

# Misconceptions on Ism Al-'Adad Wa Al-Ma'dud Among Students of Arabic Language in Malaysia

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## Abstract

This paper discusses ism al-'adad wa al-ma'dud in the teaching and learning of grammar knowledge. The core of discussion revolves around Arabic language educators of various levels in institutions implementing the teaching of grammar knowledge for the topic ism al-'adad wa al-ma'dud. A unique and interesting topic, it is frequently mentioned in verses of the Quran and Hadith. The target audience for ism al-'adad wa al-ma'dud is students of all levels of education, be it in institutions of higher learning or schools. Educators and students of Arabic language in Malaysia are not native speakers of the language or ghair al-natiq bi al-'arabiyyah. On that basis, misconceptions and confusion regarding ism al-'adad wa al-ma'dud are bound to occur, especially among students and involving the issue of gender - muannath (feminine) and muzakkar (masculine). This paper attempts to uncover the concepts and operations of ism al-'adad wa al-ma'dud and the common misconceptions among students.

**Index terms**— Misconceptions, muzakkar, muannath.

## 1 Introduction

The teaching and learning of Arabic grammar knowledge is highly distinctive compared to other subjects. The obvious difference is that it involves an extensive array of grammatical methods and comprehensive skills. The comprehensiveness of skills in Arabic grammar knowledge comprises eloquent mastery of Arabic Language, profound understanding, strength of memory as well as high creativity. Arabic grammar knowledge also requires vast and deep understanding of a concept in an accurate and holistic manner. All Arabic language teachers must be responsible in maintaining competency in the implementation of the Arabic grammar knowledge teaching and learning process by taking into account the requirements and level of attainment of the students. As such, any grammar knowledge learning problems raised by students should be accepted and handled positively to preserve the beauty and fluency of the Arabic language. Arabic language is the most beautiful and noble language created by Allah Subhanahu Wataa'la for mankind. The Quran, which was revealed by Allah Subhanahu Wataa'la through Jibril 'Alaihi al-Salam to Prophet Muhammad Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wasallam, contains a diversity of knowledge involving all aspects of living, including grammar knowledge. It discusses the numerous methods available to be cognizant of the laws that have to be established at the end of every Arabic word, in terms of order which comprise i'rab and bina'. The scope of discussion regarding grammar knowledge is related to the phrases or words in Arabic language in order to avoid errors in speech and writing (Mustafa 2005). However, grammatical errors in speech and writing tasks are common among students who are nonnative speakers of the language. Many studies have revealed that grammatical errors are made by students of all levels in Malaysia.

## 2 II.

## 3 Studies on Grammatical Errors Among Arabic Language Non-native Speaking Students in Malaysia

According to Jassem Ali (2000), Malay students learning Arabic Language as a Foreign Language or Second Language face difficulties when learning the four essential skills (maharat al-'arba'), namely listening, speaking, reading and writing. Among the four skills, writing is alleged to be the most difficult and most susceptible to grammatical errors. Errors in grammar usage largely occur among students. This is based on studies involving grammar application error analyses from various aspects carried out in secondary schools and institutions of higher learning (Muhammad Bakhit 1998; Jassem Ali 2000; Hanizam 2005; Norasmazura 2005). The most frequently made grammatical errors are those referring to gender and quantity, whether pertaining to the i c rab marks for gender and quantity, or the formation of phrases and sentences related to the similarities or differences in gender and quantity ??Sohair 1990;Bakhit 1998;Jassem 2000). A study carried out by Ashinida (1998) on grammatical errors committed in religious secondary schools found that students usually make mistakes in constructing sentences, especially those involving al-idafat and al-na'at. Mohd Bakhit The grammar topic which Arabic language teachers find the hardest to impart to their students is , that is numeral ( ) and its subject ( ). This is because the method to determine the gender of is very dependent on the gender of . Sometimes the genders are the same and sometimes they oppose each other (Noorhayati 2009). As such, Arabic grammar teachers are unable to make accurate comparisons between numeral classifiers in Malay language grammar and al-c adad wa al-ma c dud in Arabic grammar as there is no similarity between them. A teacher teaching this topic has to master and understand it well because many students find the muzakkar and muannath or otherwise known as the masculine and feminine aspects confusing and cannot be likened to numeral classifiers in Malay language (Zabiyyah 2002).

According to Baharuddin Abdullah (2003), the Arabic grammar syntax system is very complex due to changes at the end of a word involving changes to the end vowel or additions. Besides that, there are words which are positioned earlier and later in Quranic verses and reasons for the repetition of certain words. Changes which take place at the end of a word in Arabic language is known as i'rab or case. There are various cases, in the form of nominative (marfu c ), accusative (mansub) or genitive (majrur). This also applies to ism al-'adad wa al-ma'dud which involves various cases, depending on the position of ism al-'adad wa al-ma'dud in a sentence.

There are studies stating that ism al-'adad wa al-ma'dud is among the most difficult topics in Arabic grammar. Nevertheless, it is undeniably very important. Some researchers have expressed their amazement over the topic as it involves a law that contradicts the norm; feminine is coupled with masculine and vice versa (Mahmud Ramadhan 2007). In addition, there are also cases of feminine and masculine being coupled with their respective gender. As such, Arabic language teachers need to master and possess vast and profound knowledge regarding the concept and operations of ism al-'adad wa al-ma'dud to ensure it is effectively conveyed to the students.

## 4 III.

the Concept and Operations of Ism al-'Adad Wa Al-Ma'dud c Adad is something that shows quantity, such as one, two, three and so forth. Ma c dud, on the other hand, is a countable item (Dayf 1986). Ahmad (2001) in "al-Wajiz fi al-nahw wa al-sarf" defines al-c adad as something that shows the quantity of a countable item.

In correlation with this, Dayf (1986) states that c adad is any noun or adjective showing the quantity of an item or portraying a specific sequence. c Adad consists of two sections, namely c adad asli, that is and c adad tartibi such as and so forth. c Adad is also divided into several parts, namely c adad idafah, c adad murokkab, c adad c ataf ma c tuf and c adad c uqud as follows: i. In mufrad form with the position of ma c dud man c ut and isim c adad as na c at. This isim c adad is for quantities 1 and 2 ( c adad al-mufrad). For example:

ii. In the form of idafah arrangement with the position of ma c dud as mudaf ilaih and isim c adad as its mudaf. This isim c adad is for quantities 3 until 10 ( c adad al-mufrad). For example:

iii. In the form of mudaf and mudaf ilaih arrangement with the position of ma c dud as tamyiz. This isim c adad is for quantities 11 until 19 ( c adad al-murakkab).

iv. In the form of mulhaq jama c muzakkar salim with the position of ma c dud as tamyiz. This isim c adad is for quantities 20 until 90 ( c adad al-c uqud).

v. In the form of c ataf and ma c tuf arrangement with the position of ma c dud still as tamyiz. This isim c adad is for quantities 21 until 99 ( c adad al-ma c tuf). For example:

vi. In idafat arrangement with the position of ma c dud as mudaf ilaih or possibly a combination of mudaf and mudaf ilaih. This isim c adad is for quantities 100 and above such as:

In understanding ism al-c adad wa al-ma c dud, there are several concepts which students generally find confusing, especially those involving the functions of the various types of c adad and ma c dud (Muhammad Fahmi 2003). Not all quantities are determined by just one regulation, but in general it can be assumed as tasrif noun because its harakat or end vowel changes according to its 'ikrab ( c Abdullah c Abbas 1995) as Based on the examples above, the numerals for one and two should be the same as the subject in terms of gender and quantity. If the c adad is muzakkar, then the ma c dud has to be muzakkar too. On the same note, if the c adad is muannath, then the ma c dud has to be muannath too (Hamdi, 1998). Fuad Ni c mah (1973), in his book

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Al-Mulakhas fi Al-Qawa'id Al-Nahwiyah also explained that the numerals for one and two should always be the same as the subject in terms of gender and quantity, whether both numerals are in the form of single words ( mufrad ) , phrases (murakkab) or combined phrases (ma'c tuf ).

A vast content knowledge of the al-'adad wa al-ma'dud concept, combined with established paedagogical knowledge, enables an Arabic language educator to realise the Arabic language curriculum in order to successfully achieve the aims and objectives outlined. Arabic language educators who possess paedagogical content knowledge of the al-'adad wa al-ma'dud concept are capable of handling any misconceptions among students regarding ism 'adad wa al-ma'dud.

## IV. Analysis on the Misconceptions of Students Regarding Ism Al-'Adad Wa Al-Ma'dud

Wise Arabic language educators are able to identify several forms and causes for errors made by students in ism 'adad wa al-ma'dud. A misconception that usually occurs in the learning of ism 'adad wa al ma'dud is the concept of 'adad murakkab (Mahmud Ramadhan 2007). Students are often confused when 'adad murakkab is involved in the process of constructing relevant jumlah or sentences. This is due to them not fully understanding or mastering the concept of 'adad murakkab. In the teaching and learning process, students will be enlightened that 'adad murakkab is 'adad 1 to 9 which is incorporated with quantities or to produce numbers in teens such as 11, 12, 13 until 19. 'Adad murakkab also consists of two parts or which are opposing in terms of muzakkar and muannath, except for 11 and 12 whereby both parts are the same from the aspects of muzakkar and muannath as given below: ( D D D D ) E Year + / = + / = + / = + / = + / = + until + / = + = .

Nevertheless, misconceptions are common among students, especially in the combination of the second part ( ) in 'adad murakkab. For instance, students often place as and vice versa especially when constructing sentences.

Errors involving ma'dud are also prevalent whereby the ma'dud is often wrongly combined with 'adad in terms of muzakkar and muannath such as whereas it should be . Sometimes students are inclined to place the ma'dud as jama'

whereas if the quantity is 11 and above, then the ma'dud must be mufrad and the case should be mansub. The following is an example of ma'dud mufrad mansub present in Surah Yusuf, verse 4:» «

Which means: (Remember the event) when Prophet Yusuf said to his father: "O father! I saw in my dream eleven stars as well as the sun and the moon; I saw them prostrating themselves before me".

'Adad present in the verse is and the ma'dud is whereby the ma'dud is mufrad and mansuf and the word is not turned into jama' to although this occurs frequently due to the confusion with 'adad mufrad, that is quantities 3 until 10.

Besides misconceptions in understanding the concept of 'adad murakkab, students also tend to make errors in 'adad mufrad involving quantities 3 until 10. The misconception is when 'adad contravenes the ma'dud from the aspects of muzakkar and muannath (Nuha 2005). If the ma'dud is muzakkar then the 'adad must be muannath, for instance 3 boys and 3 girls . The word is jama' for the word which is a muzakkar singular noun and the word is jama' for the word which, on the other hand, is a muannath singular noun. Meanwhile, the 'adad is in which it is a muannath incorporated with a muzakkar ma'dud, that is . 'Adad is muzakkar but it is incorporated with a muannath ma'dud, that is . The error frequently committed by students is that when they wish to construct a sentence in the context of 'adad mufrad, they will first look at the 'adad to see whether it is muzakkar or muannath. What they should do when constructing sentences in the form of tahwil is to observe the ma'dud and ascertain whether the ma'dud is muzakkar or muannath. If the ma'dud is muzakkar, the 'adad should be muannath and vice versa. Only then can the ma'dud be turned into jama'.

Various misconceptions arise among students when learning ism 'adad wa al-ma'dud. As such, Arabic language educators who are involved in the teaching and learning process of this topic should be more creative and innovative in dispelling misconceptions among students and coming up with practical strategies to overcome them (Nuha 2005). Many researches propose diverse teaching and learning strategies which may cultivate the interest among students to learn grammar knowledge and simultaneously trigger enjoyment in learning a difficult grammar topic (Jassem 'Ali, 2000). The following are several suggestions and recommendations from Arabic language researchers which can be adopted in the teaching of ism al-'adad wa al-ma'dud: Teaching strategies which combine various approaches, methods and techniques, together with creative analogies and adaptation of textbook content according to the environment of the students will pave the way towards the best and most effective teaching methodology. <sup>1</sup>

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Figure 1: (

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