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RESEARCH ARTICLE

THE CONSISTENCY AND COHERENCE OF HURUF AL-MA'ANI IN MUGHNI AL-LABIB 'AN KUTUB AL-A'ARIB AS A REFERENCE FOR MALAYSIAN STUDENTS OF ISLAMIC STUDIES IN MOROCCO

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Abstract

Arabic speakers considering Morocco uses Arabic as a daily spoken language. Thus, Malaysian students could learn more deeply and master the knowledge of this tool before delving into other Islamic studies. Besides, Malaysian students are forced to speak in daily affairs while they study here which is in university or outside Campus. Among the core courses for specialization in Arabic language are courses relating to Arabic grammar. Courses on grammar encompass various aspects, among which is huruf al-ma'ani. Past prominent Arabic grammarians emphasized very much on the study of huruf al-ma'ani. Various works on it were written by many Arabic grammarians. One of them was the distinguished 8th Century Hijrah Ibn Hisham al-Ansari. He contributed much to Arabic grammar development, particularly through his famous writing which is still relevant for application even today. Among his works is Mughni al-Labib which is considered as a masterpiece acclaimed and regarded as unique by many lovers of Arabic language who wish to explore Arabic language, especially on the aspect of huruf al-ma'ani. The objective of this study is to review ibn Hisham's endeavor to simplify learning of grammar, particularly through his study of the huruf al-ma'ani aspect in his book Mughni al-Labib and its suitability as part of reference for Arabic specialization syllabus in Morocco Universities. This article is based on descriptive study of the methodology in Mughni al-Labib contained in the chapter relating to huruf al-ma'ani. It is found that Ibn Hisham endeavored to simplify learning of Arabic grammar through his study of Arabic huruf al-ma'ani. It is hoped that the use of his book, Mughni al-Labib, as part of syllabus reference may benefit students, particularly those majoring in Arabic language in university.

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Introduction:-

Mastery of various languages is very important in facing today's challenges of globalization of the world which has become so small due to the explosion of new era technology. In the context of Morocco, the opportunity to learn Arabic language is widespread open for Malaysian's here. Every year only 15 students who are selected from Malaysia to pursue their studies in Morocco for only two courses which is Islamic Studies or Arabic Studies. Before that, they learn Arabic in our country from secondary schools, and in Morocco we will learn deeper to the root of Arabic as communication and learning. At this level, various courses or subjects teach Arabic language in-depth. Among the core courses of Arabic language specialization are courses on Arabic grammar by using Matan al-Ajurrumiyyah, 'Awamil al-Mi'ah, Qatr al-Nada, Shudhur al-Dhahab and more. Knowledge of Arabic grammar has evolved by various developmental stages through time. Study of this knowledge covers various topics and aspects, among them huruf al-ma'ani. Past grammarians emphasized very much on its study.

At the initial level of grammatical knowledge, huruf al-ma'ani was studied as an aspect of Arabic grammar together with other grammatical aspects. At this stage, it was not studied in isolation from grammar itself. This may clearly be seen in al-Kitab by Sibawayh (1988) and al-Muqtadab by al-Mubarrid (1994). Later, in the developmental era of Arabic grammar, certain aspects of Arabic syntax began to be studied in isolation and given specific attention. One of these aspects was huruf al-ma'ani which began to be studied in isolation and given deep attention. Thus, were born books which discuss in-depth huruf al-ma'ani such as Mughni al-Labib by Ibn Hisham. Huruf al-ma'ani in this article means particles which indicate a specific meaning in other words and not huruf al-Mabani which do not contain specific meaning. Among the inherited books relating to huruf al-Ma'ani are Ma'ani al-Huruf by ar-Rummani, Sirr Sina'at al-Huruf by Ibn Jinni, Rasf al-Mabani fi Sharh Huruf al-Ma'ani by al-Maliqi, al-Jana al-Dani by al-Muradi and Mughni al-Labib 'an Kutub al-A'arib by Ibn Hisham ('Awwad 1982). In addition, other Arabic grammar books also give attention to the study of huruf al-ma'ani such as Sharh al-Tashil by Ibn Malik, Irtishaf al-Darab by Abu Hayyan al-Andalusi and Ham' al-Hawami' by al-Suyuti as well as Sharh Ibn 'Aqil by Ibn Aqil.

Malaysian students studying in the Arab world are required to know more in-depth information on Arabic language sources, especially for university students majoring in Arabic language. The objective of this article is to review Ibn Hisham's endeavor to simplify learning of Arabic grammar, specifically through study of huruf al-ma'ani in his book Mughni al-Labib and its suitability as part of reference for the university syllabus of specialization in Arabic language and Islamic Studies in Morocco.

Ibn Hisham al-Ansari: A Short Biography:-

Ibn Hisham al-Ansari's full name was 'Abd Allah ibn Yusuf ibn Ahmad ibn 'Abd Allah ibn Hisham al-Ansari. He was a distinguished and renowned Arab grammarian (Ibn Hisham 2000). Born at the beginning of the 8th Century Hijrah, in the year 708H (al-Suyuti 1979; Mukram 1990), he first learnt various religious sciences and Arabic language from teachers as well as famous figures, such as Ibn al-Murahhal, Taj al-Din al-Faqihani and Ibn Sarraj (Mukram 1990). Among his works which are still being learnt and studied even today are Mughni al-Labib 'an Kutub al-A'arib, al-I'rab 'an Qawa'id al-I'rab, Qatr al-Nada wa Ball al-Sada, Sharh Shudhur al-Dhahab and 'Awdat al-Masalik ('Abd al-Rahman 1998). Mughni al-Labib 'an Kutub al-A'arib by Ibn Hisham, is a grammar book which gives attention to discussion of huruf al-ma'ani, apart from other aspects of Arabic grammar. This book was compiled twice by Ibn Hisham in the years 749H and 756H ('Awad 1987).

It begins with an introduction and contains eight chapters with the following topics, Fi Tafsir al-Mufradat, Fi Tafsir al-Jumal wa Dhikr Aqsamiha wa Ahkamiha, Fi Dhikr ma Yataraddadu bayn al-Mufradat wa al-Jumal, Fi Dhikr Ahkam Yakthuru Dawruha wa Yaqbah bi al-Mu'rab Jahluha, Fi Dhikr Awjuh Allati Yadhkhulu 'ala al-Mu'rab al-Khalal min Jihatih, Fi al-Tahzir min Umur Ishtishharat bayn al-Mu'rabayn wa al-Sawab Khilafuha, Fi Kayfiyyat al-I'rab and Fi Dhikr Umur Kulliyyat Yatakharraj 'alayha ma la Yanhasir min al-Suwar al-Juz'iyyah. The first chapter relates to huruf al-ma'ani. Ibn Hisham died in the year 761H (Mukram 1990) leaving a legacy of various priceless and still applicable works to lovers of Arabic language even today.

Methodology of Mughni al-Labib in the Study of Huruf al-Ma'ani:-

This article discusses the suitability of Mughni al-Labib as a reference for Malaysian students studying in the Arab world from the methodology aspect of Mughni al-Labib in the study of huruf al-ma'ani. The aspect which will be discussed encompasses the muqaddimah (introduction) of the book, all huruf al-ma'ani, the arrangement, selection of topics, comprehensive analysis as well as the stated sources of reference.

1. Objectives in the Muqaddimah and its Beautiful Language Style:-

In the muqaddimah of Mughni al-Labib is stated the main purpose or objectives of writing the book. Among the main objectives are to facilitate understanding of al-Qur'an al-Karim and to explain the rules of grammar and the problems which make understanding difficult for students (Ibn Hisham 2000). This shows the noble intention of the book's author, Ibn Hisham, who was more focused on the goal of understanding al-Qur'an and facilitating learning of Arabic language. Indeed, al-Qur'an al-Karim and learning of Arabic language are closely related. The outlined goal also shows how past scholars had long endeavored to simplify learning of Arabic language, specifically, Arabic grammar. The goal is to assist students in understanding the difficulty of i'rab (grammar analysis) problems, making it suitable for students majoring in Arabic language at tertiary institutions. The stated objectives in the introduction before the contents, as found in the book, Mughni al-Labib, are important to inform the reader or student who wishes to explore the book, the objectives of writing it. Students also may study the contents in line with the outlined goal. Further, the muqaddimah Mughni al Labib is written beautifully in the language style of al-khutbah al-masju'ah (Shu'ayb 1986). Indeed, the eloquence and beauty of the language expression may attract the attention of students, particularly those majoring in Arabic language, to continue reading this highly priceless book.

2. Study Inclusive of All Huruf al-Ma'ani:-

The study of huruf al-ma'ani in Mughni al-Labib is not limited to only al-harf (one of the Arabic word categories consisting of al-ism, al-fi'l and al-harf (Sibawayh 1988). In fact, it also involves particles, including al-zarf (Ibn Hisham 2000). Information which covers all huruf al-ma'ani in a single book such as contained in Mughni al-Labib makes it easier for students to search for needed materials relating to huruf al-ma'ani.

3. Arrangement of Huruf al-Ma'ani for Easy Understanding:-

Huruf al-ma'ani in the book is arranged according to the basic order of huruf hija'iyah (Shu'ayb 1986). For example, particle Hamzah is discussed before particle al-ba' (Ibn Hisham 2000). However, this arrangement is guided only by the first letter (huruf) in a huruf al-ma'ani, without looking at the arrangement of the second letter in the word. For example, Ibn Hisham discusses the particle An before the particle Am, even though in terms of huruf hija'iyah order, harf al-mim comes before harf al-nun (Shu'ayb 1986). Such an arrangement facilitates students in doing a search as well as avoiding the methodology from becoming too complex.

4. Apt and Accurate Selection of Topic and Sub-topic:-

Ibn Hisham named the topics and sub-topics aptly and accurately in line with discussion of their contents (Shu'ayb 1986) with careful classification of chapters ('Awad 1987). For example, the first chapter given as topic Fi Tafsir al-Mufradat wa Dhikr Ahkamiha, Wa A'ni bi al-Mufradat al-Huruf wa ma Tadammana Ma'naha min al-Asma' wa al-Zuruf (Ibn Hisham 2000), contains discussion of mufradat huruf al-ma'ani which covers al-harf as well as al-Isim, including al-zarf. Thus, by reading the topic properly, aptly, and accurately given, the student can expect the contents of the chapter. This then helps the student to focus on the topic of discussion and not get side-tracked from it. Such focus on a topic is very helpful for students, particularly those who major in Arabic language at tertiary level, as it helps them in their endeavor to master the topic.

5. Comprehensive Analysis of Huruf al-Ma'ani:-

Discussion of huruf al-ma'ani in Mughni al-Labib, covers various aspects such the meaning of harf and rules of grammar (Ibn Hisham 2000). Ibn Hisham discussed the meaning of huruf in detail, cited the names and views of Arabic grammarians concerning wujuh ma'na al-huruf (Ibn Hisham 2000), and even cited changes in a certain grammarian's views (Shu'ayb 1986). It is customary for students who major in a certain discipline at university level to master the field comprehensively and in detail as compared to other students. Such is also the case with students who specialize in Arabic language in university. Based on this, it is felt that the book Mughni al-Labib is suitable for use as part of syllabus reference in the learning of Arabic language for students who major in Arabic language.

6. Transparency in Stating Sources of Views:-

Ibn Hisham in his discussion of huruf al-ma'ani, often cited the views of the proponents. The sources of reference for Mughni al-Labib consist of al-Qur'an, hadith, Arabic poetry and prose cited in his discussion relating to huruf al-ma'ani (Shu'ayb 1986). The evidence, mostly from al-Qur'an, in his study of huruf al-ma'ani, is very conducive to achieving the objectives of writing Mughni al-Labib, that is, to understand al-Qur'an and assist students to understand the rules of grammar. This shows his transparency in collecting sources of information relating to his study. Such transparency in gathering sources of information promotes students' confidence in Mughni al-Labib. Additionally, it also helps students to know the original source of a view on Arabic grammar.

Conclusion:-

The conclusion which may be arrived at is that Ibn Hisham al-Ansari was a highly esteemed figure who contributed immensely to the development of Arabic grammar. His work, *Mughni al-Labib* is among the leading works, specifically in discussion of the *huruf al-ma'ani* (grammatical prepositions or particles), in addition to other aspects of grammar. The objectives of *Mughni al-Labib* are stated in its *muqaddimah* (introduction), among which, are to facilitate understanding of al-Quran and to simplify student learning of grammatical rules and problems. Further, the methodology used by Ibn Hisham in *Mughni al-Labib* helps students, particularly those who major in Arabic language, to understand its contents. The methodology used includes suitable selection of topics, simplified arrangement of al-huruf order, wide and detailed discussion, and accuracy of information. It is hoped that his book, *Mughni al-Labib* continues to receive the attention deserved in view of the abundant benefits gained from it, and that it continues to be part of the reference for the existing syllabus, specifically for students who major in Arabic language, so as to, at least, assist students in expanding their knowledge regarding the legacy of past scholars.

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