

AN ANALYSIS OF THE INTEGRATION OF NAQLI AND AQLI ELEMENTS IN THE ENGLISH FOR ACADEMIC PURPOSES COURSE: A CASE STUDY IN USIM

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Abstract: *For a long time, there has been an element of dualism in the education system, and research has shown that there has been a great concern among many Muslim countries that university graduates live a life not in line with the Islamic values advocated in the Quran and the Sunnah. This stems from the value crises that lie within the values transpired to the students, whereby there are gaps between the worldly knowledge (Aqli) and the Islamic knowledge (Naqli) which results in imbalanced graduates—secularised minds versus the conservative ones. Both groups are incapable in performing the ‘right’ role of a khalifah for the betterment of the ummah, as one is more equipped with the worldly knowledge, and vice-versa. This study looks at the curriculum of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) course conducted at USIM—whether or not the elements of Naqli and Aqli are being integrated in the curriculum. Findings reveal that the integration of Naqli and Aqli elements in the EAP course is still at the initial stage as could be seen through the related documents of the course, and also based on the instructors’ views. The elements are superficially and loosely integrated, merely through the mention of the phrase ‘Naqli and Aqli’ but without clear guidelines of how it could be more systematically implemented, especially for language courses. The study is hoped to fill the gap, and contribute in the development of integrating Naqli and Aqli elements for a language course in general, and for EAP specifically.*

Keywords: *Integration, Aqli, Naqli, English for Academic Purposes, Islamisation*

Introduction

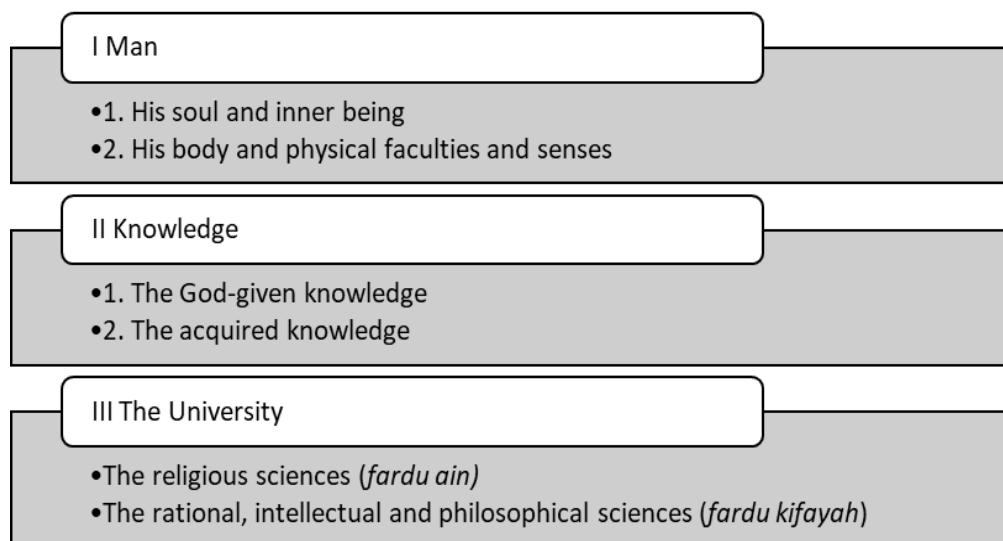
There is a need for a paradigm shift in the way knowledge is viewed. For a long time, there has been an element of dualism in the education system, including the one in Malaysia. In the Mecca’s 1977 First World Conference on Muslim Education, it was collectively agreed that

there is a need to integrate the Revealed knowledge (Al-Quran and Hadith), or *Naqli* with the acquired knowledge (worldly knowledge) or *Aqli*. This is termed by Al-Faruqi as ‘Islamisation of Knowledge’.

Literature Review

According to Al-Attas (1980), the concept of the university (*kulliyyah—jamia’ah*) is one of the important elements of the Islamic system of education. Other components include “the concept of religion (*din*); the concept of man (*insan*); the concept of knowledge (*ilm* and *ma’rifah*); the concept of wisdom (*hikmah*); the concept of justice (*adl*); and the concept of right action (*amal* and *adab*)” (Al-Attas, 1980, p. vi).

Al-Attas (1980, p. 40-41) also provides the cursory schemata of man, knowledge and university which shows the corresponding links among them:



It is conceptualised that the scope and content at the university level should be initially devised and framed before those at the lower levels. This is because, according to Al-Attas (1980), the university denotes the most complete, whole formulation, in which only when the university has achieved the position, will it suit to become the model and exemplary for the other lower levels (i.e. primary, secondary, and pre-university levels). The university serves as the perfect and complete “model of the highest order ... to serve as the criterion for the formulation of their scope and content” (p. 42).

However, it has been a great concern among many Muslim countries that university graduates live a life not in line with the Islamic values advocated in the Quran and the Sunnah (Hashim, 2004; 2013). This according to Hashim (2013), stems from the value crises that lie within the values transpired to the students. She also argues that the Islamisation of knowledge involves some changes in the university curriculum and content. Hashim (2013) further states that in the efforts to build an Islamic curriculum, Muslim scholars encountered problems in the current philosophy, whereby the present curriculum structure is “compartmentalised” (p. 62). In other words, there are gaps between the worldly knowledge and the Islamic knowledge which will result in imbalanced graduates—one group with more secularised minds and another with conservative minds. Both groups are then incapable to perform the ‘right’ role of a *khalifah* for

the betterment of the ummah, as one is more equipped with the worldly knowledge, and vice-versa.

Looking at this issue, the researchers have embarked on a research study which looks at the curriculum of English for Academic Purposes course conducted at USIM—whether or not the elements of *Naqli* and *Aqli* are being integrated in the curriculum (Hazlina Abdullah, Normazla Ahmad Mahir, Yuslina Mohamed, Maziahtusima Ishak & Ezihaslinda Ngah, 2018; Hazlina Abdullah, Yuslina Mohamed, Maziahtusima Ishak & Normazla Ahmad Mahir, 2017).

Islamic Science University of Malaysia (USIM)

As the name suggests, USIM is one of the few tertiary institutions that is devoted in upholding the Islamic education together with the modern ‘worldly’ knowledge, alongside the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), Universiti Sultan Azlan Shah (USAS) and other state university colleges like Kolej Universiti Islam Selangor (KUIS), Kolej Universiti Islam Melaka (KUIM) and Kolej Universiti Insaniah (KUIN).

Embracing the philosophy of “The integration of *Naqli* and *Aqli* knowledge combined with honourable qualities are the thrust in nurturing a noble generation and a knowledgeable society”, with the vision of “Integrating *Naqli* (revealed) and *Aqli* (human) knowledge to transform and create value for country, ummah and humanity”, and the mission—“Committed to be an advanced knowledge institution based on Islamic Studies, and to spearhead new knowledge using cutting edge technologies to produce innovations, which can transform the country, the ummah and humanity”, within the theme of being “the Leader in the Integration of *Naqli* and *Aqli* Knowledge” (Official Portal of USIM, 2016), USIM has come up with its Model of Integration of *Naqli* and *Aqli*.

This study adopts USIM’s Model of Integration of *Naqli* and *Aqli*. The model was established after a series of discussions, workshops and seminars, and formally verified in 2018 (Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia, 2018). It contains four levels, or *mustawa*, which include:

1) Ayatisation (*al-Ta’sil*) (Pengayatan):

The uses of quranic verses, and/or hadith, and/or Islamic scholars’ writings in lectures.

2) Comparison (*Al-Muqaranah*):

The similarities and differences between Islamic and conventional knowledge from the Islamic worldview.

3) Adaptation (*Al-Takyif*):

The process of selecting, filtering, adapting and using principles, values and framework that are not against Islam so that students are accustomed to the Islamic environment.

4) Integration (*Al-Takamul*)

The integration and application of various disciplines of knowledge to produce a holistic curriculum towards new knowledge for the future.

English for Academic Purposes (EAP)

There are five levels of English courses at USIM. They are: i) General English Proficiency (GEP), ii) English for Communication Purposes (ECP), iii) English for Academic Purposes (EAP), iv) English for Specific Purposes (ESP), and v) English for Research (ERP). Students will enrol into the courses based on their Malaysian University English Test (MUET) band, in which they have to complete 6 credit hours for English courses, equivalent to three courses throughout the period of their studies.

EAP is the third level, and the start of a more academic level, whereby students are expected to apply specific skills for academic reading and writing in order to bring their English language to the university level, alongside the soft skills such as problem solving, critical and creative thinking, and also team work. With those high expectations, the researchers decided to explore the integration of *Naqli* and *Aqli* in this course. Furthermore, the efforts toward integrating *Naqli* and *Aqli* knowledge are still scarce, and not many are documented in the literature, especially in the area of EAP.

Research Design

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the existing elements of *Naqli* and *Aqli* in the EAP course?
2. What are the EAP instructors' perceptions regarding the integration of *Naqli* and *Aqli* elements in the EAP course?

The qualitative study employs the method of document analysis, which involves the analyses and interpretations of data generated from the examination of the EAP curriculum. This includes the:

- a) course outline and learning outcomes
- b) course schedule
- c) textbook

Face-to-face interview sessions with five EAP instructors were also conducted to get insights into how they felt about the integration of *Naqli* and *Aqli* elements in the teaching of EAP course. The interview provided the opportunity to observe a large amount of interaction on the topic being discussed, and at the same time allowed for a large amount of concentrated data that were directly related to the focus and interest of the study (Hazlina Abdullah, 2016; (McMillan, 2008; Zainudin, 2014)).

Research Findings and Discussion

To address the research questions, the researchers analysed the course outline and learning outcomes, course schedule and the textbook, and also immersed themselves in the data collected from the face-to-face interview sessions with the EAP instructors, which were then analysed thematically. The analyses are presented according to the research questions.

Research question 1:

What are the existing elements of *Naqli* and *Aqli* in the EAP course?

The synopsis for the EAP course reads:

“This course is specifically designed for students to develop their academic English language proficiency. It aims to provide an extended experience for students in improving reading and writing skills. Through the integration of both skills, students are expected to acquire the relevant academic English skills and strategies to bring their English to university-level fluency. Blended mode as well as *Naqli* and *Aqli* elements are embedded in the task and assessment of the course. The course also offers a platform for students' soft skills development as they are expected to apply problem solving, critical thinking and team work in course related activities”.

It is stated that the elements of *Naqli* and *Aqli* are “embedded in the task and assessment” of the course. The word ‘embedded’ denotes ... “to enclose closely in...”. In the course content, two course topics are ticked showing that the elements of *Naqli* and *Aqli* are included. They are:

Input 1 – Sources for Research (Comparison)

Input 6 – Building a Paper: Refine (Adaptation). Nevertheless, it is not clearly stated in the Objectives and Learning Outcomes of the course.

The textbook chosen for the course is ‘Sourcework: Academic Writing from Sources. Second Edition. Boston: Heinle’. The book is written by American authors and the contents revolve around the western context. There is no portrayal of Islamic teachings or issues found in the textbook.

In terms of the assignment, the purpose of the assessment is to assess students’ ability to write a research paper. As mentioned in the course synopsis, the element of *Naqli* is embedded and written as, “You are required to look for other sources (e.g the Internet, academic books, journals, magazines, newspapers, Quranic verses, etc) to support each of the body paragraph. However, make sure your sources have credibility. Do not forget to record the references that you use”.

However, in the research score sheet, there is no marks allocated for the inclusion of *Naqli* element in the essay. It is focused on Content, Writing Mechanics, Thesis and Supporting Points, Citation and References, and Peer and Lecturer’s Evaluation. This shows that the inclusion of the *Naqli* element is not compulsory, but only encouraged and promoted by the instructors.

Research question 2:

What are the EAP instructors’ perceptions regarding the integration of *Naqli* and *Aqli* elements in the EAP course?

Findings from the interviews can be categorised into 4 themes; namely the notion, the extent, the benefit and the hindrance of the *Naqli* and *Aqli* integration in the EAP course. As in the case of the first theme, majority of the participants admit that their knowledge on USIM’s *Naqli Aqli* model is just on the surface. For instance, when they are asked about the four *mustawa* (levels), 4 Teachers (Teacher A, B, C, & E) confess that even though they are aware of its existence, their knowledge of the 4 levels are still at “the very basics”. Despite attending several workshops/seminars on the 4 *mustawa*, Teacher B & Teacher E still could not fully grasp “the internal aspects of *Aqli Naqli* integration”. Teacher E even laments that “no actual guide especially for language” subject was given to assist her with the inclusion of *Naqli Aqli* elements in the Course Outline. Teacher D, however, discloses that she does not have a clue on any of the *mustawa* (levels).

Secondly, the findings reveal the extent of the integration of *Naqli Aqli* elements in the participants’ EAP classes. Majority of the participants agree that such integration has taken place in their EAP classrooms. Teacher A admits that she has integrated only a small percentage of the *Naqli* and *Aqli* elements, which is in the Research paper assignment. Her students are required to include “Quranic verses and Islamic concepts like *sedekah, syariah*” as evidence to support their arguments. Both Teacher B and Teacher C embed the *Naqli* elements in the Textbook Topics, Themes and Reading Passages. Teacher B, for instance, has

encouraged her students to include *Naqli* elements (using Al-Quran verses, Hadith) during brainstorming session of the three Themes (Risking Change, Globalisation, Technology). Under the Globalisation theme, students are given an analogy of being the *Khalifah* on this earth—human beings are responsible for the well-being of God’s creation, i.e. preserving the environment. Interestingly, Teacher C has gone to the extent of emphasising on the importance of applying the *Naqli* elements in everyday life. Under the Technology theme, apart from introducing the Turn-it-in Software, Teacher C has touched upon the topic of plagiarism and support with a Quranic verse that “speaks of stealing and the Islamic view on stealing (as a sin) and how stealing would reduce/spoil the *Barakah* of learning”.

To the question on the effectiveness and the benefits of integrating the *Naqli Aqli* in the EAP course, all teachers (except Teacher D) agree that the integration process brings more advantages to the students. Teacher A states that her students would be able to apply Islamic concepts in real life situation, as Teacher C puts it, Islam as a way of life, as well as able to make comparisons between the Islamic concepts and the conventional/western perspective. Teacher B lauds such integration as it has strengthened the role of her students as a Muslim, opened their mind set and enhanced their creativity. In addition, knowledge sharing activity also occurs as Teacher B and Teacher E acknowledge the fact that they are learning from their students (Quran & Sunnah, Law & Syariah, Muamalat) on the aspect of *Naqli* elements (Islamic concepts).

When it comes to the theme of obstacles/hindrance in carrying out the integration process, Teacher B, Teacher C and Teacher E admit their shortcomings in understanding the Islamic concept in depth as well as mastering the *Naqli* elements (Quranic verses, Hadith). Relatively, Teacher E disagrees with the idea of having a Textbook custom-made with *Naqli Aqli* elements for EAP; as the search for suitable, Islamic reading materials in L1 will be quite a challenge. As for the students, Teacher A voices her concern over the fact that not all students will include the *Naqli* elements in their assignments (Research Paper). This is due to their inability to find suitable *Naqli* elements that are relevant to their topics/themes. Finally, Teacher E expresses her concern over time constraints, as the class meeting is only two hours per week.

Conclusion

The integration of *Naqli* and *Aqli* elements in the EAP course is still at the initial stage as could be seen through the related documents of the course, and also based on the instructors’ views. The elements are superficially and loosely integrated, merely through the mention of the phrase ‘*Naqli* and *Aqli*’ but without clear guidelines of how it could be more systematically implemented, especially for language courses as opposed to other content subjects. Most language instructors, whom are without formal Islamic education qualification, will need assistance in handling and tackling the issue of *Naqli* knowledge especially in classes where the students have differing views on certain topics.

In line with USIM’s mission and vision of being committed in advancing knowledge based on Islam, the present study is hoped to fill the gap, and contribute in the development of integrating *Naqli and Aqli* elements for a language course in general, and for EAP specifically.

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