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Understanding perspectives on learning English in the Qur'an and Hadith

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Article Info

Abstract

This research employs a qualitative methodology, incorporating in-depth textual analysis and interpretation of Quranic verses and Hadith. In this case, the study extracts principles related to knowledge acquisition and communication. This study offers a nuanced understanding of how these texts can inform language learning, particularly English proficiency. Key findings indicate that while the Quran and Hadith do not explicitly mandate proficiency in specific languages, including English, they provide essential guidance on broader principles of acquiring knowledge and effective communication. The Quran emphasizes wisdom, understanding, and appreciation of diversity, highlighting the value of learning multiple languages to enhance understanding and foster intercultural communication. The Hadith further supports this by endorsing the pursuit of knowledge and advocating for the responsible use of language. This adaptability is crucial, as it encourages Muslims to approach language learning, including English, with ethical considerations and a commitment to preserving their identity in accordance with Islamic values. The research underscores this perspective's relevance in contemporary settings where English proficiency is often necessary. Despite these insights, the research acknowledges limitations such as varying interpretations among scholars and the need for further exploration into language acquisition within an Islamic context. Future research directions include comparative analyses across different Islamic cultures, examining the impact of technology on language learning, and exploring contemporary Islamic scholars' perspectives. In conclusion, the study affirms the compatibility of language acquisition with Islamic principles, emphasizing that ongoing exploration and diverse perspectives are essential for enriching the understanding of this dynamic within the framework of Islam.

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Introduction

Nowadays, English has been becoming the most powerful foreign language used across the globe (Crystal, 2008; Mohd-Asraf, 2005; Muhalim, 2023). It is currently used by around 75 countries as their official language (Gration, 2022), indicating that more than one third of the global community comprehend it well. English serves as a gateway to understanding and connecting with people from different cultures and backgrounds. The spread of English as a powerful international language has been affected by several factors, including political, cultural, educational, religious, technological and economics issues (Abdullaev & Isanova, 2022). This spread is further facilitated by the concept of English as a lingua franca, where native speaker accents or dialects are not necessary for effective communication among users from various linguistic and cultural backgrounds (Adriansen et al., 2023; Liao & Zhang, 2023; Liu et al., 2023; Piattoeva et al., 2023), where native speaker accent or dialect is not a must when "multitude users of various linguistic and cultural backgrounds" (Kusumaningputri, 2023, p. 3) use it in communication. In this case, English speakers do not need to speak using the native speakers' accents. For example, Indian and Malaysian local accents strongly affect their English, demonstrating that English has been accepted and spoken globally, regardless of educational backgrounds, with diverse accents and dialects.

Despite the increasing global demand for English in various sectors (Liu et al., 2023), several non-English speaking countries express concerns about the impact on local culture, identity, and language due to the rising use of English (House, 2014). This is evident in countries such as India (Minz & Doreswamy, 2023), Russia (Piattoeva et al., 2023), Pakistan (Ashraf, 2023), Morocco (R'boul, 2022), and Indonesia (Sakhiyya & Martin-Anatias, 2023). Political motives seemingly generate narratives to point out English as "a threat to national language, cohesion and national security" (Piattoeva et al., 2023, p. 13). There is also a belief that English poses a danger to achieving fluency in native languages and, by extension, to the preservation of national identity (Saarinen, 2020; Laine & Zamyatin, 2021; Piattoeva et al., 2023). Additionally, cultural issues drive negative perspectives on learning English, potentially eroding local cultures as Western influences permeate. Overemphasis on learning English may create social divisions between those proficient in English and those who are not, leading to feelings of superiority or inferiority. In Islamic contexts, certain narratives further complicate the acceptance of

English. Some Muslim communities, such as Indonesia, believe that English is unnecessary because Arabic, rather than English, is the language of heaven (Harbani, 2023). This belief could affect their willingness to learn English. However, it is important to present this information factually, avoiding any trivialization of religious beliefs.

The aforesaid issues strongly drive the researchers to conduct in-depth literature review to see the perspectives of Quran and Hadith (sayings and actions of the Prophet Muhammad) on learning English. Such review aims to examine the existing gaps related to the abovementioned issues. Up to now, Islamic perspectives on learning English based on the Quran and Hadith have still not yet been comprehensively studied. In this case, literature indicates that far too little attention has been paid to investigate the Quran's and Hadith's perspectives on learning English. A great deal of previous research related to the present study has focused on developing English teaching materials for Islamic schools (Qamariah, 2015; Syafi'I & Gestanti, 2017; Mega & Sari, 2021; Suparjo et al., 2021), teaching English in Islamic schools (Alfian et al., 2021; Adnan & Haimi, 2017; Maesaroh et al., 2022), teaching English in Islamic higher education (Usman et al., 2023; Naralita & Azis, 2020; Siswoyo, & Yuniarti, 2023), and ELT curriculum in Islamic higher education (Sukirman, 2022; Atai & Mazlum, 2013; Syah, 2015). Surprisingly, most of these studies have suffered from several conceptual and methodological weaknesses. It strongly indicates that what is not yet clear is the nature of the Quran's and Hadith's viewpoints on learning English.

The only related publication identified within the documented literature refers to a critical review conducted by Mohd-Asraf in 2005. This article discusses an Islamic standpoint regarding the function of language and the recommended approach for Muslims in acquiring languages. This study wraps up by underlining the importance of English educators considering the socio-cultural factors in English education for Muslim students and urging Muslims to recognize the value of learning English for acquiring modern knowledge. It is obviously clear that there are several differences between the previous and present study in terms of the focus and research methods. Compared to the previous study that did not conduct in-depth analysis on every single verse of Quran and Hadith, the present study focuses on identifying verses of Quran and Hadith in relation to learning foreign languages. In other words, this study does not examine a certain Muslim community perspective on learning English instead of analysing the verses of Quran's and Hadith's viewpoints on learning English. The differences can also be seen in term of research method applied.

In this case, the previous one applied a case study that focuses on Malaysian' perspectives on the importance of learning English in relation to Islam. Meanwhile, the present study purely applies a document analysis on the verses of Quran and Hadith that discusses encouragement to learn foreign languages.

To bridge these gaps, this study aims to conduct an in-depth analysis of the Quran and Hadith perspectives on learning English. This research seeks to explore the guidance provided by Islamic teachings on language acquisition. The Quran and Hadith offer foundational principles on knowledge acquisition and communication, which can be interpreted to support the relevance of learning languages, including English. In other words, the primary objectives of this study are; (1) to identify Quranic verses and hadith related to language acquisition (this involves conducting an in-depth textual analysis to uncover any explicit or implicit references to the importance of learning languages within Islamic scripture); (2) to analyze implications for language learners within an Islamic framework (by interpreting these texts, the study aims to provide insights into the ethical and moral considerations, the value of linguistic diversity, and the role of language in fostering communication and knowledge dissemination among Muslims); and (3) to examine potential conflicts and harmonies between Islamic teachings and language learning (this objective addresses concerns about contradictions between religious teachings and the acquisition of foreign languages, including English, ensuring a balanced perspective that respects religious beliefs).

To achieve these objectives, the study aims to address the following research questions: Firstly, what guidance or directives, if any, can be found in the Quran and Hadith regarding the acquisition of languages, including English? This question aims to uncover any explicit or implicit encouragement within Islamic texts that promote the learning of foreign languages, highlighting the significance of language acquisition in a religious context. Secondly, how do Hadith address the importance of language learning, particularly the learning of English, in the context of promoting knowledge and communication? This question seeks to explore the Hadith's perspectives on the value of language learning as a means to enhance knowledge and facilitate communication among diverse communities. Thirdly, are there specific verses or Hadith that highlight the benefits and virtues of acquiring proficiency in English or any other language within an Islamic framework? This question focuses on identifying particular Quranic

verses or Hadith that explicitly mention the advantages and positive attributes of learning languages, including English, within an Islamic context. Finally, are there any contradictions between Quranic/Hadith teachings and learning foreign languages, including English? This question aims to examine any potential conflicts between Islamic teachings and the acquisition of foreign languages, addressing concerns that might arise from religious interpretations.

By addressing these questions, this study could provide valuable insights into the ethical and moral considerations related to language learning from the Quran and Hadith perspectives. This research can help individuals understand the importance of using language for positive and constructive purposes, promoting communication, and fostering understanding among people. Additionally, analyzing Quranic and Hadith references to language can offer guidance on respecting and appreciating linguistic diversity, which is particularly relevant in the context of learning English as a global language. Understanding the Quran and Hadith perspectives on learning foreign languages can also illuminate the role of language as a means of communication and knowledge dissemination, helping individuals appreciate the value of learning languages, including English, for acquiring and sharing knowledge.

Moreover, this study can also provide insights into the recommended attitudes and approaches Muslims should adopt when learning languages, including English. These insights may include aspects like dedication, sincerity, and the pursuit of knowledge for the positive development of society. By exploring these dimensions, the research aims to contribute to the broader discourse on English education in Muslim contexts, offering a comprehensive understanding of the intersections between language learning and Islamic teachings.

Methodology

This document analysis study aims to examine the perspectives on learning English as presented in the Qur'an and Hadith. Following Sukirman (2022), the researchers also opt the document analysis as the research method of this study (Bowen, 2009; Creswell, 2014), emphasizing its efficacy in studying textual sources in depth (Bowen, 2009; Creswell, 2014; Sukirman, 2022). Document analysis allows for a comprehensive exploration of the nuances within the Qur'an and Hadith, enabling a deeper understanding of their insights into English learning. By prioritizing the analysis of existing texts,

this methodology streamlines research time, emphasizing data selection over collection (Bowen, 2009). Furthermore, ethical approval is deemed unnecessary, given the public availability of the Qur'an and Hadith. This section provides a detailed breakdown of the research methods employed in this study and elucidates how document analysis contributes to addressing the research questions.

Research Approach

In qualitative research, the choice of the research approach is fundamental. Qualitative research is chosen as the approach for this study because it is well-suited for the interpretation and understanding of textual documents. In this case, the primary goal of this study is to extract insights from sacred Islamic texts—the Qur'an and Hadith. These texts provide foundational guidance for Muslims across the world, and understanding their perspective on learning English is of great importance. In addition, qualitative research allows for a holistic exploration of these texts, considering not only what they say but also their cultural and historical context. The objective is to go beyond surface-level observations and delve into the depths of Islamic thought regarding language learning.

Data Sources

The Qur'an and Hadith stand as pivotal sources of data in this study. These texts are revered as the foundational scriptures of Islam, offering profound insights into various spheres of life, including education. The Qur'an is esteemed as the verbatim word of God, revealed to the Prophet Muhammad, while the Hadith comprises his recorded sayings and actions. Their significance lies in their authoritative role in shaping Islamic belief systems and guiding everyday practices. The selection of relevant passages from these texts is conducted rigorously, ensuring a comprehensive and unbiased representation of perspectives on English learning within Islamic teachings. Their inclusion in this study is imperative due to their unparalleled status as primary sources of Islamic knowledge (Lucas, 2008; Sulistio et al., 2023). Their meticulous examination offers a scholarly approach to understanding the intricacies of English learning within the Islamic framework, enriching academic discourse in this domain.

Data Selection

The selection of relevant passages from the Qur'an and Hadith is a critical step in this research. Given the vastness

of these texts, it is crucial to carefully select passages that specifically address the act of learning, knowledge acquisition, or languages. This selection ensures that the study remains focused on the topic of learning English. The objective is to create a comprehensive and representative selection of passages to ensure the depth and validity of the study.

To select relevant passages, a systematic process is followed. The researchers consider several factors. The first factor is relevance - passages that directly or indirectly touch upon the subject of learning, knowledge, or languages are chosen. These passages should have the potential to shed light on the perspectives on learning English. The next factor is context - the selected passages are considered in their larger context within the text to ensure that their interpretation aligns with the overall teachings and philosophy of the Qur'an and Hadith. It is further followed by clarity - passages that are clear and straightforward in their message are prioritized, as they provide unambiguous insights into the subject. The last factor refers to historical significance: In cases where historical context is crucial to understanding a passage, it is taken into account. This ensures that the interpretations are faithful to the cultural and historical context of the time.

Translation and Interpretation

As the Qur'an and Hadith are originally in Arabic, the process of translating and interpreting these texts is a crucial component of the study. It is imperative to convey the intended meanings accurately to preserve the authenticity of the messages within these sacred texts. The translation process, therefore, demands rigorous attention to detail and linguistic nuances to ensure fidelity and accuracy. To ensure the translation accuracy, the research team employs a stringent selection process for bilingual experts proficient in Arabic, Indonesian, and English. These experts undergo rigorous evaluation to assess their linguistic proficiency, cultural sensitivity, and understanding of religious nuances. They are selected based on their demonstrated expertise in translation and their ability to convey the subtle meanings embedded in the original Arabic texts accurately. Throughout the translation process, frequent consultations and peer reviews are conducted to verify and refine the accuracy of the translations. Any discrepancies or ambiguities are meticulously addressed through consensus among the research team and linguistic experts.

Furthermore, the interpretation of the selected passages is equally critical. This step involves going beyond the literal meaning of the words and considering the context

in which they were revealed. Cultural, historical, and theological factors are all taken into account to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the passages. It is also important to acknowledge that there is variability in interpretations of Quranic verses and Hadith, reflecting a range of scholarly opinions. Different scholars may have varying interpretations based on linguistic analysis, theological perspectives, and historical context. In this case, bilingual experts, alongside scholars well-versed in Islamic theology and history, collaborate to ensure that the interpretations remain faithful to the original intent of the texts. Regular discussions and dialogues are held to dissect and analyze the nuances of the verses and hadiths, considering various scholarly viewpoints and interpretations. By incorporating diverse perspectives and scholarly expertise, the study aims to uphold the integrity and accuracy of the interpretations while illuminating the insights these texts offer on language acquisition within the Islamic context.

Data Analysis

The data are coded and grouped into themes and concepts related to learning English, helping to organize the extensive information from the Qur'an and Hadith. Themes include knowledge importance, language acquisition, and education's broader role. Specific passages relevant to these themes are identified and grouped together.

Thematic analysis, a systematic approach (Bowen, 2009; Braun & Clarke, 2012; Ramli et al., 2021; Sukirman & Linse, 2024), is used to find recurring patterns, themes, and insights within the Qur'an and Hadith. This method goes beyond simple categorization, exploring deeper meanings in the texts. Thematic analysis involves several steps (Braun & Clarke, 2012). Firstly, researchers immerse themselves in selected passages to understand their context. Then, passages are coded based on identified themes. After coding, themes emerge, representing recurring patterns or ideas. Themes are reviewed and refined through discussion among researchers to ensure accuracy. The final step involves reporting the identified themes and their interpretations in the context of learning English.

To ensure reliability, a second researcher independently checks the coding and theme development process. They review a subset of the data, coding, and themes to assess consistency and agreement with the primary researcher's findings. Any discrepancies are discussed and resolved collaboratively to maintain the validity of the analysis.

Inter-textual Analysis

Inter-textual analysis is a critical component of this study. It involves comparing and contrasting passages from the Qur'an and Hadith to identify consistencies and potential contradictions in their perspectives on learning English. Then, in inter-textual analysis, researchers examine how passages in the Qur'an align with or diverge from the guidance provided in the Hadith, and vice versa. This process helps in establishing a comprehensive view of the perspectives presented in these sacred texts. Last but not least, the inter-textual analysis serves to; (1) highlight the harmony or discord between the Qur'an and Hadith regarding learning English; (2) find out any evolving perspectives over time or differences in emphasis; and (3) provide a comprehensive understanding of Islamic teachings on education and language learning.

Validity and Reliability

To ensure the accuracy and reliability of the research findings, several measures are implemented. Firstly, careful data selection is conducted to include only relevant passages, reducing the risk of misinterpretation. For example, passages are selected based on their direct relevance to the themes being explored, ensuring that the analysis remains focused and accurate. Secondly, meticulous translation and interpretation are undertaken with the assistance of bilingual experts. These experts ensure that translations maintain faithfulness to the original texts and that cultural and historical nuances are appropriately considered. For instance, bilingual experts carefully examine the linguistic and cultural context of each passage to ensure accurate interpretation. Additionally, triangulation is employed to confirm the consistency and accuracy of results. This involves cross-referencing findings from different sources and perspectives, such as comparing interpretations from different translators or consulting additional scholarly sources. This process helps validate the research outcomes by ensuring that conclusions are supported by multiple lines of evidence.

Furthermore, to enhance the reliability of the document analysis, a second researcher is engaged to independently analyze a subset of the data. This serves as a means of verification and validation. For example, the second researcher conducts an independent analysis of selected passages and then assesses the level of agreement between their findings and those of the primary researcher. This assessment, often conducted using established methods like inter-rater reliability,

confirms the consistency and reliability of the results while minimizing the potential for researcher bias.

Ethical Considerations

In this study, cultural sensitivity is of paramount importance. The research team approaches the sacred texts, the Qur'an and Hadith, with the utmost respect and reverence. The team is fully aware of the profound significance of these texts in Islamic culture and society. Every effort is made to ensure that the study is conducted with the highest level of cultural sensitivity and respect. Cultural sensitivity includes a deep understanding of Islamic culture and the values it holds dear. Researchers are aware of the religious and historical context of the texts and take great care to preserve the sanctity of the Qur'an and Hadith throughout the research process. For example, when selecting passages for analysis, researchers seek guidance from Islamic scholars to ensure appropriate context and interpretation, and they avoid using sacred texts in any manner that might be perceived as trivializing or disrespectful.

One potential issue is the risk of misinterpreting the Qur'an and Hadith due to their complex and nuanced nature. To mitigate this, the research team involves multiple Islamic scholars and linguists in the translation and interpretation process. These experts provide insights into the linguistic, cultural, and theological contexts of the passages, ensuring that interpretations are accurate and respectful. Furthermore, there is a danger of cultural insensitivity if the texts are not handled with the necessary respect and understanding of Islamic values. To address this, researchers undergo cultural competency training and continuously consult with Islamic scholars throughout the study.

The study might inadvertently overgeneralize findings, applying insights from specific passages too broadly. To avoid this, the study employs triangulation by cross-referencing findings with multiple sources and perspectives. This method helps validate the research outcomes, ensuring that conclusions are supported by diverse evidence and are not overextended beyond their scope. Although the study does not require traditional ethical approval due to the nature of its data sources, the absence of formal oversight could lead to ethical oversights. To counter this, the study adheres to stringent ethical guidelines and maintains transparency and accountability throughout the research process. Regular peer reviews and consultations with ethics experts help ensure that the study remains ethically sound and respectful.

The translation of texts is a critical component where inaccuracies could lead to misinterpretations. To ensure fidelity, translations are conducted with meticulous attention to the original Arabic meanings. Multiple scholars review these translations, providing a consensus on their accuracy and respectfulness towards the original messages. This multi-layered review process ensures that the translations are both accurate and culturally sensitive. When analyzing the texts, researchers take care to avoid any interpretations that might trivialize or misrepresent the sacred nature of the Qur'an and Hadith. By engaging in regular discussions and seeking consensus among the research team and consulted scholars, the study maintains a respectful and fair approach to its analysis.

To align language learning with Islamic values, the study emphasizes the importance of intention (*niyyah*) in learning English, encouraging learners to approach their studies with the intention of seeking knowledge to benefit themselves and their communities. Additionally, the study highlights the concept of 'ilm (*knowledge)* in Islam, which encourages the pursuit of knowledge in all forms, including language acquisition, as a means to enhance understanding and cooperation among different cultures. Furthermore, examples of prophetic traditions that advocate for the learning of languages to facilitate communication and promote mutual understanding are integrated into the study to provide a clear alignment with Islamic teachings.

In conclusion, the research methods detailed in this section provide a robust framework for conducting a document analysis study aimed at uncovering the perspectives on learning English as presented in the Qur'an and Hadith. The rigorous data collection and analysis processes are designed to yield valuable insights into this underexplored area of study within an Islamic context. The systematic approach to data selection, meticulous translation and interpretation, thematic analysis, inter-textual analysis, and the use of inter-rater reliability all contribute to the rigor and depth of this research. By adhering to ethical principles, the study maintains the respect and sensitivity required when dealing with the sacred texts of the Qur'an and Hadith. The overall objective is to contribute to a broader understanding of language acquisition within an Islamic context, offering insights that can inform discussions on education, language, and intercultural dialogue.

Results and Discussion

Question 1: What Guidance or Directives can be found in the Quran and Hadith regarding the Acquisition of Languages, including English?

Language is a profound tool in human expression, playing a pivotal role in shaping cultural interactions and fostering comprehension. In the context of Islam, the Quran and Hadith serve as guiding principles for various aspects of life, providing insights into the acquisition of languages. While they do not explicitly mention the acquisition of specific languages like English, they offer valuable principles applicable to language learning in general.

The Quran, the holy book of Islam, consistently advocates for the pursuit of knowledge. Surah Al-Mujadila (58:11) resonates with a divine endorsement of knowledge-seeking, asserting that believers are elevated through faith and knowledge, emphasizing the importance of intellectual pursuits. This elevation implies a harmonious relationship between faith and knowledge, aligning language acquisition with the Quranic message. Learning foreign languages facilitates effective communication with people from different linguistic backgrounds. The Quran highlights the diversity of languages and peoples as signs of God's creation, saying, "And of His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth and the diversity of your languages and your colors" (Quran 30:22). This verse implies that understanding different languages aligns with appreciating the diversity of God's creation. Learning languages also aids in spreading the message of Islam to a wider audience, breaking down linguistic barriers.

يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْٓا اِذَا قِيْلَ لَكُمْ تَفَسَّحُوْا فِى الْمَجٰلِسِ فَافْسَحُوْا يَفْسَحِ اللّٰهُ لَكُمْ ۚ وَاِذَا قِيْلَ انْشُزُوْا فَانْشُزُوْا يَرْفَعِ اللّٰهُ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا مِنْكُمْ ۙ وَالَّذِيْنَ اُوْتُوا الْعِلْمَ دَرَجٰتٍ ۗ وَاللّٰهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ خَبِيْرٌ

Meaning: *"O you who have believed, when you are told, 'Space yourselves' in assemblies, then make space; Allah will make space for you. And when you are told, 'Arise,' then arise; Allah will raise those who have believed among you and those who were given knowledge, in degrees. And Allah is Acquainted with what you do."* Surah Al-Mujadila (58:11).

وَمِنْ اٰيٰتِهٖ خَلْقُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافُ اَلْسِنَتِكُمْ وَاَلْوَانِكُمْ ۗ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّلْعٰلِمِيْنَ

Meaning: *"And of His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth and the diversity of your languages and your colors"* (Surah Ar-Rum, 30:22).

The Quran also encourages the pursuit of knowledge in Surah Ta-Ha (20:114), which says, وَقُلْ رَّبِّ زِدْنِيْ عِلْمًا (And my Lord, increase knowledge in me). This verse emphasizes the importance of seeking knowledge, which includes language learning. Furthermore, the Quran acknowledges the diversity of languages and emphasizes the universality of knowledge in Surah Al-Rum (30:22), which states, "And of His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth and the diversity of your languages and your colors." This verse signifies that knowledge is accessible to people of different linguistic backgrounds. Additionally, the Quran recognizes linguistic diversity as a sign of God's creation (Quran 30:22). Learning English facilitates communication with a diverse global audience. In the modern world, English serves as a bridge language, enabling Muslims to convey the message of Islam to people from various linguistic backgrounds. This aligns with the Quranic mandate to be "a witness over mankind" (Quran 2:143), which can be more effectively realized through English proficiency. Following the aforementioned Surahs, Surah Al-Hujurat (49:13) encourages humanity to know one another, transcending cultural and linguistic barriers, indicating that the Quran calls for diversity and mutual understanding further reinforces the relevance of language acquisition. In this context, language becomes a powerful vehicle for breaking down walls, enabling meaningful communication, and nurturing the profound understanding that the Quran advocates.

The Hadith may not explicitly address the acquisition of English or other specific languages but it provides nuanced insights applicable to linguistic endeavors. In this case, the Hadith's endorsement of strength as a commendable trait, encapsulated in the statement, "The strong believer is better and more beloved to Allah than the weak believer while there is good in both," hints at the value of proficiency, including linguistic prowess. Acquiring languages, including English, can be perceived as a means of fortifying one's communication skills, contributing positively to personal development, and fostering cohesion within society. Moreover, the Hadith accentuates the importance of good character and effective communication. The teachings of Prophet Muhammad underscore the judicious and responsible use of language, emphasizing its potential as a force for good.

In this light, language, including English, should be wielded as a tool for promoting understanding and unity rather than sowing discord. In addition, Hadith further underline the virtue of knowledge. The Prophet Muhammad is reported to have said, "العلمُ واجبٌ على كلّ مُسلمٍ" (Seeking knowledge is obligatory for every Muslim) (Ibn Majah). This obligation extends to acquiring knowledge that may involve learning languages. Interestingly, the Hadith emphasize the role of educators and instructors in promoting language learning and knowledge dissemination. One Hadith states, "The best of you are those who learn the Quran and teach it to others" (Bukhari).

One of the remarkable aspects of Islam is its adaptability to diverse cultural contexts, including language. While Arabic holds a special status as the language of the Quran, the broader teachings of Islam encourage believers to engage with and seek knowledge in various languages, including English. This flexibility underscores the notion that linguistic diversity is not only acceptable but also a means of fulfilling the overarching goals of the faith. The Quranic principle of adaptability implies that Islam recognizes and accommodates linguistic variations as a testament to the diversity inherent in human societies. This adaptability extends to language, affirming that the pursuit of knowledge and effective communication can occur in various linguistic forms. In this context, language, including English, is not merely a tool for expression but a means of fulfilling the universal objectives of Islam.

In summary, the Quran's emphasis on wisdom, understanding, and diversity, coupled with the Hadith's insights into strength and good character, collectively support the idea that language acquisition, including English, harmoniously aligns with the broader principles of Islam. Specifically, language, in this nuanced perspective, emerges as a conduit for building bridges, fostering mutual understanding, and embodying the values propagated by Islam across the diverse tapestry of human languages. The Quran and Hadith, as guiding lights, illuminate the path for believers, encouraging them to engage in linguistic endeavors that contribute positively to personal growth, societal cohesion, and the overarching goals of Islam in the contemporary world.

Question 2: How do Hadith address the Importance of Language Learning, particularly the Learning of English, in the Context of Promoting Knowledge and Communication?

Language, as a dynamic tool of expression and connection, holds a central place in the fabric of human interaction. The Hadith serves as an invaluable guide for believers, addressing the importance of language learning within the broader context of promoting knowledge and effective communication. Although the Hadith does not explicitly stipulate the learning of specific languages, the underlying principle encourages a holistic approach to education. In the contemporary landscape, where English has emerged as a global lingua franca, its acquisition aligns seamlessly with the Hadith's call to seek knowledge.

The globalized nature of knowledge exchange in fields such as science, technology, and academia underscores the practicality of learning English. The Prophet's emphasis on the duty of seeking knowledge becomes increasingly relevant in a world where the pursuit of understanding transcends geographic and linguistic boundaries. In this case, effective communication lies at the heart of the Hadith teachings. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is reported to have said, "Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should speak good or remain silent. "While this Hadith centers on the quality of speech, it indirectly underscores the pivotal role of language in communication. The Prophet Muhammad is also reported to have said, "مَنْ سَلَكَ طَرِيقًا يَلْتَمِسُ فِيهِ عِلْمًا سَهَّلَ اللهُ لَهُ بِهِ طَرِيقًا إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ" - Whoever seeks a path in the pursuit of knowledge, Allah will make easy for him a path to Paradise (Sahih Muslim). This encourages the pursuit of knowledge in various fields, including language learning. In the context of English, a language widely used in international discourse, diplomacy, and business, the acquisition of English becomes a means of adhering to the Prophet's guidance on speaking with goodness. Proficiency in English allows believers to engage in global conversations, promoting positive communication and fostering understanding across diverse cultures.

Islam, as a comprehensive way of life, recognizes and respects linguistic diversity. The Quran itself is revealed in Arabic, emphasizing the significance of the Arabic language in worship. However, the Hadith reveals a pragmatic approach to linguistic diversity. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) communicated with people in their respective languages, showcasing an understanding of the importance of linguistic inclusivity. In the contemporary context, the acquisition of English aligns with this pragmatic approach. English, as a global language, serves as a medium for dialogue in diverse contexts. The Hadith's acknowledgment of linguistic diversity encourages believers to embrace the practicality of learning English to engage meaningfully with a broader spectrum of humanity. Further, the teachings of the Prophet, when contextualized in the modern era, underscore the global relevance of English.

English has become a bridge language, connecting people from different linguistic backgrounds in various domains of life. The Hadith's emphasis on seeking knowledge and communicating effectively resonates with the practicality of English as a means of participating in global discourse. From academic research to diplomatic negotiations, English serves as a conduit for knowledge dissemination and cross-cultural understanding. The Hadith, with its timeless wisdom, encourages believers to recognize the global significance of English in the contemporary landscape and actively participate in the interconnected world of ideas.

In conclusion, the Hadith provides profound insights into the importance of language learning, with a specific focus on the acquisition of English. While not explicitly addressing English, the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) inspire believers to seek knowledge, communicate effectively, and embrace linguistic diversity. The acquisition of English, in this nuanced exploration, emerges as a practical and impactful endeavor, aligning seamlessly with the Hadith's call for intellectual growth and positive communication. As believers navigate the intricate fabric of our interconnected world, the teachings of the Hadith serve as a guide, encouraging them to contribute meaningfully to the pursuit of knowledge and the promotion of effective communication. By recognizing the global relevance of English and incorporating its acquisition into their educational journey, believers can embody the spirit of the Hadith, fostering understanding and dialogue in the diverse and dynamic tapestry of human languages.

Question 3: Are there Specific verses or Hadith that highlight the Benefits and Virtues of Acquiring Proficiency in English or any other Language within an Islamic Framework?

This study found that there are no specific verses or Hadith that explicitly highlight the benefits and virtues of acquiring proficiency in English or any other specific language within the Islamic framework. In other words, specific verses or Hadith that mention the benefits and virtues of acquiring proficiency in English or any other modern language are not found in Islamic scripture, as these languages did not exist at the time of the Quran and Hadith. The primary sources of Islamic guidance – the Quran and Hadith – provide broader principles that emphasize the importance of knowledge, effective communication, and adaptability to diverse contexts.

The Quran, as the fundamental source of guidance in Islam, consistently emphasizes the pursuit of knowledge and effective communication. Surah Al-Mujadila (58:11) highlights the elevation of those who believe and are given knowledge. This Quranic verse, while encouraging a general pursuit of wisdom, refrains from prescribing any specific language for this endeavor. Then, Surah Al-Hujurat (49:13) - يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُم مِّن ذَكَرٍ وَأُنثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا ۚ إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِندَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ - recognizes the diversity of languages and cultures, advocating for understanding and cooperation among people of different backgrounds. However, the Quran does not attribute virtues or benefits to any particular language, leaving the choice of language proficiency open-ended for believers.

The Hadith, comprising the sayings and actions of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), reinforces the obligation of seeking knowledge for every Muslim. The well-known Hadith, "The seeking of knowledge is obligatory for every Muslim," as mentioned previously, underscores the universal nature of this duty. Yet, similar to the Quran, the Hadith does not specify proficiency in a particular language. The Prophet's reported communication with people in their respective languages showcases Islam's adaptability to linguistic diversity. This adaptability, however, does not imply a specific endorsement of acquiring proficiency in a particular language, including English. The adaptability of Islam to linguistic diversity aligns with the broader principle of universality in the faith. Believers are encouraged to seek knowledge and communicate effectively in ways that foster understanding and cooperation without prescribing the superiority of any particular language.

In conclusion, the Islamic framework, as represented by the Quran and Hadith, does not explicitly highlight the benefits and virtues of acquiring proficiency in English or any specific language. Instead, it provides overarching principles that emphasize the universal obligations of seeking knowledge and effective communication. The flexibility and adaptability inherent in Islam allow believers to navigate linguistic diversity, choosing languages for proficiency based on their individual and societal contexts. The absence of explicit endorsements for a particular language within the Islamic framework underscores the timeless and adaptable nature of Islamic teachings, encouraging believers to engage with knowledge and communication in ways that are most relevant to their diverse and dynamic circumstances.

Question 4: Are there any Contradictions between Quranic/Hadith Teachings and Learning Foreign Languages, including English?

The findings indicate that there are no inherent contradictions between Quranic/Hadith teachings and learning foreign languages, including English. The Quran and Hadith emphasize the pursuit of knowledge,

effective communication, and the universality of knowledge, which can be seen as supportive of language learning. However, like any endeavor, the way in which language learning is approached and the intentions behind it matter. Learning a foreign language, including English, is not inherently contradictory to Islamic teachings. It can be a valuable means of acquiring knowledge, facilitating communication, and understanding different cultures and perspectives.

The Quran acknowledges the diversity of languages and cultures as a sign of Allah's creative power, emphasizing that this diversity is meant for mutual understanding (Quran 49:13). Therefore, the learning of foreign languages aligns with the Quranic encouragement for people to know one another. Moreover, the Prophet Muhammad himself recognized the importance of languages for effective communication. He communicated with various tribes and communities in their own languages, demonstrating the practical significance of linguistic diversity. In addition, prominent scholars like Ibn Sina (Avicenna) and Ibn Rushd (Averroes) made profound contributions to various disciplines through their knowledge of multiple languages. Their work serves as a testament to the compatibility of linguistic diversity with Islamic teachings.

While there is no inherent contradiction, it is essential for Muslims to approach language learning with a sense of responsibility. This includes being mindful of the content being studied and ensuring it aligns with Islamic principles. Then, the intention behind language learning should be for the sake of gaining knowledge, promoting understanding, and effective communication rather than for harmful or inappropriate purposes. In addition, language learning should involve ethical content that adheres to Islamic values and does not promote harm or immorality. Further, language learning should not take precedence over religious obligations and duties. Next, language learners should respect the culture and values of the language they are learning and not engage in activities that contradict Islamic principles. Lastly, maintaining one's identity and values while learning a new language is emphasized to prevent any compromise on core beliefs.

In conclusion, learning foreign languages, including English, can be in harmony with Islamic teachings when pursued with the right intentions and ethical considerations. There are no inherent contradictions, and language learning can serve as a means of promoting knowledge, understanding, and effective communication in a global context.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The comprehensive analysis of Quranic and Hadith teachings on language acquisition, especially concerning English, provides valuable insights into the alignment of linguistic pursuits with Islamic principles. While the research establishes that there are no explicit directives on specific languages, the Quran and Hadith offer foundational guidance for knowledge acquisition and effective communication within the Islamic framework. In this case, the Quran's emphasis on wisdom, understanding, and diversity supports the notion that language acquisition, including English, harmonizes with broader Islamic principles. The acknowledgment of linguistic diversity as a divine sign and the encouragement to know one another, highlighted in Surah Al-Hujurat (49:13), strengthens the case for the relevance of language learning. The Quran's adaptability to diverse cultural contexts, permitting believers to engage with knowledge in various languages, signifies the inherent flexibility in Islamic teachings. Additionally, the Hadith complements these principles by endorsing the pursuit of knowledge and effective communication. Though not explicitly addressing English, the Hadith's focus on strength, good character, and responsible language use indirectly advocates for linguistic proficiency. The pragmatic approach to linguistic diversity, exemplified by Prophet Muhammad's communication in various languages, aligns with the contemporary context of learning English as a global language for meaningful engagement.

The absence of specific verses or Hadith explicitly endorsing English proficiency underscores the timeless and adaptable nature of Islamic teachings. Instead, the Quran and Hadith provide overarching principles emphasizing universal obligations in seeking knowledge and effective communication, allowing believers to navigate linguistic diversity based on individual and societal contexts. Despite these insights, one crucial limitation that warrants thorough consideration is the potential variability in interpretations among scholars regarding Quranic verses and Hadith. Islamic scholarship encompasses a diverse range of interpretations and perspectives, which may lead to differing understandings of the same texts. Therefore, it is essential to acknowledge the inherent subjectivity in interpreting sacred texts and discuss how this variability might influence the conclusions drawn in the research.

Moving forward, the implementation of these findings encourages Muslims to approach language learning with a consciousness of responsible intentions, ethical

considerations, and a commitment to maintaining their identity. This aligns with Islamic values and ensures that language acquisition positively contributes to personal growth, societal cohesion, and the broader goals of Islam. In order to strengthen the practical utility of the findings of this research, future scholars and researchers in the field can employ various methodological approaches and research questions. Firstly, adopting a mixed-methods approach that combines quantitative surveys or experiments with qualitative interviews or focus groups would offer comprehensive insights into language proficiency levels and attitudes towards language learning among Muslim communities. Longitudinal studies tracking language learning progress over time within Islamic communities would provide valuable data on the factors influencing successful language acquisition. Comparative analyses across different Islamic cultures and regions can shed light on the impact of cultural, educational, and socio-economic factors on language learning outcomes. Furthermore, in-depth case studies of language learning programs within Islamic educational institutions or community centers can assess the effectiveness of these initiatives while ensuring alignment with Islamic values. Content analysis of language learning materials and ethnographic research immersing researchers in Islamic communities would offer nuanced perspectives on language learning practices and their integration with religious and cultural contexts. Additionally, investigations into the role of technology, teacher training, and interdisciplinary collaboration can further enrich our understanding of language acquisition within Islamic frameworks. Finally, community engagement and participatory research methods involving stakeholders in the research process can ensure that findings are relevant, actionable, and inclusive of diverse perspectives, ultimately strengthening the practical relevance of conclusions drawn from such research endeavors. Through the implementation of these methodological approaches and research questions, scholars and researchers can enhance the applicability and impact of their studies in the field of language acquisition within an Islamic context.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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