QS. Al-Baqarah: 30, QS. Al-Ahzab: 72, QS. Ar-Rahman: 7-9, and QS. Al-A'raf: 56), the main hadith books, as well as fundamental works of Islamic ecotheology, and secondary sources consisting of journal articles, books, dissertations, and curriculum documents of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah.⁹ The data collection technique uses documentation by searching through academic databases (Google Scholar, DOAJ, Scopus, SINTA) using structured keywords and *snowball* techniques to browse reference lists from key literature.¹⁰ Data analysis uses the *qualitative content analysis method* through three stages, namely data condensation, data presentation in the form of a conceptual matrix, and conclusion drawing and verification, with source triangulation to ensure the validity of the findings.¹¹ The research procedure is carried out in four stages, namely the preparation stage, data collection, analysis, and reporting of research results.¹²

DISCUSSION

The Concept of Ecotheology in Islam

Islamic ecotheology is a paradigm of thought that integrates the teachings of Islamic theology with ecological awareness in understanding the relationship between God, humans, and the universe. Etymologically, the term ecotheology comes from two words, namely *ecology* which means the science of the reciprocal relationship between living things and their environment, and *theology* which means the science that discusses God and everything related to religious beliefs. In the perspective of Islam, the two concepts cannot be separated because the entire universe is a creation of Allah SWT which has certain goals, order, and functions in the system of life. Nature is not a stand-alone entity, but a part of the signs of Allah's power

⁸ Hamzah, A. (2020). *Library Research Methods: Philosophical, Theoretical, Application, Process, and Research Results* (Revised Edition). Malang: Literasi Nusantara Abadi, pp. 13-15.

⁹ Luthfiyani, P. W., & Murhayati, S. (2024). Strategies to Ensure Data Validity in Qualitative Research. *Tambusai Education Journal*, 8(3), 45315-45328

¹⁰ Setiawan, D. A. F. (2023). *AQAK Library Anxiety Scale Based Assessment on Users at UPI Library* (Thesis). University of Education Indonesia, pp. 45-47.

¹¹ Luthfiyani & Murhayati (2024), pp. 45320-45322; Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2014). *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications (classic methodological references that remain relevant).

¹² Hamzah (2020), pp. 89-92; Fithriyani, N. (2021). *A Literature Study of Parenting on the Confidence of Students with Visual Impairments* (Thesis). State University of Jakarta.

(*kauniyah verse*) that must be understood, respected, and maintained by humans. Therefore, man's relationship with nature is not only ecological, but also has a strong spiritual and theological dimension.

The concept of Islamic ecotheology was born in response to the increasing environmental damage that occurs due to the overexploitation of natural resources. Various problems such as deforestation, water pollution, climate change, biodiversity loss, and the waste crisis show that modern humans tend to view nature only as an economic object that can be used without limits. In Seyyed Hossein Nasr's view, the root of the modern environmental crisis lies in the loss of man's sacred awareness of nature. Nature is no longer seen as a manifestation of God's greatness, but merely a commodity that can be exploited for the benefit of human materialism. As a result, the harmonious relationship between humans, nature, and God experiences a rift that has an impact on the emergence of various ecological disasters.¹³ In Islam, man's relationship with nature is built on the principle of monotheism. Tawheed is not only interpreted as a belief in the oneness of Allah, but also as an awareness that all creatures are part of the creation system that is subject to His will. Thus, destroying nature means disrupting the order that God has established in creation. This perspective shows that concern for the environment is not just a social obligation, but part of the practice of monotheism in daily life.¹⁴

One of the fundamental concepts in Islamic ecotheology is human beings as *caliphs fil ardh* (representatives of Allah on earth). This concept comes from the word of Allah in QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 30 which explains that man was created as a caliph on earth. The position of the caliph shows that man has a divine mandate to manage, utilize, and care for the earth responsibly. The mandate is not a legitimacy to control nature absolutely, but a mandate that contains moral and spiritual responsibility. According to Quraish Shihab, the human caliphate must be understood as a duty to prosper the earth (*isti'mar al-ardh*) while maintaining its balance and sustainability. Therefore, any form of exploitation that causes environmental damage is contrary to the nature of the caliphate itself.¹⁵

Apart from being a caliph, humans also carry the mandate given by Allah SWT. Trust in the context of ecotheology means the responsibility to keep all of God's creation in good and sustainable condition. The Qur'an illustrates that trust is such a great responsibility that the heavens, the earth, and the mountains are reluctant to take it, while humans are willing to accept

¹³ Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Man and Nature: The Spiritual Crisis of Mode.....*pp. 17–25.

¹⁴ Osman Bakar, *Environmental Wisdom for Planet Earth* (Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC Press, 2021), p. 31

¹⁵ M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Mishbah*, Vol. 1 (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2019), pp.143–145.

it (QS. Al-Ahzab [33]: 72). In the context of the environment, the mandate is realized through behaviors that reflect concern for nature conservation, such as maintaining cleanliness, saving the use of resources, protecting plants and animals, and avoiding actions that can cause environmental damage.¹⁶

Another principle that is the foundation of Islamic ecotheology is the concept of *mizan* or balance. The Qur'an explains that Allah created the universe based on a very careful size and balance as mentioned in QS. Ar-Rahman [55]: 7-9. This balance is seen in various natural phenomena, such as the water cycle, food chains, the alternation of day and night, and the interaction between various components of the ecosystem. The sustainability of life on earth is highly dependent on maintaining this balance. When humans carry out excessive exploitation, such as uncontrolled deforestation or environmental pollution, the balance of nature will be disturbed and various ecological disasters will arise. Therefore, maintaining environmental balance is part of the religious responsibility of a Muslim.¹⁷

Islamic ecotheology also emphasizes the prohibition of doing *facades* or damage on the earth. The Qur'an repeatedly reminds people not to do damage after Allah has repaired it (Qur'an. Al-A'raf [7]: 56). The term *façade* has a wide scope of meaning, including social, moral, economic, and ecological damage. In the context of the environment, actions such as littering, polluting rivers, burning forests, and overexploiting natural resources are forbidden forms of *facades* in Islam. The prohibition shows that protecting the environment is not only a matter of social ethics, but also a religious obligation that has moral consequences before Allah SWT.¹⁸

Thus, Islamic ecotheology views nature as God's mandate that must be managed wisely by humans. The relationship between God, man, and nature is an interrelated and inseparable relationship. Environmental damage is understood as a result of human failure to carry out the role of the caliphate and the mandate given by Allah. On the contrary, environmental preservation is a form of worship that reflects human obedience to God as well as concern for the sustainability of future generations' lives.

¹⁶ Mujiyono Abdillah, *Environmentally Friendly Religion Perspective of the Qur'an* (Jakarta: Paramadina, 2020), pp.87–90.

¹⁷ Fazlun Khalid, *Signs on the Earth: Islam, Modernity and the Climate Crisis* (Leicestershire: Kube Publishing, 2019), pp. 54–58.

¹⁸ Yusuf al-Qaradawi, *Ri'ayat al-Bi'ah fi Syari'at al-Islam* (Cairo: Dar al-Syuruq, 2020), pp. 61–65.

The Relevance of Ecotheology to Arabic Language Learning at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah

Arabic language learning at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah has a very strategic position in the process of internalizing Islamic ecotheological values. Arabic is not only a communication tool or subject that functions to develop students' linguistic competence, but also the language of the Qur'an and Hadith which are the main source of Islamic teachings. Through Arabic, students can access various Islamic values contained in religious texts, including teachings on man's relationship with nature and ecological responsibility as caliphs on earth.¹⁹

So far, Arabic learning at the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah level tends to be oriented towards mastering linguistic aspects such as vocabulary (*mufradat*), grammar (*qawa'id*), reading skills (*qira'ah*), writing (*kitabah*), speaking (*kalam*), and listening (*istima'*). While these aspects are important, learning Arabic actually has a wider opportunity to become a medium for character education and value transformation. The integration of environmental themes into Arabic materials allows students to gain a learning experience that is more contextual, meaningful, and relevant to everyday life.²⁰

The Qur'an contains hundreds of verses that explain natural phenomena such as plants, animals, mountains, seas, rain, wind, earth, and sky. The richness of ecological vocabulary in the Qur'an can be used as a source for the development of Arabic learning materials at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah. For example, when students learn the vocabulary of plants (النباتات), teachers can relate them to verses of the Qur'an that explain the benefits of trees for human life. Similarly, when studying the theme of water (الماء), students can be invited to understand that water is a source of life that must be maintained and should not be wasted. In this way, the learning process not only improves language mastery, but also builds students' ecological awareness.²¹

The integration of ecotheology in Arabic language learning can also be done through the selection of learning themes that are close to the lives of students. Themes such as the school environment (البيئة المدرسية), cleanliness (النظافة), parks (الحديقة), animals (الحيوانات), plants (النباتات), and water (الماء) are very relevant to the characteristics of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah students who are still in the concrete operational stage. Through these themes, students can learn Arabic vocabulary and structure while observing real objects in their surroundings. This approach is

¹⁹ Ahmad Fuad Effendy, *Arabic Language Teaching Methodology* (Malang: Misykat, 2020), pp.35–37.

²⁰ Acep Hermawan, *Arabic Language Learning Methodology* (Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya, 2021), pp. 41–43.

²¹ Osman Bakar, *Qur'anic Environmental Ethics* (Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC Press, 2021), pp.88–95.

in line with the principles of contextual learning that emphasize the relationship between the subject matter and the students' life experiences.²²

Arabic language learning based on ecotheology can be a means of forming students' ecological character. When students get used to reading Arabic texts about keeping cleanliness, having a dialogue about the importance of throwing garbage in its place, or writing simple sentences about caring for plants, ecological values will slowly be internalized in them. This process not only results in good language skills, but also forms positive habits and attitudes towards the environment.

Arabic language learning functions as an educational instrument that integrates cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects in a balanced manner. In the end, the integration of ecotheology in Arabic language learning at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah is an effort to present a holistic Islamic education. Education is not only directed at the achievement of academic competence, but also at the formation of a generation of Muslims who have spiritual awareness, social responsibility, and ecological concern. Through this approach, Arabic can be transformed from just a subject into a medium for the formation of ecological character based on Islamic values and supporting the realization of *sustainable education* in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah.

Arabic Language Learning at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah

Arabic language learning at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) is one of the important components in Islamic education that aims to develop students' ability to understand and use Arabic as a language of communication as well as a language of religion. In general, Arabic learning at MI is directed at mastering four language skills (*al-mahārāt al-lughawīyyah*), namely listening skills (*mahārah al-istimā'*), speaking (*mahārah al-kalām*), reading (*mahārah al-qirā'ah*), and writing (*mahārah al-kitābah*). These four skills are interrelated and become the foundation for students to understand Islamic texts gradually according to their level of development.²³

At the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah level, learning Arabic is not only oriented towards the achievement of linguistic competence, but also serves as a means of character formation and internalization of Islamic values. This is because Arabic has a special position in the Islamic tradition as the language of the Qur'an, Hadith, as well as various classical and contemporary Islamic literature. Mastery of Arabic allows students to understand religious messages more

²² Elaine B. Johnson, *Contextual Teaching and Learning* (California: Corwin Press, 2018), pp.67–71.

²³ Ahmad Fuad Effendy, *Arabic Language Teaching Methodology* (Malang: Misykat, 2020), pp. 63–65.

authentically and deeply. Therefore, learning Arabic cannot be separated from the mission of Islamic education which aims to form people who have faith, knowledge, and noble character.²⁴

From the perspective of contemporary Islamic education, learning Arabic should not only emphasize grammatical aspects such as *nahwu* and *sharaf*, or vocabulary mastery alone. Arabic needs to be developed as a learning medium that is able to integrate various life values, including social, cultural, spiritual, and ecological values. Thus, Arabic material can be an effective vehicle to convey Islamic messages about human responsibility for the environment. This approach is in line with the holistic education paradigm that views students as individuals who must develop intellectually, emotionally, socially, spiritually, and ecologically in a balanced manner.²⁵

The integration of ecotheological values in Arabic learning is very relevant because the Qur'an itself contains many verses related to the universe, plants, animals, water, soil, rain, and various other ecological phenomena. These themes can be used as contextual learning resources so that students not only learn the language, but also understand the moral and spiritual messages contained in it. Thus, learning Arabic can contribute to shaping students' ecological awareness from an early age as part of their religious responsibilities.²⁶

Internalizing Ecotheological Values through Arabic Language Learning

Internalization of values is a gradual process of instilling values so that these values are not only understood cognitively, but also accepted, lived, and manifested in daily behavior. In the context of education, the internalization of values aims to shape the character of students through a continuous learning process. According to Muhaimin, value internalization is a process of transformation and value appreciation that takes place through interaction between students and the learning environment so that the value becomes part of their belief and behavior system.²⁷ In the context of learning Arabic, the internalization of ecotheology values can be carried out through various linguistic activities that connect language materials with environmental awareness.

The first stage in the internalization of values is **the transformation of values**. At this stage, teachers convey ecological concepts through vocabulary, reading texts, dialogues, and illustrations related to the environment. Students are introduced to various vocabulary such as

²⁴ Acep Hermawan, *Arabic Language Learning Methodology* (Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya, 2021), pp. 28–30.

²⁵ Abuddin Nata, *Islamic Education* (Jakarta: Kencana, 2021), p. 198.

²⁶ Osman Bakar, *Qur'anic Environmental Ethics* (Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC Press, 2021), pp. 90–95.

²⁷ Muhaimin, *The Paradigm of Islamic Education* (Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya, 2019), p. 153.

البيئة (environment), الشجرة (trees), الماء (water), الأرض (earth), النهر (river), الحيوان (animals), and النظافة (cleanliness). Through the introduction of this vocabulary, students begin to understand that Arabic is not only used to communicate, but can also be a means to get to know and understand the surrounding environment. At this stage, the role of teachers is very important in relating the meaning of vocabulary to the reality of daily life so that learning becomes more meaningful and contextual.²⁸

The next stage is **the transaction of values**, which is the process of interaction between teachers and students in understanding and discussing the values contained in the learning materials. At this stage, learning takes place dialogically through questions and answers, discussions, simulations, and simple communication practices using Arabic. For example, the teacher asks أين ترمي القمامة؟ *the question* (Where do you throw garbage?) and the students answer أرمي القمامة في سلة المهملات (I throw garbage in the garbage can). These simple dialogues not only train speaking skills (*mahārah al-kalām*), but also instill awareness about the importance of maintaining the cleanliness of the environment. Through repeated interactions, students begin to understand that protecting the environment is part of Islamic behavior that must be practiced in daily life.²⁹

The most profound stage is **the transinternalization of values**, which is when ecological values have become part of the consciousness and behavior of students. At this stage, students no longer just know or understand the importance of protecting the environment, but have become accustomed to doing it voluntarily. The real form of transinternalization can be in the form of the habit of throwing garbage in its place, taking care of plants in the madrasah environment, saving water use when performing ablution, maintaining classroom cleanliness, and participating in school greening activities. Teachers can reinforce this process by linking these practices with the Arabic vocabulary, expressions, and texts that have been learned, so that there is an integration between language skills and the formation of ecological characters.³⁰

Through these three stages, learning Arabic is no longer seen as a process of transferring linguistic knowledge alone, but as a means of transforming values that are able to shape students into individuals who have language competence as well as strong ecological awareness. Thus, the internalization of ecotheological values through learning Arabic contributes to the formation of a generation of Muslims who care about the environment and are responsible for the sustainability of life on earth.

²⁸ Ahmad Izzan, *Arabic Language Learning Methodology* (Bandung: Humanities, 2020), p. 87.

²⁹ Abdul Hamid, *Measuring Arabic Language Skills* (Malang: UIN Maliki Press, 2021), pp. 41–43.

³⁰ Muhaimin, *Reconstruction of Islamic Education* (Jakarta: RajaGrafindo Persada, 2020), pp. 221–223.

Conclusion

Islamic ecotheology is a paradigm that places the relationship between God, humans, and nature in a harmonious and interrelated unit. From an Islamic perspective, nature is not just an object that can be used to meet human needs, but the mandate of Allah SWT that must be maintained, preserved, and managed responsibly. Fundamental concepts such as *caliph fil ardh*, *amanah*, *mīzān* (balance), and the prohibition of *doing fasād* (damage) became the theological foundation that emphasized the importance of caring for the environment as part of the practice of Islamic teachings. Thus, environmental preservation not only has an ecological dimension, but is also a form of worship and a manifestation of human spiritual responsibility to Allah SWT.

The process of internalizing ecotheology values in learning Arabic can be carried out through the stages of value transformation, value transactions, and value transinternalization. At the transformation stage, students are introduced to environmental concepts through vocabulary, texts, and Arabic learning materials. At the transaction stage, there is an educational interaction between teachers and students that allows ecological values to be understood and discussed in more depth. Furthermore, at the stage of transinternalization, these values are embodied in tangible behaviors, such as maintaining cleanliness, saving water, caring for plants, and loving the environment as part of religious responsibility.

Therefore, learning Arabic based on ecotheology can be seen as a pedagogical innovation that is relevant to the challenges of 21st century education. This learning model not only supports the achievement of Arabic language competence, but also contributes to the formation of a generation of Muslims who are faithful, have noble character, have ecological awareness, and are able to carry out their role as the Caliph of Allah in maintaining the sustainability of life on earth. Thus, the integration of ecotheology in Arabic language learning at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah is a strategic step in realizing a holistic, humanist, and sustainable development-oriented Islamic education.

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