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Arabic-Learning Among the Minangkabau: Attitudes,
Motivations, and Collective Religious Memory

Thesis presented by

Isral Naska

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3117-8325>

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College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Study
Study of Religions Department

Head of School/Department: Dr. Amanullah De Sondy

Supervisor(s):

Dr. Amanullah De Sondy

Dr. Jenny Butler

2024

DECLARATION

“This is to certify that the work I am submitting is my own and has not been submitted for another degree, either at University College Cork or elsewhere. All external references and sources are clearly acknowledged and identified within the contents. I have read and understood the regulations of University College Cork concerning plagiarism and intellectual property.”

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the role of Minangkabau cultural identity in shaping learners' motivation to learn Arabic and their attitude toward the language. Minangkabau is a matrilineal society whose homeland is the West Sumatra province of Indonesia. Islam connects the Minangkabau people and Arabic. While the language functions as the sacred language of Islam, the Minangkabau people make Islam one of the most fundamental aspects of their cultural identity. This intersection brings out a particular social dynamic that plays a role in Arabic learning motivation and attitudes toward the language among Minangkabau learners of Arabic. Concerning the historical dynamics between Islam and Minangkabau, collective religious memory, which Maurice Halbwachs and Danièle Hervieu-Léger suggested, functions as the theoretical foundation of this thesis' data analysis. Ethnography serves as the approach to collecting and analyzing the data. Thirty-six participants who have the Minangkabau cultural background from 4 cities of West Sumatra (Padang, Padang Panjang, Bukittinggi, and Payakumbuh) participated in the study. The study concludes that Arabic holds a distinctive significance among the Minangkabau because of four key aspects: religious rituals, religious authority, Qur'anic language, and identity or "Minangkabauness." These aspects contribute to shaping participants' motivation to learn Arabic.

Keywords: **Arabic, Minangkabau, Religious Collective Memory**

ARABIC-LATIN TRANSLITERATION SYSTEM

International Journal of Middle East Studies (IJMES) System

Arabic Letter	Latin Letter	Example
ا	Ā	كتاب (kitāb)
ب	B	بيت (bayt)
ت	T	توت (tūt)
ث	Th	مثل (mithl)
ج	J	جيد (jayyid)
ح	ḥ	حمد (ḥamd)
خ	Kh	خير (khayr)
د	D	دفتر (daftar)
ذ	Dh	ذهب (dhahab)
ر	R	رجل (rajul)
ز	Z	زهرة (zahrah)
س	S	سماء (samāʻ)
ش	Sh	شمس (shams)
ص	ṣ	صلاة (ṣalāh)
ض	ḍ	ضوء (ḍawʻ)
ط	ṭ	طعام (ṭaʻām)
ظ	ẓ	ظلم (ẓulm)
ع	ʻ	علم (ʻilm)
غ	Gh	غراب (ghurāb)
ف	F	فاكهة (fākhah)
ق	Q	قل (qal)
ك	K	كتاب (kitāb)
ل	L	ليل (layl)
م	M	مسلم (muslim)
ن	N	نعم (naʻam)
ه	H	هواء (hawāʻ)
و	W	كتاب (kitāb)
ي	Y	بيت (bayt)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION	i
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	ii
ABSTRACT.....	iv
ARABIC-LATIN TRANSLITERATION SYSTEM.....	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vi
CHAPTER 1	1
GENERAL INTRODUCTION	1
Background	1
Research Question and Purpose of The Study	4
Significance of The Study	5
Thesis Structure.....	6
CHAPTER 2	8
RESEARCH APPROACH AND METHOD.....	8
Researcher Background and Worldview.....	9
Researcher's Personal Reflections	9
Researcher's Ontological View on Social Reality	15
Research Method.....	17
Ethnography: A Methodical Approach	17
A Crisis-Adapted Ethnography	20
Data Collection and Analysis; General Principles and Implementations ..	23
Language	23
Interview and Data Collection	25
Data Analysis	30
CHAPTER 3	33

UMMAH, MINANGKABAU SOCIETY, AND ARABIC.....	33
Understanding Ummah	33
General Insight into the Meaning of Ummah	33
The Basic Meaning and Contextual Meaning of Ummah.....	36
Ummah as Muslims Religious Community and Social Religious Identity	38
Arabic, The Language of Islam.....	43
Minangkabau Society and Arabic	46
Historical Overview	46
A Glimpse of Arabic in Minangkabau Today.....	57
CHAPTER 4	61
ANALYSING COLLECTIVE RELIGIOUS MEMORY, ATTITUDE AND MOTIVATION	61
Argument Behind Theory	62
Collective Religious Memory	65
Religious Traditions and Rites	69
Memory Within Islamic Tradition	73
Etymological Perspective.....	74
The Perspective from Qur'an and Hadith	76
Ibn Khaldun's Perspective	78
Identity, Attitudes and Motivation in Language Learning.....	81
Attitudes	81
Motivation.....	86
CHAPTER 5	89
COLLECTIVE RELIGIOUS MEMORY AND ARABIC LEARNING IN MINANGKABAU TODAY	89
Research Participants: Young and Old Minangkabau Learners	89
Macro and Micro Sphere of Arabic Learning; A Thick Memory Space ...	91

Arabic Learning Spheres.....	91
Macro Sphere of Arabic Learning.....	92
Micro Sphere of Arabic Learning	96
Arabic Learning Sphere as a Thick Memory Place	98
Arabic, Islamic Rites and Traditions, and Collective Memory.....	100
Non-learners view	100
Learners' views	105
Collective Memory, Religious Authority, and Learning Arabic.....	109
Non learners' view	115
Non-learners View	119
Collective Memory, The Qur'anic Language and Learning Arabic	120
Learners' View.....	122
Non learners' view	125
Collective Memory, Minangkabauness, and Learning Arabic.....	126
CHAPTER 6	129
CONCLUSION, LIMITATION AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS	129
Conclusion	129
Limitation.....	135
Future Directions.....	136
REFERENCES.....	138

CHAPTER 1

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

This chapter serves to introduce the study and provide an overview of the writing organization. The chapter is organized into four subchapters: "Background", "Significance of the Study", "Research Question and Purpose of the Study" and "Thesis Structure".

Background

In West Sumatra, some groups of people who do not belong to any type of formal Islamic educational institutions, in which Arabic is a compulsory subject, have decided to learn Arabic voluntarily, commonly taking place in mosques. Most of the learners come from occupational backgrounds where Arabic is not a crucial requirement for supporting their job, such as farmers, math teachers, government staff, and nurses. According to Nichols (2014), students who fit character are termed non-traditional students. Learning Arabic in this context is a growing trend in the province.

Cultural connection between the Minangkabau and Arabic cultures is relatively limited, despite the fact that many Minangkabau people learn the Arabic language. While the Minangkabau language belongs to the Austronesian language family (Adelaar & Himmelmann, 2004, p. 202), originating from the Arabian Peninsula and widely used in the Middle East and North Africa. Geographically, the Arab region, with its desert climate, exhibits significantly different geographical features compared to West Sumatra, resulting in distinct cultural characteristics. Additionally, Arab culture is notably patrilineal, further distinguishing it from the Minangkabau. At this stage, the cultural and linguistic connections and similarities between the Minangkabau and Arab cultures are minimal.

Despite the minimal cultural, geographical, and linguistic connection, Minangkabau still connect to Arabic through Islam. Religion functions as one of the most fundamental aspects of Minangkabau collective identity. The society collectively agrees to accept Islam as an inseparable part of their heritage identity (Dobbin, 2014, p. 25; Hadler, 2008b, pp. 101–102; Kato, 1982, pp. 10–13). As a result of this social agreement, the mainstream understanding among the Minangkabau people stipulates

that both maternal lineage and the acceptance of Islam are two fundamental criteria for someone to be recognized as a member of the Minangkabau community. For Minangkabau people, identification with the religion is a required aspect of the cultural identity, as stated by von Benda-Beckmann (2012):

“Since the sixteenth century they have been devout Muslims. Their history is characterized by dynamic transformations of the relationship between adat (indigenous law and social organization) and Islam, and—since their incorporation into the colony of the Dutch East Indies in the early nineteenth century—with the state”.

As the consequence, the Minangkabau people who make up the vast majority of the population of the Indonesian province of West Sumatra are Muslim. Muslim population -most of them is Minangkabau people- in West Sumatera is considered probably as 97.41 % (BPS, 2010) from a total population of 5.196.289 people (Jumlah Tempat Peribadatan Menurut Kabupaten/Kota Dan Agama (Unit), 2019-2021, 2021). There are approximately 15.844 mosques and thousands of Islamic education institution Around West Sumatera, as published by Kemenag (2012).

The robust connection and association between the Minangkabau and Islam have endured for at least 3-4 centuries, characterized by a unique historical dynamic (Abdullah, 1966; Dobbin, 2014; Hadler, 2008b). Meanwhile, Arabic holds a significant position as the language of Islam. It is employed as the language of the Qur'an, which is the holy book of Islam believed by Muslims to be a divine revelation. Furthermore, Arabic is also used as the language of the five daily Islamic prayers.

Regarding the research theme, given the limited cultural connection between the Minangkabau and the Arab cultures, and the strong religious relationship between them, one can suggest that the Minangkabau attitude toward Arabic and their motivation to learn it are primarily driven by religious factors. Certainly, extensive research indicated that religious motivation is one of the most striking motivations of Arabic learning (Belnap, 1987; Husseinali, 2005, 2006; Seymour-Jorn, 2004).

Yet, according to my reading of accessible resources, there is a lack of explanative effort regarding the religious motivation in learning Arabic from the perspective of sociology. This research aims to explain how socio-cultural aspects operate in establishing and shaping learners' attitudes toward Arabic and their motivations to learn it in the Minangkabau context.

Existing literatures on the motivation for learning Arabic, such as by Belnap (1987; Brosh (2013) Husseinali (2005), have not specifically focused on addressing

the role of religious identity in shaping attitudes towards Arabic and motivation to learn it. A study by Seymour-Jorn (2004) comes close to this aim, but it is situated within the context of Arab immigrants residing in an American city, namely Milwaukee. In contrast, this study is conducted within the socio-religious context of the Minangkabau, which has evolved through dynamic and unique historical roots.

In short, the previous literature acknowledged religious identity as a fundamental factor in influencing attitude and motivation. However, the explanation of the role of identity in shaping learners' attitudes and motivations has not yet been provided thoroughly. Hence, it is defined as a gap in the field which this study is intended to address.

In order to explore how identity shapes attitudes towards Arabic and motivation to learn it, the theory of collective memory is employed. Several rationales can be put forth to support this choice. Firstly, the traditional aspect of Arabic in relation to Islam is significant. Arabic serves as the language of the Qur'an, a sacred text revealed in the 6th century CE. Since its revelation, Arabic has remained the exclusive language of the Qur'an and Islamic daily prayer as well. Early Muslims undertook extensive efforts to systematize Arabic as a form of knowledge, driven by the ultimate purpose of understanding the Qur'an (Dhayf, 1960; Tawwab, 1999; Ya'qub, 1982). Subsequently, the importance of Arabic has been sustained within Islamic traditions, encompassing religious rituals and scholarly endeavors. Classical Arabic, known widely as the Arabic of the Qur'an, has been preserved from the past and maintains its relevance to the present. This sustainability is a fundamental element of tradition. Tradition itself serves as a repository of collective memory (Hervieu-Léger, 2000a, pp. 83–92). In addition to that, the Minangkabau are a traditional community, which makes them one of the most distinctive ethnic groups in Indonesia (Abdullah, 1966; Dobbin, 2014; Hadler, 2008b; Kato, 1982). As part of the global umma (Muslim community), Minangkabau society maintains a common characteristic with Muslim communities globally, such as having a strong sense of religious brotherhood with other Muslim communities, as seen, for instance, through their notable advocacy for Palestine. It is commonly known that, at least, the support for Palestine has been defined as among the indicators of umma brotherhood (Shadiqi et al., 2020)..

On the other hand, the way Minangkabau accepted Islam led them to develop a unique relationship with the religion. Islam was introduced to Minangkabau not by

outsiders, but rather by Minangkabau figures who had detailed knowledge of the social scheme of Minangkabau society, which led to the development of a locally based and wisdom-driven approach (Azra, 2017). As a result of this approach, after a dynamic historical relationship, the Minangkabau combined the robust maintenance of their matrilineal system with Islam. The Minangkabau's ability to maintain their matrilineal system makes them a very traditional community, a group of people who make distinctive efforts to ensure their traditional values remain relevant in dealing with contemporary circumstances. In other words, the Minangkabau are a community that preserves their collective memory both in terms of their collective cultural memory and their collective religious memory.

Arabic and Minangkabau are terms that are identical with traditional value. As the language of the Quran, Arabic is socially preserved within the collective memory of Muslim, which make it part of Islamic traditionality. Minangkabau is an ethnic who embrace their traditional value, as the result of well preservation of their collective memory.

Therefore, theory of collective religious memory is harnessed to comprehend the relationship between Minangkabau and Arabic in the context of this study. In essence, this theory emphasizes the role of collective memories in shaping collective identity. Identity itself forms a worldview that influences the way a community understands itself and the external world. Traditions serve as sites where people preserve their collective memory. Therefore, a community that maintains its traditions effectively preserves its collective memory. In the context of this research, the fundamental characteristics of Arabic and the Minangkabau people create an ideal context for applying the theory of collective memory.

Research Question and Purpose of The Study

This research aims to explore how the religious and cultural identity of the Minangkabau people, who hail from West Sumatra, Indonesia, influences their attitude toward Arabic and their motivation to learn it. An ethnographic approach is employed to collect and analyze data from 36 participants residing in four major cities of West Sumatra: Padang, Padang Panjang, Bukittinggi, and Payakumbuh. The theory of collective religious memory, as introduced by Halbwachs (1992) and Hervieu-Léger (2000), serves as an analytical framework for interpreting the gathered data. Collective memory is a fundamental aspect that establishes collective identity.

Identity drives how a person understands the world they live in and how they deal with it (Norton, 2013). In the context of foreign language learning, a student's identity determines their attitude toward a foreign language as well as their decision and commitment to learning it. Based on this statement, the research questions for this study are as follows: How does religious identity play a role in forming and shaping Minangkabau people's attitudes toward Arabic and their motivation to learn it within the social context of the Minangkabau?

Regarding the research question, this study aims to investigate the role of religious identity in forming and shaping people's attitudes toward Arabic and their motivation to learn it within the Minangkabau social context. The study seeks to explore, explain, and understand how religious identity influences attitudes toward Arabic and motivation to learn it within the sociological circumstances of the Minangkabau community. Ethnographic-based field activities, including observation and a series of interviews, will be employed to achieve the study's objectives. In order to explain and understand the sociological processes and mechanisms underlying these variables, the theory of collective memory will be utilized as the analytical tool in this study.

Significance of The Study

The findings of this study will provide new insights into how religious identities as Muslim shape attitudes towards Arabic and motivation to learn it. Although this study is limited to the context of the Minangkabau people, I believe it has the potential to offer a general understanding of the attitudes and motivations of other Indonesian Muslims towards Arabic, particularly those who, like the Minangkabau, establish ethnicity as part of their identity alongside Islam. Future research could explore possible contextual differences that may exist among different ethnic groups in Indonesia.

On a practical level, the findings of this study can inform the development of Arabic learning curricula in Indonesia, both in formal and non-formal educational institutions ranging from elementary and secondary schools to universities, particularly in madrasas and Islamic universities.

Thesis Structure

This thesis is organized into 6 chapters. Those chapters are (1) General Introduction, (2) Research Approach and Method, (3) Umma, Minangkabau Society, and Arabic, (4) Collective Religious Memory, Attitude and Motivation (5) Collective Religious Memory and Arabic Learning in Minangkabau Today, and (6) Conclusion, Limitation and Future Directions.

Chapter One (General Introduction) aims to explain a brief overview of the research, set of concise explanations of thoughtful consideration behind the selection of research theme, and thesis structure.

Chapter Two (Research Approach and Method) aims to elucidate the approach adopted in this study. According to Bhaskar (2008, p. 14), a scientific discovery is the result of integrating preexisting knowledge with the effective efforts of individuals. Building upon this premise, the chapter will delve into two pivotal processes of the study: the organization of preexisting and data collection and analysis. With regard to knowledge organization, the chapter will briefly explain the rationale behind the next chapters. In terms of the second aspect, the chapter will elucidate the methodology employed for data collection and analysis.

Chapter Three (Umma, Minangkabau Society, Arabic). This chapter aims to provide preexisting knowledge regarding the research topic, serving as the scientific foundation for data interpretation. It incorporates key topics such as the Ummah, Arabic language, and Minangkabau culture and society. "Ummah" is a widely known term for the global Muslim community, formed and shaped by a collective religious identity. Meanwhile, the Minangkabau are an inseparable part of the umma, with distinctive cultural features. In this context, Arabic is a language that belongs to both the Umma and the Minangkabau. This chapter will offer insights into the general attitude of the Umma towards Arabic, based on accessible information, and will discuss in more detail how the Minangkabau have interacted with the language.

Chapter Four (Analyzing Collective Religious Memory, Attitude and Motivation) explains the theory of collective religious memory, which serves as a fundamental aspect in analyzing and interpreting the data. The theory proposed by Halbwachs (1992) and Hervieu-L  ger (2000) will be employed for this purpose. The chapter also encompasses a restatement of other critical explanations, including the relevance of the theory and its methodological alignment.

Chapter Five (Collective Religious Memory and Arabic Learning in Minangkabau Society Today) will present my analysis and interpretation of participants' thoughts regarding their attitude toward Arabic and their motivation to learn it. Respecting the nuance that shapes how learning groups get involved in Arabic learning, I introduce the term 'Arabic learning sphere'. It is a sphere of memory that shapes certain attitudes toward Arabic and motivations for learning it. As members of the umma, Minangkabau participants exhibit a common and typical attitude toward Arabic and a strong motivation to learn it, mirroring their fellow Muslims worldwide. The awareness of the unique historical dynamics between Minangkabau society and culture, Islam, and Arabic, the understanding of collective memory theory, and the recognition of the Minangkabau's steadfast preservation of religious and cultural traditions have enabled me to uncover distinctive dimensions in their attitude toward Arabic and their motivation to learn it.

Chapter Six (Conclusion) will encompass all the conclusive aspects of the study, demonstrating how various components are interconnected. It will provide a concise overview of the study's findings and incorporate my personal reflections on those findings. Additionally, the chapter will highlight the significance of the study within the existing scholarly discourse, propose potential avenues for future research projects, and address any limitations encountered during the study.

CHAPTER 2

RESEARCH APPROACH AND METHOD

According to Bhaskar (20d08:14), scientific discovery results from the combination of “antecedent knowledge” and “efficient activity of men”. This chapter mainly outlines how I planned my methodological approach, which included theoretical and procedural attempts to manage and systematize the research. In other words, this chapter describes the research paradigm, which determines research dimensions, such as the approach to the problem, data collection, and data analysis. In short, this chapter shows how this research is structured and designed to make it an efficient study.

This explanation is fundamental to facilitate the reader to recognize essential aspects which motivated the inception of this research project, and to give a grounding in the methods employed, which should help them to understand how conclusions were generated. In turn, conveying the methodological framework will help other scholars to engage with the research, open the data up for discussions, and allow further research in responding to this study.

This chapter is divided into several subchapters to provide a comprehensive explanation. The first subchapter, "Researcher's Background and Worldview," outlines my personal experiences and how they have shaped my perspective. In a qualitative study, the researcher serves as the primary instrument of data collection and interpretation. The researcher's position and background significantly influence the way data is collected, presented, and interpreted. It is worth noting for any reader to recognize (Mruck & Breuer, 2003).

The third subchapter, "Research Method," explains the fundamental nature of this research and its connection to my theoretical perspective and methodological approach. It aims to establish a clear understanding of the research's underlying principles. In this subchapter, I will also describe my project as a crisis-adapted ethnography, detailing the adaptations made during fieldwork in response to the unexpected events of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Lastly, the final subchapter, "Data Collection and Analysis," outlines the process of collecting data through ethnographic interviews. It also elucidates the guiding principles employed during the analysis of the gathered data.

Researcher Background and Worldview

Researcher's Personal Reflections

It was during an afternoon a long time ago that someone told me that my late father had asked me to meet him as soon as possible and that he was waiting for me at our home. When I got home, I found him sitting with my teacher and tutor from my Islamic boarding school. From the atmosphere in the room, it seemed they had just finished a serious conversation about me. I wondered what it was about.

I joined them, sitting on an empty seat. After a moment of silence, my father carefully started to talk. He proposed to me to change my department. Previously, I had registered myself to the Islamic Law faculty in an Islamic university in my hometown. With all the registration process completed, I was waiting for the first day to go to the college. He said: "what if you change it to the Arabic Teaching Department?" Without waiting for my answer, he continued to talk about his hope that he would see me teaching Arabic in university like him one day in the future. He finally said: "look at the turath!" I then stared at the collections of classical Islamic books written in Arabic, called turath. Then I heard him saying: "All of those books are yours. It is only you in this family that can read them; who else?" I then looked at my teacher's face. He did not say anything but gave a delicate nod, which I took to mean "just say yes, and you will be fine". And what happened seconds after was that I agreed to move to the Arabic Teaching Department.

My father was a dedicated Arabic lecturer who had taught Arabic in the Islamic Law faculty in the Islamic university where I enrolled myself. He also taught Arabic at the Muhammadiyah University of West Sumatra, a Muhammadiyah-owned university located in our city. Since his youth, he had been a Muhammadiyah active member. In addition, he, mostly every night, also taught Arabic at the Islamic boarding school, which he was Director/Principal of. I remembered when a group of Malaysian students come to the Islamic boarding school to get additional sessions of Arabic learning. One time, for several months, a dentist came to our house every morning after fajr prayer to have a private Arabic tutor. I read my father's writings, published in local newspapers, explaining Arabic grammar. He focused on teaching Arabic

grammar, rather than communication skills in Arabic. He also wrote two books in Arabic on grammar: *Al Tashil Fi Qawa'di Al 'Arabiyyah* and *al Ahruf al-Ma'nawiyyah*.

My father had a physical disability due to a heart problem and suffered from congenital heart disease, which made him highly dependent on medicine and the hospital. He often had to be hospitalized because his condition deteriorated until I had no interest in counting how often it was. My mother told me that my father got a full scholarship to the Middle East in the early 80s, and he failed to go due to his heart condition.

Returning to the idea of moving my study to the Arabic teaching department, one day after, my father immediately brought me to the admission center of the university to make sure it happened. On the day, I was just like a small child whose father came to the school to care for him. If he asked me to do it myself, I surely could do it since I am quite well acquainted with the administrative process. I was the one who usually dealt with that kind of issue every time he needed to go to the hospital, whether for the regular visit or even for having inpatient care. But that day, in August 2003, he decided to do everything for me.

One semester later, which was January 2004, he passed away. His body could no longer survive the heart problem, and he died at the age of 59 years, far beyond doctors' predictions.

The following days I continued to study as usual. The difference is that I realized that studying in the Arabic teaching department was like a "final wish" of my father's only six months before. I felt lucky since I had fulfilled his final request. It also made me get more motivation to be an Arabic lecturer.

I began to recall my fascination with reading when I was an elementary pupil. I loved Bahasa textbooks since they contain many stories cited in novels and short stories. At that time, I also enjoyed reading the textbooks of my brothers who were pupils of a higher level of education. I also saved my daily pocket money to purchase a weekly children's magazine published every Thursday. When I was in elementary school, I had finished reading a classic Indonesian novel entitled *Sengsara Membawa Nikmat*, which was first published in 1929. The story was quite thick using classical Bahasa. In junior high school, I enjoyed reading Buya Hamka's masterpiece novel, *Tenggelamnya Kapal Van Der Wijk* (the Sinking of Van Der Wijk), first published in 1939. These are the two most memorable novels in my life.

Reading books sparked and strengthened my interest in history and Minangkabau culture. Besides reading Indonesian history, I also read the history of world civilization. My interest in the history of World War II led me to follow global political and economic circumstances. The novels that I mentioned as the two most memorable novels stood out as ones written by Minangkabau novelists whose settings were Minangkabau society at the beginning of 20th century, sparking my interest in Minangkabau, my own ethnicity. I started to learn more about what it means to be part of Minangkabau people, its adat (local custom, law, and culture), and the philosophy behind the adat. This interest has made my university colleagues recognize me as highly passionate about the Minangkabau.

Growing up with insights that I got from my readings helped me to view things from different perspectives. While studying in college, those insights often led me to think about the possibility of new approaches to researching Arabic learning itself and how I could incorporate my insights and interests into such an approach. I often wonder about research themes beyond the topic related the curriculum, teaching materials, and pedagogies.

When most of my friends in university when we were undergraduate students conducted research on learning Arabic as their final project, I decided to take a different topic. That time, I researched the meaning of the word *fa* in the Qur'an, mainly the chapter of Al-Baqarah. For the final project of my Master's degree, I explored a theme that had not explicitly been discussed in the classroom. It was a contrastive analysis of Arabic and Minangkabau phonology, a piece of research combining my core interests: Arabic and Minangkabau

Three years after completing the Master's degree, I managed to secure a permanent job that I had wanted since I was a child: a full-time lecturer. It was special for personal reasons since I joined the Muhammadiyah University of West Sumatra, where my late father taught Arabic. Becoming part of the university also made the path for me to become the active member of Muhammadiyah. Becoming its active member personally means I am walking on the path, based on my own decision, that my father walked before.

When I was in college, again inspired by my father, I joined Muhammadiyah through Ikatan Mahasiswa Muhammadiyah (The Union of Muhammadiyah Student): a Muhammadiyah autonomous organization for the level of the university student. Since I found that I was not fit for the organization's management, I decided to recede

after several months. However, it did not mean to completely abandon my relationship with the Muhammadiyah. I still viewed myself as a Muhammadiyah person even though I decided not to be active in the organization. Years later, I realized that I had to find my way back to the Muhammadiyah, and that was when I officially got a job at that campus.

Finding a way back to Muhammadiyah was not a sentimental aim and I think I would have done it even though my late father was not a Muhammadiyah activist. Muhammadiyah, which literally means the followers of Muhammad, is a big organization with a big vision: to implement *Amar Ma'ruf Nahi Munkar* (to order what is right, forbid what is wrong) to materialize "a truly Islamic society." In the perspective of the Muhammadiyah, the point of departure of the vision is a state in which Muslims free themselves from *taqlid* (blind obedience), *bid'ah* (religious heresy), and *khurafat* (superstitious belief). The Muhammadiyah terms how they achieve the goal as *Gerakan Islam berkemajuan* (the progressive Islamic movement).

To actualize its vision, the Muhammadiyah established thousands of educational institutions at every level, health institutions, economic institutions for humanitarian purposes, even in regions where Muslims are a minority. In recent years, the Muhammadiyah has expanded its activities abroad, such as establishing educational institutions in Malaysia and Australia and completing thousands of schools and 164 universities that the Muhammadiyah has developed in Indonesia. It has led Hefner et al (2010) to conclude that the Muhammadiyah is the most successful Islamic organization globally. And I've always desired to be a part of this great movement.

Muhammadiyah activists and members in Indonesia are quite familiar with the quote, "Muhammadiyah was born in Jogjakarta and grew up in Minangkabau of West Sumatra." Historically, Minangkabau was the region outside Java Island in which the Muhammadiyah showed a dramatic expansion. Regarding that, Muhammadiyah branches increased from 4 units into 26 branches throughout Minangkabau in only two years periods, which was 1928-1930 (Abdullah, 1970, p. 160). The branches coordinated 75 groups. In 1930 there were 17 Muhammadiyah education institutions in Minangkabau, which in 1929 were only 8 institutions. The first Muhammadiyah held outside Java Island was in Bukittinggi, a Minangkabau city, in 1930, which is another indicator of rapid Muhammadiyah development in Minangkabau. This happened because the Minangkabau region in the late 19th and early 20th centuries

had become a place where ideas for Islamic renewal were born, just like what Muhammadiyah started when founded in 1912 in Jogjakarta.

At that time, a group of scholars, called Kaum Muda or Young Group, emerged who campaigned for the liberation of Muslims, especially the Minangkabau, from taqlid (blind obedience), bid'ah (religious heresy), and khurafat (superstitious belief) (Abdullah, 1970; Rais, 1994). This idea immediately received wide acceptance in Minangkabau, making Minangkabau the center of Islamic reform in the archipelago. In that era, Minangkabau became where modern Islamic schools that adopted the Western system emerged. These things were initially widely opposed by traditionalists because they thought they were part of tashabbuh: if you try to imitate the invaders, you are one of them. So, the idea of reform existed in Minangkabau before the Muhammadiyah was founded in 1912. When Muhammadiyah was introduced to Minangkabau, immediately the Minangkabau people saw this as a suitable movement platform to help them carry out their agendas, as indicated by Abdullah (1970).

Minangkabau people's acceptance of the Muhammadiyah is related to Minangkabau culture, one of which is the culture of merantau (voluntary migration). As Kato (1982, p. 23) found, merantau for Minangkabau people "is not simply a product of the recent urbanization process but is deeply rooted in Minangkabau history." De Jong (1980, p. 9) described Minangkabau people has a strong wanderlust in nature. The habit has made the Minangkabau world relatively receptive for ideas that come from outside. The Islamic revivalism in Minangkabau in the early 20th century was brought by Minangkabau migrants who returned from the Middle East, where the ideas of Rashid Ridha and Jalamauddin al-Afghani influenced them (Abdullah, 1970; Rais, 1994). Back to the Muhammadiyah¹, the Minangkabau people have involved themselves in developing this organization on the island of Java. This organization was also brought to Minangkabau by returning migrants.

To this day, the Muhammadiyah is among notable parts of Minangkabau life, even though not all Minang people agree with the Muhammadiyah's interpretation of

¹ When conducting this research, there are several possible impacts of being known as Muhammadiyah members. First, regarding access to participants, some are Muhammadiyah active members, whose status as fellow Muhammadiyah allows me easier access. Not only that, the conversation will proceed more naturally because it takes place between fellow Muhammadiyah activists. My knowledge of organizational culture, including the communication culture, makes exploring participants' thoughts easy. In a broader context, given Muhammadiyah's history and influence among the Minangkabau people, being a Muhammadiyah activist only provides easy access to reach participants and communicate with them.

Islamic teachings. Minangkabau figures notably claim leadership positions in a central board of Muhammadiyah. A progressive scholar and well-known Minangkabau writer and novelist, Buya Hamka, was a Muhammadiyah figure.

From my personal perspective, I found no need to put aside my cultural identity as a Minangkabau person when joining the Muhammadiyah. Minangkabau is an egalitarian society with a democratic culture, making it far from feudalism. In the Indonesian context, it is unique since feudalism has often been blamed as the most fundamental root of the country's problems. Islam is the only widely and culturally accepted religion in Minangkabau communities. For the Minangkabau people, Islam is an ethnic and heritage identity whose customs and culture always strive to be in accordance with the teachings of Islam. The Muhammadiyah itself is a modern progressive democratic Islamic mass organization with a considerable ideological distance from feudalism.

The Muhammadiyah University of West Sumatra provides me ample space to rethink the most fundamental issues of Arabic learning in Indonesia. Many lecturers and Islamic university students in Indonesia do not master Arabic well, even though they spent their education in the madrasa, in which Arabic is a compulsory subject. I suppose that motivation is the problem when such a learning environment has failed to help students and pupils master Arabic.

My subsequent readings led me to the idea that motivation grows because of sociological factors. People need a sociological impetus to do things, including learning a foreign language. This idea finally led me to do my current research, which looks at the motivation to learn Arabic from sociological perspectives. When I chose the context of Muslim Minangkabau in West Sumatra, I realized that by conducting this research, my combined interests and insights about history, progressive Islamic movements, Minangkabau, and sociology can come together for the first time.

Somehow, affiliating with a university in a Western country for the study is an issue for some people in West Sumatra and Indonesia. A researcher of Eastern society who is affiliated with Western institutions is widely known as an orientalist. The situation is probably the same as Grewal (2014) explained that people will ask, "how can you study Islam in the West?" Although I often have gotten such questions, in my opinion, I don't need to ask the questions since I am not studying Islam in the West, but rather conducting sociological research in a Muslim society, with only my institutional affiliation in the West. Beyond my individual circumstance, it is worth

noting that several influential and widely accepted Muslim figures have researched in Western contexts and worked in the Western universities.

In the context of Indonesia, historical trauma is one of the causes of questioning studying in the West. Snouck Hourgronje (1857-1936) was a Dutch scholar who lived within the Muslim community in Aceh during 1891-1892. People had known him by another name: Haji Abdul Ghafur. During the period, he managed to do research on the people of Aceh and published his work under the title *de Atjeher*. Many articles have defined him as a Dutch spy and intruder who infiltrated the Muslim society to send recommendations to the Dutch that allows the longevity of their colonialization of this population. To this day, many Indonesians accuse a person like me of the *orang-orang Snouck* (the followers of Snouck).

My reasons for studying in the West was to broaden my thinking and exposure to international academic discourses and to try to develop skills in evaluating things from various perspectives. In this case, I am looking at my community in a different light. And this is not a new thing in Minangkabau society, because more than a few Minangkabau figures that the members of Minangkabau community are proud of, they are Western alumni. Even Buya Hamka doesn't regard the idea of studying in the West as a bad thing. To put it simply, I am a Minangkabau and a Muhammadiyah activist who is trying to take advantage of the methodological advantages and theoretical "lenses" of the West to understand my own world and society. If there is a term used to define this, then I will use the term proposed by Grewal (2014); *Native Orientalist*.

Researcher's Ontological View on Social Reality

As a researcher, I have found that my ontological understanding aligns with critical realism. Critical realism, originally known as natural realism, is the application of transcendental realism, a term coined by Bhaskar (2008) in the realm of social studies. Transcendental realism posits that the objects of knowledge are structures and mechanisms that give rise to phenomena, which operate independently of our understanding, experience, and the conditions that enable us to comprehend them (Bhaskar, 2008, p. 19). The ontological understanding of transcendental realism, in relation to existence, serves as an alternative to the other two traditions, namely transcendental idealism and empiricism Bhaskar (2008:14–20).

The first assumption is that the understanding of the object of knowledge is determined by human perception, which, in our contemporary world, is imposed by

the scholarly community. On the other hand, empiricism posits that the object of knowledge encompasses anything that is empirically observable and measurable (Bhaskar, 2008, p. 19). Both perspectives impose certain presuppositions on the object of knowledge while disregarding other potential possibilities. Bhaskar (2008, p. 22) asserts that: "To say that the weaknesses of both the empiricist and idealist traditions lie in their commitment to empirical realism is, of course, to commit oneself to the impossibility of the ontological neutrality in an account of science; and thus to the impossibility of avoiding ontological questions in the philosophy of science."

Social reality is stratified into three levels: the empirical, the actual, and the real (Bhaskar, 1998a, p. 41). The empirical level is one in which reality is explained through commonsense that is shaped by human experience and interpretation. The actual level is describing a state where reality occurs outside our experience and interpretation. The real is a social reality, the causal mechanism of which has already been explained. It is to underline that the stratification is by no means indicating that a level is a subordinate of another level, or dependent on others. The stratification shows that critical realism is open to unlimited possibilities behind social reality. The stratification relates to the ontological understanding of critical realism on the intransitive aspect of the object of knowledge. Besides that, it also fits another understanding of the social structure as an open system.

The real emerges as a product of scientific inquiry. At its core, the real is characterized by causal mechanisms that provide explanations for the existence of social phenomena and establish why certain phenomena can be identified as causal factors. In the context of my research, the relationship between Minangkabau Muslim religious identities and Arabic language falls within the realm of the empirical and the actual. This is because there is a lack of previous scientific investigation that has explored the causal mechanisms underlying this relationship. Therefore, through this investigation, I aim to bring this relationship into the realm of the real. As Bhaskar stated (1998a, p. 45):

"Scientists try to discover the reasons for things and events, patterns and processes, sequences and structures. To understand how they do so one needs both a concept of the transitive process of knowledge-production and a concept of the intransitive objects of the knowledge they produce: the real mechanisms that generate the actual phenomena of the world, including as a special case our perceptions of them".

However, I need to express more than just the concept of "transforming to the real." This research endeavors to establish a framework for interpreting the actual elements, which refer to the data identified for the purpose of this study. Recognizing this, I acknowledge that "the actual" is an inescapable aspect that can be discerned to varying degrees based on the researcher's ability to identify it. Therefore, concurrently, the framework presented in this research represents one instance of "the real" among several "the reals."

The perspective presented here stands in stark contrast to positivism, empiricism, or naturalism, which Bhaskar acknowledges for their inability to capture social reality in its true form. Positivism treats social reality in the same manner as natural phenomena, emphasizing theory-driven approaches, rigid measurements, and empirical methods. However, social reality is inherently distinct, exhibiting greater complexity and openness. Bhaskar (1998, p. xv) aptly stated: "The social world is characterized by the complete absence of laws and explanations conforming to the positivist canon... the social world is much more complex than the natural world or [that] the laws that govern it can only be identified at some more basic, e.g., neurophysiological, level."

Living with this awareness prompts me to recognize that the social reality I encounter may not encompass "the real" in its entirety. Even though I have personally experienced various aspects of social reality, it is important to acknowledge that my understanding can only be limited, stemming from my individual perspective as a human being. While there are certain advantages to having a native perspective, such as the potential for a more comprehensive reflection within a relatively shorter time frame, it is crucial to acknowledge that my perspective is still subject to limitations. As a native, I have the advantage of having lived within the social reality I intend to study and being familiar with its nuances and norms.

Research Method

Ethnography: A Methodical Approach

Based on the previous explanation, ethnographic research has demonstrated its reliability in portraying the nuanced meanings inherent within social reality. The strength of ethnographic research lies in its research procedure, which requires the researcher's active interaction and participation throughout the data collection and analysis process.

The ethnographic method is adaptable, aligning with the ontological understanding of social reality and shaping the research questions aimed at gaining insights into that social reality. Its adaptability stems from the fundamental principle that researchers must refrain from imposing their presuppositions, which may be derived from previous theories, onto the data collection and interpretation process. As Brewer (2001, p. 10) aptly puts it: "Ethnography is the study of people in naturally occurring settings or 'fields' by means of methods which capture their social meaning and ordinary activities, involving the researcher participating directly in the setting, if not also the activities, in order to collect data in a systematic manner but without meaning being imposed on them externally." Spradley (2016, p. 3) similarly asserts that ethnography is about understanding another way of life from the native point of view.

Norton (2013, p. 13), a pioneering scholar in the field of identity and language learning, highlights that qualitative research employing a critical ethnographic approach is one of the appropriate methods for investigating the theme of identity multiplicity and its changeability. She states (p. 13):

Since the identity approach to language learning characterizes learner identity as multiple and changing, a quantitative research paradigm relying on static and measurable variables will generally not be appropriate. The focus on issues of power also necessitates that qualitative research designs are framed by critical research. For these reasons, methods that scholars use in identity approaches to language learning tend to be qualitative rather than quantitative, and often draw on critical ethnography, feminist poststructuralist theory, sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology.

Critical ethnography aims to investigate the role of the power system and social hierarchy behind a culture. Critical ethnography is a way of applying a subversive worldview to the conventional logic of cultural inquiry.

It does not stand in opposition to conventional ethnography. Rather, it offers a more direct style of thinking about the relationships among knowledge, society, and political action. The central premise is that one can be both scientific and critical, and that ethnographic description offers a powerful means of critiquing culture and the role of research within it (Thomas, 1993, p. vii).

However, critical ethnography is not the opposite of 'conventional ethnography,' it is ethnography with a particular intention to power relations in social

phenomena instead. As Thomas (1993, p. 4) stated, “it is a conventional ethnography with a political purpose’.

Despite the similarity between my research and Norton’s, the context of research is entirely different. The similarity does not mean I have to do my research using critical ethnography. She conducted ethnographic research on a group of female students of an English course who were immigrants in Canada (Norton, 2013). The context they experienced was highly dynamic as a result of social hierarchy and power. For example, in Norton’s research Eva, a Polish immigrant, had motivation to learn English to allow her to obtain the same privileges other Canadians who were fluent in English had gotten (Norton, 2013, p. 98). The research participant Eva was also motivated to learn the language to fight against unfair treatment from some of her co-workers, who exploited her English inability for their own interests (Norton, 2013, p. 99).

Arabic as the Islamic sacred language has seemed to shape social hierarchy in the context of Minangkabau who live in West Sumatera, making this research a critical ethnography. People likely tend to perceive someone with a good mastery of Arabic as having more religious authority. In the Minangkabau community, this type of authority creates certain social positions, and to some degree is similar to how shamans claim their role in some indigenous communities. To give the example of the life of Hamka, one of the most influential Minangkabau religious scholars, indicates to us the robust relationship between Arabic and social hierarchy. In his biography, he related how people recognized him as a great orator, making them eager to hear him deliver a speech. He was invited many times to give religious speeches publicly. Not long after people detected him making some mistakes in articulating Arabic expressions and reading some Qur’anic verses due to his low ability in Arabic, people started to ignore him speaking. The issue embarrassed the young Hamka. It pushed him to resign from religious public speaking, concerned that people will not come to hear him anymore. He then traveled to Mecca in hopes of strengthening his ability in Arabic. This kind of judgment seems to be still happening today. The awareness of it underlies the research analysis of this study, which, according to Norton, is considered critical ethnography.

A Crisis-Adapted Ethnography

In late 2020, the fieldwork began as West Sumatra province had just experienced the first wave of the Covid-19 pandemic. Although the infection rate started to decline, it still fluctuated. The local government had loosened some previous restrictions to allow for more economic activities. However, formal educational institutions at all levels were conducting learning remotely. Remote working was strongly encouraged, and mosques, as the most visited communal facilities, opened with physical distancing measures in place.

Series of interview and observation were scheduled to start promptly after informants confirmed that Arabic learning groups in four major cities of West Sumatra—Padang, Padang Panjang, Bukittinggi, and Payakumbuh—had resumed their activities. It was the beginning of September, marking a complete six months since the Covid-19 outbreak had interrupted these activities in March. These groups were non-formal learning institutions, formed based on casual agreements among group members. They were self-funded and self-organized. Most of them utilized mosques as their venues for learning. Their nature as non-formal institutions and motivations made in-class activities possible for them.

The fieldwork plan had been established with consideration of the nature of the Covid-19 crisis, acknowledging the potential for unexpected events that could disrupt data collection at any time. In light of this possibility, I opted to conduct most observations and interviews in a single attempt. Weekly regular observations were only implemented at Taqwa Mosque in Padang, the city where I reside. The observation schedule aligned with the learning schedules, which occurred every weekend. However, the observation period abruptly ended when I was diagnosed with Covid in November and had to self-isolate for 14 days. By that point, I had completed all interviews (involving 26 participants) and observations in every city, marking two and a half months of my fieldwork.

In January 2021, I continued to observe and interview ten participants who do not learn Arabic but are actively engaged in non-formal Islamic teaching activities, such as teaching Quran and delivering sermons in mosques. This approach aligns with the same concern as the previous fieldwork. Within one month, I collected all the necessary data. This indicates that I conducted about four months of fieldwork in West Sumatra, the province where I have spent most of my life.

The time allocated for fieldwork is one of the main concerns in an ethnographic project. In the context of this study, the most recent ethnographer who conducted fieldwork in West Sumatra was Simon, who spent at least 18 months living in the area (Simon, 2014a, p. 6). Given this fact, some might question whether the duration of ethnographic fieldwork in this research is sufficient for data collection and interpretation.

I would answer the question starting from revisiting the essential purpose of ethnography. Geertz (1973, p. 6) stated that ethnographic is uniquely determined by “thick description”. The term refers to the detailed account of field engagement and experience that allows for an interpretation that reveal the cultural and contextual meaning. It involves the academic endeavor of collecting and interpreting socio-cultural data while respecting the perspectives of the native individuals who live within their social environments (Spradley, 2016). In doing so, an ethnographer is expected not only to understand but also to experience the lives of the natives.

Based on the explanation, it is reasonable for Simon to spend 18 months in West Sumatra to understand the moral subjectivity of the Minangkabau people. As an outsider who had never lived in the province or communicated in the Minangkabau language, his preexisting knowledge about the Minangkabau was based on scholarly works and information. Given his starting point, it is understandable that his exploration and immersion would require about one and a half years to be accomplished.

My ethnographic projects, given my status as a native, are widely known as “at-home ethnography” (Caronia, 2018; Qamar, 2020). A native researcher enjoys privileges that an outsider does not. The ability to communicate in the local language offers a very effective and efficient means of understanding linguistic expression. Understanding local culture and mechanisms allows for quicker access and trust-building. The experience of living in a socio-cultural context provides a significant resource for understanding the unseen and the unheard. Additionally, the consciousness of being a researcher and the organized preexisting knowledge about the field ensure scientific understanding and explanation.

Hence, a native researcher conducting an at-home ethnographic project in West Sumatra would not require the same length of time as Simon (2014a) did. However, I must emphasize that my project, conducted during a time of crisis, is not a typical ethnographic endeavor. Its unique aspect lies in the implementation of a

single attempt of a series of interviews and observations for most participants and research locations. I refer to my ethnographic project as a "crisis-adapted ethnography. How reliable is this approach for achieving the purpose of ethnography?

The initial response to the question refers to my status as a native researcher. Every privilege of being native allows for shorter fieldwork. A short ethnographic project while still maintaining the quality of data and interpretation is possible to implement, even for non-native researcher (Handwerker, 2001; Jeffrey & Troman, 2004; Pink & Morgan, 2013; Vindrola-Padros & Vindrola-Padros, 2018). This approach is referred to by different terms, such as Rapid Ethnography (Vindrola-Padros & Vindrola-Padros, 2018), Short-Term Ethnography (Pink & Morgan, 2013), and Quick Ethnography (1992, p. 183). The possibility of conducting this kind of ethnography lies in comprehensive planning, which includes organizing preexisting related knowledge and identifying strategies, methods, and techniques that enable researchers to directly target their objectives.

The second answer lies in the nature of the data. I have observed that the Arabic learning activities in the four cities and the individuals participating in them exhibit a similar pattern. All informants expressed consistent ideas and narratives regarding their thoughts on Arabic and the process of learning it. The nuances of Arabic learning activities are similar across the board. Based on the facts, I can argue that, referring to Sharifian (2017), the similar patterns of meaning behind the linguistic expressions of participants regarding their thoughts on Arabic and Arabic learning stem from identical conceptualizations. Thus, similar conceptualizations are expected to result in similar nuances and spheres. In this regard, I may posit that establishing regular observations in a related place, which is in this context is at Taqwa Mosque, may project similar social contexts as in other identical places. Of course, some degree of variability will occur. However, I am confident that it is methodologically sustainable to argue that behaviours in this context it is scientifically believed that it should follow the broadly-established existing patterns.

Lastly, I emphasize that the implementation of ethnography in my context is designed to adapt to the crisis. While this project is conducted under ideal conditions for ethnographic research, it may produce more detailed findings. There remains room for further work to develop a deeper understanding of the issue.

Data Collection and Analysis; General Principles and Implementations

Language

Language is one of the most critical aspects of ethnography considering humans mostly rely on it to express their experiences and perspectives. Regarding this, Bhaskar (1998b, p. 214) said that people cannot communicate except by utilizing existing media, produce except by applying themselves to materials which are already formed, or act save in some or other context. Speech requires language; making materials; action conditions; agency resources; activity rules.

One of the most recent ethnographic research projects conducted by scholars on Minangkabau culture was Simon (2014a). He spent about 20 months conducting research (Simon, 2014a, p. 9), most of which was for studying the Minang language and observing the situation. He wrote:

I conducted most of the interviews in the Minangkabau language or a mixture of Minang and Indonesian...I began my fieldwork already fluent in Indonesian. I first studied it formally in 1990 and subsequently spent about a year and half in Indonesia in the 1990s, mostly on the island of Java. To become proficient in Minang I studied with tutors during my first six months living in Bukittinggi. I waited until the second year of my fieldwork to conduct most of my recorded interviews (Simon, 2014a, p. 13).

According to Spradley (2016), mastering the language is one of the most essential and fundamental aspects of the ethnography. A researcher needs to master the native language of his/her informants, which may lead to better understanding the informant's culture since language conveys reality more appropriately than in the absence of the language. Different languages entail different ways to convey and express meaning. An ethnographer who relies on translators when conducting interviews most likely will fail to fully experience and comprehend information that the informant told him/her. It means failing to generate deeper meanings.

Language is more than a means of communication about reality: it is a tool for constructing reality. Different languages create and express different realities. They categorize experience in different ways. They provide alternative patterns for customary ways of thinking and perceiving... Because ethnography was first undertaken in non-Western societies, learning the native language took the highest priority (Spradley, 2016, p. 17).

As a Minangkabau individual, I don't need to spend any time mastering the Minang language. Besides that, I spend most of my time living in West Sumatra, which

is a considerable amount of time to experience the culture. Hence, I don't need as much time for fieldwork as Simon needed. It is a native advantage while studying his/her community.

The fact of having the native language does not necessarily make me neglect consideration of other aspects of research such as observational techniques and communication skills. A native researcher needs to maintain a proper understanding of the language style and diction that informants use in order to properly and precisely convey the meanings. Failure on this issue would result in the inability to analyze data properly. As Spradley points out in relation to research in English-speaking communities:

... in recent years, as ethnographers have increasingly undertaken research in our society, the necessity of studying the native language is frequently ignored. In part, this neglect occurs because informants appear to use a language identical to that spoken by the ethnographer. But such is not the case; semantic differences exist and they have a profound influence on ethnographic research (Spradley 2016:18).

As such, I'm cognizant that I need to pay attention to this aspect. Using Arabic learning terms or other terms and phrases that the scholarly community commonly use should be avoided while interviewing an informant who may not be familiar with this terminology or style. The phrase often used for learning Arabic is "Belajar Bahasa Arab." In a casual conversation among Arabic learners in West Sumatera, the phrase is likely rarely used. Instead, they generally use another phrase in the Minang language for "Belajar Bahasa Arab" such as (1) Baraja Nahwu Saraf (Learning Nahwu-Saraf), (2) Baraja ilmu alat (learning the tool), (3) Baraja baco kitab (learning reading the book) atau (4) Mangaji kitab kuniang (learning the yellow book).

In addition to that, I should also put my attention on how to approach the participants in a way that is proper and polite according to Minangkabau culture. For instances, I will call "uni", which means "my old sister" for female participants whose age is older than me by only a few years. "Uda" is used for the same purposes when it comes to male participants. Male participants in the same age-range as my mother respectfully deserve to be called in the same way I address my own mother. In Minangkabau context, this detail will likely determine the participants' acceptance. The difference of dialects within Minangkabau language is not a problem during this interview.

Interview and Data Collection

In ethnography, humans play essential roles, whether as an interviewer, who is collecting and analyzing data, or as an interviewee sharing his/her knowledge. Considering this, an ethnographer needs to explain his ontological understanding, especially about human beings, as social actors, and society, as that is where humans engage in activities. Bhaskar said:

Society, then, provides necessary conditions for intentional human action, and intentional human action is a necessary condition for it. Society is only present in human action, but human action always expresses and utilizes some or other social form. Neither can, however, be identified with, reduced to, explained in terms of, or reconstructed from the other. There is an ontological hiatus between society and people, as well as mode of connection (viz transformation) that the other models typically ignore (1998b, p. 217).

Observing and understanding people means understanding the social situations humans live in. In terms of my research context, investigating how social-religious identity plays a role in shaping attitudes and motivations towards Arabic in the Minangkabau Muslim community is possible by studying actors, such as through interviews. Given the ontological principles of social realism, the researcher's approach in conducting an interview should be to avoid the imposition of his/her presuppositions. Instead, the researcher should follow the flow created within the social situation and context and be open to its emergence. It is in line with Spradley's (1979, p. 55) principle of the ethnographic interview:

An ethnographic interview is a particular kind of speech event. Every culture has many social occasions identified primarily by the kind of talking that takes place; I refer to these as speech events. ... All speech events have cultural rules for beginning, ending, taking turns, asking questions, pausing, and even how close to stand to other people.

Data collection commenced by identifying groups of non-traditional students who were actively engaged in Arabic learning. They are not university students whose educational institutions require Arabic learning as a compulsory subject. Instead, they are adults who do not seem to have institutional pressure to learn Arabic. The Arabic non-formal institutions could be in the form of a *ma'had* (an independent and non-formal Islamic educational institution) or the form of *halaqah* (small group of people) in a mosque. This group represent who has an attitude and motivation to learn Arabic.

Some of these groups were identified well in advance, even before my enrollment at UCC (University College Cork). For instance, there was a group of learners at Taqwa Mosque of Muhammadiyah in Padang, as well as another group in Payakumbuh. The awareness of these groups stemmed from discussions related to my profession as an Arabic lecturer at Muhammadiyah University of West Sumatra and my active membership in the Muhammadiyah organization.

Some groups are identified through my networks such as friendship network, former university students who become Arabic teacher, and a learning tutor who actively teach Arabic in a group in Padang Panjang. There is no information about the existence of other groups of Arabic learning that come from research participants.

After obtaining ethical approval at the beginning of the second semester of 2020, the process of accessing participants commenced by informing the course owners, who primarily functioned as learning tutors, about my research and seeking their permission to interview their students. I provided a brief description of my research and its objectives. Fortunately, the majority of course owners responded with enthusiasm to the information and granted me permission to interview their students. Consequently, all of the course owners accepted my request to conduct interviews with their students.

In terms of locating informants, I conduct interviews in several cities in West Sumatra, such as Padang, Padang Panjang, Bukittinggi, and Payakumbuh and locate some non-formal Arabic learning institutions in these cities. In addition to that, these cities are essential in the Minangkabau context. Padang is the capital of the Province of West Sumatra, where most of the population comes from various corners of the Minangkabau. Padang Panjang is a city where the renewal of Islamic education was introduced in the early 20th century, not only in West Sumatra but also in Indonesia. Besides that, Padang Panjang, together with Bukittinggi and Payakumbuh, is an essential city in the Minangkabau culture, because these cities are representations of the three core areas of Minangkabau, namely Luhak Tanah Data, Luhak Agam and Luhak Limo Puluah Koto.

The success of ethnographic interviews lies in the researcher's ability to maintain the interviewer-informant relationship that allows the researcher to obtain contextual information. As Spradley said (2016, p. 78): "Ethnographic interviewing involves two distinct but complementary processes: developing rapport and eliciting

information. Rapport encourages informants to talk about their culture. Eliciting information fosters the development of rapport”

Interviews are conducted through asking open-ended questions. Concerning this, Hammersley and Atkinson (2007, p. 119) stated that “Non-directive questions, then, are relatively open-ended, rather than requiring the interviewee to provide a specific piece of information or, at the extreme, simply to reply ‘yes’ or ‘no’.” Noting this, some examples of questions that might be asked during a given ethnographic interview for the current research are:

1. What do you think about learning Arabic?
2. Why do you learn Arabic?
3. What do you think about reciting the Qur'an without comprehending it?
4. “Do you think it is important to understand the meaning of the words in the prayers as you're praying? Why?”
5. What do you think about doing 5-times prayer using Minangkabau language or Bahasa instead of using Arabic, especially for those who do not understand the Arabic?

The questions will be probably asked to participants in different ways by paraphrasing it, depending on the situation.

For this study, it is significant to converse during interviews in Minang native language and to consider the phrase and diction that the group of learners usually use in communication. The questions above also show that, as the researcher, I am not imposing my presupposition by avoiding the introduction of terms (and core research concepts) such as identity, Minangkabau, motivation, or attitude within the questions.

In doing field work, ethnographers make cultural inferences from three sources: (1) from what people say; (2) from the way people act; and (3) from the artifacts people use. At first, each cultural inference is only a hypothesis about what people know. These hypotheses must be tested over and over again until the ethnographer becomes relatively certain that people share a particular system of cultural meanings. None of the sources for making inferences behavior, speech, artifacts—are foolproof, but together they can lead to an adequate cultural description (Spradley 2016:8).

In addition to collecting artifacts, collecting documents is also critical for capturing meaning (Atkinson, 2007, p. 121). According to the research context, documents could be in the form of learning documents for those undertaking a program of learning in Arabic (such as books, schedule/curriculum, and learning records) and other types of documents.

In terms of the relationship with informants, it is also important to pay attention to some general principles in research ethics as explained by Spradley (2016, pp. 35–39), namely (1) Considering informants first, (2) Safeguarding informants' right and interest, (3) Communicating research objectives and (4) Protecting the privacy of informants, (5) avoiding exploitation on informants, and (6), making reports available for informants. Regarding data recording, I will record and store data as Hammersley and Atkinson (2007, p. 140-152) suggested, namely through (1) field notes for recording observations and interviews, (2) Audio recording for interviews.

Concerning attitude on Arabic may exist without motivation to learn it, another groups of Minangkabau people are also included into interview. The interviewees come from people who actively engage in religious field, such as member of Islamic organization, Qur'anic teacher, and those who regularly attend five-time prayer in mosque. This kind of people, concerning their activities., will give a good talk about Arabic compared to the other.

Being different from the groups learning Arabic in four different cities, I met this particular group only in Padang. The main reason for this is the COVID-19 restrictions that limit intercity travel. However, I realized that interviewing participants who learn Arabic from the four cities may yield similar patterns of explanation. This led me to hypothesize that the interview results could provide insights into the views and experiences of individuals with similar characteristics. Furthermore, the interviewees in this group are typical residents of Padang, originating from various cities in West Sumatra, including the four cities. This adds further justification that their perspectives may represent those of others with similar characteristics.

The COVID-19 restrictions posed significant challenges and limitations to this research. When I commenced the fieldwork, which is in November 2020, West Sumatra and Indonesia were beginning to see a decline in the first wave of the outbreak. However, uncertainty still persisted. The government had not yet eased COVID-19 restrictions, particularly in areas under their full authority. The work-from-

home policy was strictly enforced, and educational activities across all levels were predominantly conducted online. Essentially, the government did not permit people to go outside except for essential economic activities, and inter-city travel was restricted.

In terms of religious life, after months of strict restrictions, many people in West Sumatra began to find it difficult to resist the urge to attend mosques for the five daily prayers. In response, the local government attempted to strike a balance between the mission of COVID-19 prevention and the intentions of the public. As a result, a set of COVID-19 protocols was introduced for mosques. According to these protocols, attending the mosque for the five daily prayers was permitted, but with certain restrictions in place, including physical distancing and capacity limitations.

Amidst the circumstances, the Arabic learner groups were unable to resist restarting their learning activities after being canceled for several months. However, this was often done in disregard of the COVID-19 protocols, such as sitting closely to one another. Nevertheless, uncertainty loomed. There was no guarantee that the government would not implement stricter protocols in the following week, considering the fluctuation in the number of COVID-19 cases. The presence of an infected member within the learning group could also result in the suspension of their activities. Consequently, my fieldwork took place during uncertain times, which imposed certain limitations mainly in conducting an ideal ethnographic interview.

An ethnographic interview is conducted with the intention of extracting deeper meanings by treating it as a "speech event" rather than a formal interview or interrogation (Spradley, 2016, pp. 55–56). This nature of ethnographic interviews necessitates more time compared to other types of interviews, as it requires gradually building rapport and turning the interview into a casual conversation. However, implementing this approach became challenging during the uncertain times of the COVID-19 pandemic in West Sumatra, which posed a significant limitation to this research.

Thus, it is crucial to assess the extent to which the limitations are scientifically acceptable. In other words, it is important to ensure that these limitations do not hinder the achievement of the research's aim as an ethnographic study. Evaluating these limitations can begin by referring to Spradley, who writes:

The essential core of ethnography is this concern with the meaning of actions and events to the people we seek to understand. Some of these meanings are directly expressed in language; many are taken for granted and communicated only indirectly through word and

action. But in every society people make constant use of these complex meaning systems to organize their behavior, to understand themselves and others, and to make sense out of the world in which they live. These systems of meaning constitute their culture; ethnography always implies a theory of culture (Spradley, 2016, p. 5).

Spradley's explanation implies that it is undeniable that language plays a crucial role in conveying and expressing human meanings. This recognition serves as the primary justification for employing interviews as a data-gathering tool. As mentioned earlier, conducting an ideal ethnographic interview requires a significant amount of time, particularly to establish trust with participants, which then allows for more informal and casual conversations to take place.

The Covid-19 restrictions, coupled with the prevailing uncertainty, compelled me to maximize my status as a native with a deep understanding of local wisdom. It began with introducing myself and my university affiliation. Due to cultural factors, being recognized as a member of Muhammadiyah and a lecturer made cultural and casual interactions much easier. Communicative diction was another crucial factor in establishing a sense of familiarity and intimacy between myself and the participants. It is noteworthy that gaining the trust and acceptance of Minangkabau participants is not difficult as long as the researcher can effectively implement the Minangkabau philosophy of communication, which emphasizes self-awareness of unique local customs, the speaking context, and existing social hierarchies. For instance, when interviewing an elderly lady of the same age as my mother, I would communicate with her as a Minangkabau son would with his mother. However, the lack of time available for interviews due to Covid-19 restrictions is still considered a research limitation.

Data Analysis

As Spradley stated, the main task of ethnographers is to capture meaning through translating symbols which could be in the form of language or anything else.

“(1) Cultural meaning systems are encoded in symbols. (2) Language is the primary symbol system that encodes cultural meaning in every society. Language can be used to talk about all other encoded symbols (3) The meaning of any symbol is its relationship to other symbols in a particular culture. (4) The task of ethnography is to decode cultural symbols and identify the underlying coding rules. This can be accomplished by discovering the relationships among cultural symbols” (Spradley, 2016, p. 99).

To analyze the data, which according to Spradley, means “discovering the relationships among cultural symbols,” I will use the theory of collective religious identity. My understanding of the theory results from synthesizing the concepts that Halbwachs and Hervieu-Léger suggested, which I explain in more detail in the theoretical chapter. To demonstrate the theory is suitable for the Minangkabau context, I dedicate a chapter to discussing Minangkabau society from historical and cultural perspectives.

According to Angrosino (2007, p. 68), it is “the process of figuring out how those parts fit together; in other words, how can we explain the existence of patterns in the data, or how do we account for the perceived regularities?”. It means that theoretical analysis must be preceded by recognizing components or patterns as well as having an in-depth knowledge of the cultural context and meaningful frameworks. Thus, there are at least four stages of data analysis (Angrosino, 2007), namely:

1. Data management, which is organizing data. I use NVivo 12 for managing data.
2. Overview reading, rereading the field notes for the next step analysis.

One good practice of this is as Simon did:

I often listened to the recording of the interview not long after the interview itself to help me recall and make a record of details and contexts not preserved on the tape (e.g., hand gestures, posture, the meaning of references that were not obvious in the recording itself). This also helped me to plan for the next interview (2014a, p. 22).

3. Clarification of categories, including data classification and identification.
4. Demonstrating how it relates to the existing interpretations. It could be confirmed by existing knowledge by adding a new illustration on it or encountering the previous explanations that may stimulate a new study. In the context of Minangkabau studies, many studies, although not directly connected to this research project, could be considered as existing interpretations, such as research by Simon (2014a), Hadler (2008b), Dobbin (2014), Abdullah (1970), Rais (1994), and Kato (1982).

The ultimate aim of data analysis is to reveal what Geertz (1973) coined as a "thick description of culture." A researcher must uncover the meaning in depth, and

not let what appears on the surface be taken for granted. According to this perspective, two identical and similar expressions do not exactly hold the same meaning. Both can have different meanings, meanings that may be beyond the observer's expectations. A study using ethnography is expected to be able to explore these things.

The interpretive perspective has informed the approach of this research. Reality is not singular but multi-layered and socially constructed, open to subjective interpretation. Thus, research is essential to comprehend social phenomena. However, what a specific study reveals should not be perceived as the final finding, considering the many aspects that may have influenced its conclusions, such as time, space, values, and culture. In respect of the role of the researcher during field-based research, which is collaborative, interactive, and – to some degree – participative, the researcher's background will also stimulate the research analysis and conclusion.

CHAPTER 3

UMMAH, MINANGKABAU SOCIETY, AND ARABIC

This chapter aims to present the preexisting knowledge regarding the research topic. As Bhaskar points out, this knowledge, along with what he refers to as the "efficient activity of men," is essential for scientific discovery (Bhaskar, 2008, p. 14). It serves as an internal guide for the researcher in navigating the topic and as a fundamental aspect of data interpretation.

There are three subchapters in this chapter, which are "Understanding Ummah", "Arabic, the Language of Islam" and "Minangkabau Society and Arabic". The first subchapter offers an analysis of regarding the ummah, a term for global Muslim society. It incorporates the concept of collective religious identity that determines its members' attitude on towards and motivation to do certain thing, including learning Arabic. A short review on the language, which comes in the next subchapter, explains common understanding within umma on Arabic.

Minangkabau culture, as inseparable part of global umma with unique local features, has developed relationship with Arabic. As an inseparable part of global umma, Minangkabau culture and the umma shares a similar attitude and motivation toward Arabic. However, the relationship has also unique and distinctive dimension. The knowledge about it, which is presented in the last subchapter, will enrich my research interpretation.

Understanding Ummah

General Insight into the Meaning of Ummah

This research aims to investigate Minangkabau Muslims regarding their attitude towards Arabic and their motivation to learn it. Discussing the Muslims of Minangkabau inherently involves discussing the ummah, as they—like other Muslims around the world—are members of the ummah. Contemporary social research describes the ummah with various phrases, such as the "community of Islamic believers" (Saunders, 2008, p. 303), the "world community of believers" (Mandaville, 2003, p. 135), and the "universal community of Muslim believers" (Hassan, 2006, p.

311). These phrases effectively capture some essential characteristics of the Ummah as a social group: (1) the ummah is a community rather than a society, (2) it is a religious community whose members practice Islam, and (3) it is a global community, with membership transcending local borders such as nationality, language, and culture. However, these phrases do not fully explain the basic concept of the ummah.

An understanding of the concept of ummah in this context is crucial for discussing the identity aspects of the ummah, particularly among the Muslims of Minangkabau, and how this identity influences their attitudes and motivations for learning Arabic. Identity itself is responsible for the formation of behavior at both the individual and social levels (Terry et al., 1999). I consider learning Arabic among Muslims as a form of social behavior, which is formed, established, and shaped by their religious identity. This raises several basic questions, such as: “How does the term ummah represent Muslims' social and religious identity?” and “What makes this kind of identity capable of encouraging Muslims to learn Arabic?”

This section is dedicated to discussing the first question, which will help provide a possible answer to the second. To start, I assert that ummah is not only a term that functions as a name for a religious community of which Muslims are members (external identity), but also embodies a concept that forms, to varying degrees, the self-concept of Muslims (the internal aspect of identity). Self-concept is regarded as a mental cognitive structure within humans that determines how they think about themselves and the world.

Investigating the concept of ummah should be based on an awareness that the term holds two crucial statuses: as an Arabic term and as a Qur’anic term. Regarding its status as an Arabic term, the concept of al-ishtiqāq, or the Arabic system of word derivation, should be a primary concern. Al-ishtiqāq is an Arabic system in which word transformation is applied according to several rules, maintaining two types of connections (al-munāsibah): the connection of word structure (munāsibah al-Lafz) and the connection of meaning (munāsibah al-ma’nā) (Al-Salih, 2009, p. 187). Consequently, Arabic derived words preserve the physical characteristics of their root word even though the transformation process may involve the addition of up to three new characters, such as غفر (ghafara, "to forgive") which is transformed into اِستَغْفَرَ (istaghfara, "to ask for forgiveness") by adding اِ (i), س (s), and ت (t) to the root word. Besides that, derived words semantically connect with their root word. Sometimes the semantic connection is easily recognized, such as the connection between كَتَبَ (katb,

"writing"), كتب (kataba, "to write," which is the activity of writing), كتاب (kitāb, "a book," which is a product of writing), مكتب (maktab, "a desk," which is a place for writing activity), and مكتبة (maktabah, "a library," which is a place for collecting books). In this case, the first word is the root word, and the others are derived words. At other times, the semantic relationship is more complicated and philosophical. The latter occurs in how the word ummah connects semantically with its root word. Thus, understanding the ummah solely by referring to an ordinary bilingual dictionary, where the word is usually simply translated as "community," and exceeding the etymological perspective will lead to a lack of understanding about the meaning of ummah.

Referring to Arabic lexical dictionaries (mu'jam or ma'ajim) is a proper way to investigate the etymological aspects of the ummah. One of the classic Arabic lexical dictionaries which is considered the most complete and influential is the Lisān al-ʿArab (Language of Arabs), compiled by Ibn Manẓūr. Therefore, I will use this dictionary as the main reference for etymological investigation of the ummah. As a comparison, I will refer to one of the most popular contemporary Arabic lexical dictionary, namely Muʿjam al-ʿArabīyah al-Muʿāṣirah (Contemporary Arabic Lexical Dictionary), compiled by Ahmad MuchtarʿUmar. It should be underlined that work of lexicographers regarding an Arabic word does not only relate to etymological analysis, but also relates to the contextual meaning of a word. Concerning ummah as a Qurʾanic term leads Arabic lexicographers to refer to Qurʾan in revealing its contextual meanings, even if it usually does not include all Qurʾanic verses in which the term is used.

Being listed as a Qurʾanic word makes ummah the object of a particular study, namely the study of mufradāt al-Qurʾān (the study of Qurʾanic words). The main purpose of this study is to reveal the Qurʾanic contextual meaning of a term through investigating the verses in which the term is found. This endeavor is classified more as an exegesis study rather than a lexical study. Despite the difference, I observe that these two types of studies sometimes overlap. This overlap has its roots in the tradition of Arabic linguistic studies, where the primary intention was to provide a scientific tool for understanding the Qurʾan (Haleem, 2005, p. ix). Given the nature of the subject, during the early stages of the development of Arabic linguistics, most Arabic grammarians and lexicographers were also Islamic scholars. Conversely, Islamic scholars had a deep understanding of Arabic.

Regarding ummah as a Qur'anic term, I will refer to two publications, Al-Isfahani (2009) and Badawi & Haleem (2008), which address the contextual meaning of all Qur'anic terms, including ummah. The former represents classical work, while the latter represents contemporary scholarship. Additionally, several other works specifically dedicated to understanding the meaning of ummah in the Qur'an, such as those by Denny (1975) and Oda (1984), will also be used as references.

It should be underlined that in the Qur'an, the word ummah appears in at least 58 verses, with 47 instances in the singular form and 11 in the plural form. This section will not explain each verse individually, as ummah can contextually refer to various concepts, including time, religion, nation, community, and even a particular person. Instead, I will focus on the verses where ummah is interpreted as a social group. Different interpretations of ummah as a social group, whether as a community or another form of social organization, have been found among Qur'anic interpreters. For example, ummah in 45:28 was translated by Pickthall (1960) as "nation," while A. Haleem (2005) translated it as "community." When conducting social studies, it is important to address these differing terms since they carry different theoretical implications. I view ummah as a community rather than other forms of social groups, such as nation or society. To support this conclusion, I will refer to several works (Giddens & Sutton, 2014; McMillan & Chavis, 1986; Shariati, 2007). Additionally, understanding how the Qur'an discusses the ummah allows us to grasp the basic nature of the ummah as a community. Furthermore, ummah is not merely a unique name for the Muslim community but also a term that represents the self-concept of Muslims, which is a key aspect of their social religious identity.

The Basic Meaning and Contextual Meaning of Ummah

Arabic lexicographers have varied explanations for the definition of ummah. However, these differences can mostly be reconciled. According to Ibn Manzur, ummah encompasses several meanings: (1) Dīn (دين) and Aṭ-Ṭarīqah (الطريقة), which mean religion and method, respectively; (2) al Qarn min al-Nās, referring to a certain era or group of people; (3) Ummah kull Nabi (أمة كل نبي), which means the people to whom God sent a prophet; (4) Kull Jīl min an-Nās (كل جيل من الناس), meaning every generation of people; and (5) Jīl wa Jins min Kull Ḥayy (جيل و جنس من كل حي), referring to a generation or a variety of living creatures (Manzur, 1979, pp. 133–134). Meanwhile, Mukthar Omar stated that the meanings of ummah are: (1) groups of

people who live in certain places, groups formed based on the same interests or other factors such as language, religion, and origin; (2) Dīn (دين) and Millah (ملة), which mean religion and belief; (3) someone with good manners; and (4) Muddah (مدة) and Hīn (حين), which mean period and time (Umar, 2008, p. 121).

Like the lexicographers, the different explanations among Qur'anic interpreters on the contextual meaning of ummah can be reconciled. According to Badawi & Haleem (2008, pp. 48–49), the contextual meaning of ummah in the Qur'an refers to eight meanings: (1) "a people, a nation, a community" as in 35:24; (2) "a party, a category of people" as in 3:104; (3) "a crowd" as in 28:23; (4) "a common belief, tradition" as in 43:22; (5) "a period of time" as in 12:45; (6) "a fixed, determined time" as in 12:45; (7) "an organized society" as in 6:38; and (8) "an epitome of Godliness, a man alone, one of a kind" as in 16:120. Meanwhile, Al-Isfahani (2009, pp. 86–87) stated that the contextual meaning of ummah in the Qur'an includes: (1) each group formed naturally or by design, driven by similarity in one or several factors such as religious factors, place, and time; (2) each type of creation; (3) a social category related to belief; (4) a group committed to goodness, serving as an example for others; (5) certain time limits; (6) groups who obey God; and (7) groups that live in certain ways and methods.

One essential question may arise after this explanation: what is the most basic meaning of ummah? Answering this question requires us to look back at the concept of al-ishtiqāq. Understanding the connection of the word structure (munāsabah al-lafẓ) and the connection of meaning (munāsabah al-ma'nā) greatly assists us in answering this question. My understanding of how this concept applies to the word ummah leads me to conclude that the most basic meaning of ummah is "religion" and "method." The word ummah (أمة) derives from the word ammu (أُمّ), which means "a purpose" (Manzhur, 1981, p. 133). The word ummah preserves the physical elements of ammu, which are the glottal sounds a/u (أ), m (م), and m (م). There is a modification to the vocal sounds in the first letter; the sound "u" replaces the sound "a." Another modification occurs in the last letter, where the sound "a" replaces the sound "u." Additionally, there is the addition of a new letter at the end, namely ta' marbutah (ة), transforming ammu into ummah. From this, it is clear that among the meanings of ummah introduced by lexicographers, "religion" and "method" most closely relate to "purpose," the meaning of ammu, the root word of ummah. "Religion" and "method" are highly related to "purpose" since every religion defines the purpose of life as its

most basic theological issue. In this respect, religions offer a distinctive method of life that should be followed by their followers to achieve this purpose.

Based on their explanation of the meanings of ummah, it can be recognized that the word can be used, at least, for three scopes: humans, time, and living things in general. When ummah is used to refer to humans, two meanings emerge: (1) ummah as a group and (2) ummah as prophets or figures who act based on religious zeal. When ummah is used to refer to time, it means a certain period. When ummah is used to refer to living things, it means species. When the word ummah is not juxtaposed with these three concepts, it refers to religion and methodology. I understand that the latter represents the fundamental meaning of ummah, while the former are contextual interpretations.

Ummah as Muslims Religious Community and Social Religious Identity

Ummah, as a term, specifically refers to a religious group, particularly the Muslim community, rather than other forms of groups like nations or societies. Shariati (2007, pp. 39–40) asserts that ummah denotes a religious group. To support his definition of ummah, Shariati compares it with other terms that may seem to convey similar meanings. These terms include (1) Al-Qabīlah, (2) Al-Qawm, (3) Ash-Sha‘b, (4) At-Ṭabaqah, (5) al Mujtama', (6) At-Ṭā'ifah (in Arabic), as well as (1) Nation, (2) Race, (3) Mass, and (4) People (in English). While some may view these Arabic terms as synonyms, Shariati argues that they cannot be considered as such. Despite their simple translations to "group of people," they each emphasize distinct meanings, making them different terms used to refer to different entities (Shariati, 2007, p. 40). From a linguistic standpoint, Shariati's perspective finds support in a school of thought within Arabic linguistics that suggests the absence of synonyms in Arabic (Al-Salih, 2009, pp. 174–175, 295–296). According to this view, each word is uniquely formed to represent a specific meaning. For example, the word "sayf" exclusively refers to a "sword" in Arabic, while other words (more than fifty in total) such as "al-Sarim" or "al-Muhannad" describe specific qualities or types of swords rather than the swords themselves. The first word is used for describing an extremely sharp sword, and the last word is used for describing a sword that is made on Hindi style.

Going back to the previously listed terms often associated with ummah, Shariati managed to highlight the distinctions between them. Through his commentary, he

posited that all forms of social groups, including the ummah, are encompassed by the Arabic term "al-Majmu'ah," which simply means "a social group." This term can be further specified into several types, including (1) Nation, (2) Al-Qabīlah, (3) Al-Qawm, (4) Ash-Sha'b, (5) At-Ṭabaqah, (6) al Mujtama', (7) At-Ṭā'ifah, (8) Race, (9) Mass, and (10) People. According to Shariati (2007, pp. 31–32), the nation originates from the word "naitre," which means birth. He further elaborated that a nation refers to a group of people who gather due to family ties and blood lineage. The second term, Al-Qabīlah, refers to social groups formed primarily based on common agreements, usually related to food resources (Shariati, 2006, p. 42). The third, Al-Qawm, denotes social groups inhabiting a place based on shared interests for livelihood (Shariati, 2006, p. 43). The fourth, Ash-Shu'ub, describes several social groups originating from a common origin (Shariati, 2007, p. 43). The fifth, at-Ṭabaqah or social class, refers to groups formed based on classifications such as work similarity, lifestyle, and income level (Shariati, 2007, p. 43). The sixth, al-mujtama' (society), signifies social groups formed due to living within a social structure (Shariati, 2006, p. 43). The seventh, at-tā'ifah, refers to nomadic social groups (Shariati, 2006, p. 43). The eighth, Race, pertains to groups formed based on physical characteristics (Shariati, 2007, p. 43). The ninth, Mass, denotes groups of people gathering in a specific place or crowd (Shariati, 2007, p. 44). The tenth, People, refers to a group residing in a particular place (Shariati, 2007, p. 44). Based on the explanations above, Shariati's suggestion regarding the definition of ummah as a Muslim religious group is highly acceptable due to his strong argumentation.

In order to provide a more specific explanation of the term ummah, Shariati (2007, p. 46) identified *ikhtiyār* (choice), *ḥarakah* (movement), *taqaddum* (improvement), and *hādif* (purpose) as its main characteristics. The characteristic of *ikhtiyār* (choice) is evident in Hassan's description of ummah as a "community of believers," wherein membership is open to all without qualification or restriction, embodying the universalism of Islam (Hassan, 2006, p. 312). This suggests that individuals or groups can choose to join the ummah. The characteristic of *ḥarakah* (movement) is evidenced in studies by Mandaville (2003) and Saunders (2008), which show that the ummah is an actively spreading community. Mandaville (2003) also addressed the last two aspects, *taqaddum* (improvement) and *hādif* (purpose), by demonstrating how the ummah utilizes the internet to communicate and share information, leading him to coin the term "the virtual ummah."

Basically, according to Qur'anic contextual uses of the word, ummah may refer to any religious group, such as in 43;22. In addition to that, the word may refer to Ahl al-Kitab (people of the book) which includes the Christians and Jews such as in 23;52 and 21;92. According to Muslims believe, God in several serves, such as 2;128, 143 and 3;104, directly call Muslims as ummah. Since the Medinan period, when the previous verses were revealed, the word ummah have become exclusively being used for referring to Muslims (Denny, 1975). Obviously, ummah is an Arabic word that is meant for referring to a religious group, particularly Muslims religious group. Besides this Qur'anic argument, the concept of al-ishtiqāq offers another argument for viewin ummah as a religious group. This can be recognized from, how ummah relates to several other words which still originate from one basic word, ammu. The words are imām (إمام) and ma'mūm (مأموم). As derived words of ammu, the basic letters of ammu is physically recognized within these two words through the existence of three letters; a (أ), m (م), and m (م). In Arabic, imām refers to a leader, especially Islamic religious leaders. While the word ma'mūm refers to the followers of religious leaders or the members of congregation. Religious groups in common especially Muslims religious group, are being structured by the existence of religious leaders (imām) and members of congregation (ma'mūm).

The categorization of the ummah as a community (Muslim community) is more accurate, compared to another terms. Community is defined as a social group that is tied into a same type of locality and interest within a dynamic interaction in which members are engaged (Giddens & Sutton, 2014, p. 234). The formation of a community is determined by the existence of at least four important aspects, namely "membership", "influences", "integration and fulfilment of needs" and "shared emotional connection" (McMillan & Chavis, 1986, p. 9). Some research on the ummah, such as by Mandaville (2003) and (2016) generally showed findings that fit with the four-aspects above. Thus, it is not surprising that contemporary social researchers explicitly state that the ummah is a community. Meanwhile, society is a term for describing a social group embodied in an organised social structure, mainly in form of a state that is set up by "large community of people" (Giddens & Sutton, 2014, p. 46). In addition to that, they also noted that in a modern world, multinational companies that operate across countries, have greater income compared to many developing countries, and even have stronger economic and political influences from many states, are also considered as societies. Concerning the context of this discussion,

the conception of society is not fitted with the concept of the ummah because in the reality we are witnessing, the ummah is not formed in organized social ties such as found in nation states or multinational companies. However, in the past the ummah was a social group that lived and evolved in a form of nation state (Lapidus, 2002, pp. 183–193).

Ummah is a religious community that views religion as a very important aspect of life. The influence of Islam on Muslims involves all of their life aspects since Islam does not only cover the personal rituals, but also include the social aspects. If we see that self-concept as an aspect that influences identity, then the self-concept of a Muslim is formed by the interpretation of Islamic teachings contained in the Qur'an. Following this, A Haleem wrote;

The Qur'an is the supreme authority in Islam. It is the fundamental and paramount source of the creed, rituals, ethics, and law of the Islamic religion. It is the book that differentiates between right and wrong, so that nowadays, when the Muslim world is dealing with such universal issues as globalization, the environment, combating terrorism and drug, issue of medical ethics, and feminism, evidence to support various arguments is sought in the Qur'an. Muslims are strongly influenced by their religion. A Survey (Ipsos MORI, n.d.) shows that 94% of Muslims emphasize the role of Islam in their lives. According to this, we may conclude that any single aspect of Islamic teachings - including the term ummah - will put an influence on how Muslims name and perceive themselves as a distinctive religious group.

The explanation above shows that Islamic teachings highly influence Muslims. In the context of the discussion about identity, Islamic teachings are a set of conceptions which contribute in structuring the identity of Muslim and ummah. The Self-conception of Muslims emanates from Islamic teachings. Self-concept is identity itself. If identity (self) is a term used to define individual or group uniqueness in the way of thinking, feeling and behaving, social roles, or membership in the social group (Erikson, 1956; Mead, 1934), while self-concept is used more in order to describe that identity is a cognitive mental structure that shapes the uniqueness of humans, either as individual and as member of any social group (Oyserman et al., 2012). Although the definition of self-concept above emphasizes more on the cognitive aspect, considering that self-concept is identity, or at least as the most important part of identity, it ultimately also includes or closely relates to the affective aspects of the human experience.

This understanding allows us to conceptualize ummah as social religious identity of Muslim. According to Tajfel (1974, p. 69) - the pioneer of social identity research - social identity is the individual's knowledge and awareness that he/she is a member of a social group through accepting group values, such as cognitive and emotional values. The acceptance is the main consideration of his/her nature as a member of social group and indicates, as well, his/her belongingness to the group. In order for an individual to become a member of a group, he/she experience a process, namely social categorization (Turner & Reynolds, 2010) which is a process in which an individual become a member of a social group after analyzing what among the existing social category fit his/her self-concept. Since being belonged to a group and living in a group are among of human basic natures and need, human will analyze existing social categories, which among the existing categories is being compatible with his self-concept. Social categories may come in the form of profession, nationality, race, ethnicity, and religion. In context of ummah as a religious group, an individual accepted the Islamic values, then recognized that among the existing religious social categories (such as Muslims, Christians and Jews), Muslim is a compatible category for him/her. Up to this point, the individual recognized him/herself as Muslim and become the member of ummah. Depersonalization is a process when an individual, after fully attached to a group, define himself as member of group with certain social identity (Turner & Reynolds, 2010, pp. 19–20). It is a shifting from personal identity to social identity, by which individual should not be recognized as solely as individual, but as social matter. In other way, an individual represents a social context, since he/she is formed and shaped in social life through social influence.

Ummah is certainly not the only social identity held by Muslims. Humans have several identities at once. Muslims as the member of ummah are recognized as coming from different backgrounds. Although ummah is a universal concept, localities that stemmed to Muslims should not be ignored. For example, Minangkabau Muslims hold at least two other social identities besides ummah as social religious identity, namely Minangkabau as cultural identity and Indonesian as national identity.

In this context, the concept of identity salience and commitment presented by Stryker & Serpe (1982) becomes relevant. Identity salience is a term that describes what identities -among the various identities that a person may hold- commonly play roles in any situation. In certain circumstances, a Minangkabau Muslim may view a

situation from religious perspective rather than from the cultural perspective and nationality perspective as well, and vice versa. While the concept of commitment refers to the extent or degree to which an individual or group considers an identity become as the most important factor which make him/her/them identify themselves with the identity which they highly committed to. The higher commitment to religious identity, the higher the intensity and effort is given to understand religious concepts and vice versa.

Arabic, The Language of Islam

Arabic plays a fundamental role in defining the Qur'an as the Qur'an. In contrast to the Bible in the Christian world, where translation versions are also accepted as the Bible, translations of the Qur'an are not considered equivalent to the Qur'an by Muslims.

In light of this, two widely recognized contemporary Muslim scholars, Fazlur Rahman and Naquib al-Attas, have both emphasized the importance of the Arabic language, despite being perceived as representing contrasting thoughts in the Islamic world: Islamic liberalism/modernism and Islamic conservatism/traditionalism. The contemporary views on Arabic align with a common agreement among Islamic scholars, both those with Arabic backgrounds, such as Shafi'i, and those with non-Arabic backgrounds, such as Abu Hanifah.

Respecting that, Arabic is the only language that serves as the instrument to understand the Qur'an. The language and the book become identical to each other. Moreover, Classical Arabic is well-preserved due to the endless Islamic scholarly efforts to dig everything from Qur'an, ranging from so-called Islamic theology, law, ethics, and so on.

Heading to the conclusion that Arabic is an instrument for Muslims to understand Islam and God has pushed me to put discuss the idea with the existing scholarly conception of the term, which is language as an instrument. It leads me to Karl Buhler through his seminal work the Theory of Language (2011). Referring to his perspective, Arabic in this case is a spiritual organon. Organon is a term that he adopted from Plato, which simply means an instrument. Language is the instrument that bridges three essential dots that create the concrete speech event; "the one" (the speaker), "things" (object of speech), and the "other" (the listener). See figure 1

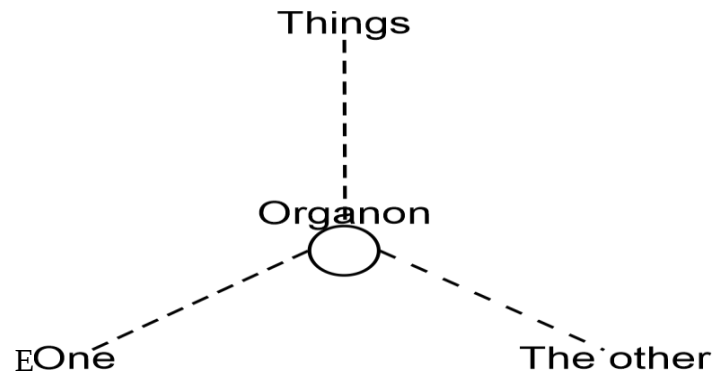


Figure 1 (Bühler, 2011, p. 31)

After reintroducing the Plato scheme, he introduced his thought (see figure 2) on how language functions as the organon in a speech event. Bühler's scheme is built based on that of Plato by adding his conception of the character of language. According to Bühler language has three aspects that allow oral and written communication; expression, representation, and appeal. While the expressional function of language refers to language's ability to convey ideas, feelings, and attitudes through its features such as vocabulary, grammar, syntax, and other linguistic features, the representation means the ability in representing the actual world, such as word tree that describes a type of plant. In other words, expression is speaker-centered and representation is object-centered. Meanwhile, appeal is the ability to influence people in many ways, including to persuade people to engage in a conversation.

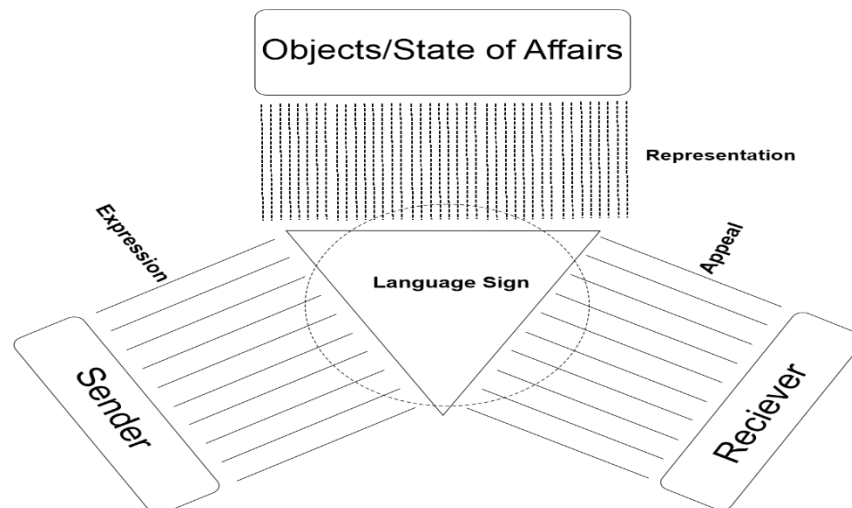


Figure 2 (Bühler, 2011, p. 35)

Now, it comes down to the main task of this sub-chapter: to portray Qur'anic-Arabic in the conception of organon. In order to start the task, it is important to take a glimpse (again) of the Islamic basic understanding of the Qur'an. Qur'an is an Arabic

book that was revealed by God -through Gabriel- to Prophet Muhammad. The prophet functions as a messenger to his fellow humankind. See Figure 3.

Referring to the conception of the three essential dots behind a speech event, it is concluded that God acts as “the one”, and Prophet Muhammad and the human audience is “the other”. Concerning Islamic belief which sees the Prophet as the messenger and the most authoritative person who explain the meaning and the way to understand the meaning (Islamic exegesis method), it is impossible to put it in one exact box with his fellow humankind. So, I decided to make the box into two chambers. It then includes the basic Islamic concept that human is the target audience of the Qur’an with the Prophet acting as the messenger.

Expressional functions of language in this respect run in the context of when God introduced Himself to humans and the fundamental of Islamic teachings through giving orders and forbiddance. Representational functions take place when God, through the Qur’an, talked about many subjects, such as past figures and events, the immaterial world, comments on human characteristics, and also natural phenomena. Both create the Islamic system of belief, creed, ethics, and law.

Regarding the appellative functions, Islamic traditions have shown great efforts to understand the Qur’anic meaning which makes what so-called Islamic sciences, such as Islamic exegesis, Islamic jurisprudence, Islamic theology, and Arabic linguistics.

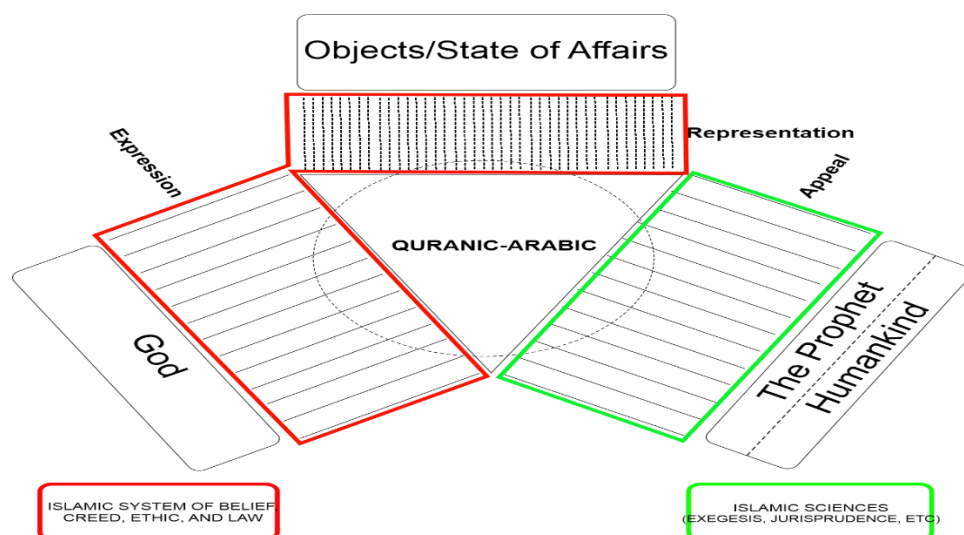


Figure 3

Minangkabau Society and Arabic

Historical Overview

Pre-Islamic Minangkabau. Historians (Amran, 1985; Dobbin, 2014; Hadler, 2008b) agreed that Minangkabau entered its historical period in the 13th CE. Several stone tablets preserved the story Adityawarman, the first king in the Pagaruyung Kingdom, dating back to the century. No written records are dating back to the time before Adityawarman, although the discovery of menhir stones indicates that there had been a group of people who inhabited the area in 3500 years BCE.

Even so, Minangkabau after Adityawarman remains generally mysterious due to insufficient written records. The lack of historical sources about Minangkabau, especially those written by the Minangkabau people themselves, is an obstacle to construct its history (Dobbin, 2014, p. vii). Most of Minangkabau's written records come from foreign observers, such as the Portuguese and British, who traveled to Minangkabau for commercial purposes. the Dutch, who came for colonialization, also provided many records on the Minangkabau history and culture. Information regarding Minangkabau from the insider perspective was only adequate from the beginning of the 20th CE.

Regarding religion, historians agree that the Minangkabau indigenous belief was animism (Hadler, 2008b, pp. 117–118, 2008a, p. 19). The Minangkabau believe there are supernatural powers behind the natural existence that can affect their lives. Shaman is a critical figure that may link human to supernatural power.

With Adityawarman establishing the Minangkabau kingdom, the Minangkabau world came under Hindu-Buddhist influence (Amran, 1985, p. 16; Dobbin, 2014, p. 118). In Dharmasraya, the center of the kingdom before moving to Pagaruyuang, historians found ruins of worshiping place for Hindu (Amran, 1985, pp. 16–17). Raffles (1835, p. 425) also noted some ruins identical to Hinduism around Pagaruyuang, the capital of Minangkabau kingdom. However, in more detail, the extent of Hindu influence on the Minangkabau, in general, is not yet known. Given the government system in Minangkabau, the influence of Hindu could be solely on the royal family. The robust independence of Minangkabau nagaris made it almost impossible to impose an outside religion on the Minangkabau.

The Minangkabau also had contact with Christianity. Thomas Dias, the first European to visit the Pagaruyuang kingdom in 1684, was a Christian. His traveling

report (Barnard, 2013) indicated that natives recognized him as the first Christian who visited their land. Contact with Christianity became more intensified as the Dutch tried to monopolize gold and agricultural product in Minangkabau, started around 16th CE. However, it seems that the Minangkabau people were not interested in it and even tended to ignore it. An agreement between the Dutch and the penghulus (local leaders) at the western coast of Minangkabau in which each party should not interfere with the other in terms of religious practices (Amran, 1985, pp. 136–137), indicated this absence of an embrace of Christianity. One of the main factors could be the Dutch's image as a group of outsiders whose colonial ambitions threatened Minangkabau society.

The Dawn of Islam in the Minangkabau World. According to Hamka (2016, p. 510), the first interaction between the Minangkabau and Islam had started since the 7th CE, when some Arab merchants from Arabia established settlements on the west coast of Minangkabau. However, there has been no conclusive evidence, such as writer report or graveyard, supporting the opinion.

A historical record indicated that the Minangkabau world had been under Islamic influence in the 15th CE. Thomas Dias's illustrated the extent of Islam's influence on the kingdom. He witnessed that some hajis (Muslims who came back from Mecca for pilgrimage) surrounded the king. In another part of his report, he gave its reader the impression that Pagaruyuang was an Islamic kingdom that already had a political network with Ottoman.

The Islamic reform movement initiated around 1784 and intensified in 1803 (Abdullah, 1966; Dobbin, 2014; Hadler, 2008b) shows that the Minangkabau world has reached a point where they accept an outside religion at an unprecedented level. Islam, as a religion, no longer dealt with converting the Minangkabau world but reforming it.

Islam entered Minangkabau through the hand of Minangkabau emigrants, called perantau, that came back to their native land. One of the prominent Minangkabau figures best known for his success in Minangkabau's Islamization is Syekh Burhanuddin (1646-1591) (Azra, 2017, p. xix; Dobbin, 2014, pp. 123–124). Born in Pariaman, an area attached to the West coast, he had emigrated to Aceh to study Islam. Returning from Aceh, he then founded a sufi brotherhood at his tiny hometown, namely Ulakan. Soon Ulakan attracted perantau from many nagaris in Minangkabau to study Islam from him. After finishing their study, they returned to

their native nagaris and clans as insiders who bring up a new religion, whose existence could not be rejected by the existing social schema. Minangkabau people at the time may never have imagined that the returned perantau with an "outside religion" would change many fundamental aspects of the Minangkabau world.

Sheikh Burhanuddin is widely known as the first mind behind the transformation of the surau from the clan communal shelter to an Islamic educational institution (Azra, 2017). Traditionally, surau, as Dobbin (2014, p. 120) reported, is a communal shelter, a place where unmarried Minangkabau teenagers sleep at night. According to Minangkabau adat, it is unexpected that a teenager is still sleeping in their traditional communal houses, called Rumah Gadang. Apart from being a place for teenagers, surau is also a place for Minangkabau widowers to sleep at night. Under normal circumstances, it is only women that can sleep at communal houses. Besides that, only the husbands can also spend the night at the houses. After the coming of Islam, in the hand of clan members who had claimed authority as Ulama after emigrating somewhere to study Islam, surau became the center of Islamic education and movement. Surau became more independent as Ulama, and their followers later managed to fund their activities (Dobbin, 2014, p. 122).

Arabic is a fundamental aspect of the existence of a surau as an Islamic educational institution. Research on surau manuscripts (Ahmad et al., 2014) addressed that Arabic was a fundamental compulsory subject in the era of Sheikh Burhanuddin. Old manuscripts of Surau from this era, as some research revealed, showed that learning materials of Arabic focus on mastering Arabic grammatical aspects, such as nahw and sarf. It indicated that in the perspective of Surau, Arabic is more a scientific tool for understanding the Arabic texts, such as the Qur'an and classical Islamic references, rather than a tool of communication.

Arabic is also a gateway for the inception of Islamic terms and concepts in the Minangkabau worldview through the writing of Tambo. Tambo, as researchers (Abdullah, 1981, pp. 144–145; Dobbin, 2014, p. 13) found, is a Minangkabau oral text which contains clan historical information, laws, ethics, and even information regarding their communal properties (Abdullah, 1981, pp. 145–144). Regarding this, it is proper to state that Tambo is a collection of knowledge that may form a worldview. As an oral text, before the appearance of Minangkabau ulama, oral tradition is the only way to inherit Tambo from a generation to another. It was in the hands of the surau ulama Tambo that was first documented into written text and

continued to be reproduced (Abdullah, 1981, p. 144). In that writing, Minangkabau ulama not only wrote Tambo as it was but tried to include several Arabic-Qur'anic terms and their concepts to replace the old terms and concepts.

For example, when tambo explains Akal (reasoning), some Islamic and Arabic terms are used. Tambo said: "The tree of Akal (reasoning) is divided into four things: syariat, tarikat, hakikat and ma'rifat" (Batuah & Madjoindo, 1956, p. 133). Syariat (sharia) is an Islamic term to describe Islamic law and precepts. Tarikat, Hakikat, and Ma'rifat are Arabic terms for "way or habit," "essence," and "knowing." In addition to that, there are many other Arabic terms in tambo, such as "kaum," "adat," and "Alam". The original Arabic words of the terms are "qaum," "adat" and "alam", which mean "tribe," "custom or tradition," and "world." Among other Arabic terms are "adat Islamiyyah" for tradition that does not contradict with Islamic values, and "adat jahiliyyah" for the contrary.

Fishman's (2006) theory on the relationship between religion and language is applicable to understand the matter. He wrote (2006, p. 18), "All sources of sociocultural change are also sources of change in the sociolinguistic repertoire vis-à-vis religion, including religious change per se." By referring to the theory, it can conclude that sociolinguistic changes in Minangkabau, which can be seen from the inclusion of Arabic terms in Tambo, result from Minangkabau's acceptance of Islam a form of sociocultural change. So, the existence of Arabic terms in tambo arises because it symbolizes the cultural acceptance on Islam in the Minangkabau world.

From the perspective of social transformations theory, Arabic is a non-human resource in the initial era of Minangkabau religious identity transformational process. The process was carried out through a change in the worldview, where Islamic values were introduced to the community, both through studies conducted in the surau and through the insertion of these values in Tambo when the writing process was carried out. The recognition of values is possible because of mastery of Arabic, Qur'anic language, the language of Islamic classical references and the language of Islamic rituals.

The Peaceful Frist Wave of Islamic Reformists Movement. Sufistic Islam or Islam Tarikat was Islam that Minangkabau ulama introduced to the Minangkabau world, which accommodated the existing tradition. Abdullah (1966, p. 9) noted that Islamic tariqat in Minangkabau paid more attention to individual purification than individual legal compliance. They also chose not to confront old traditions, such as

gambling and cockfighting (Dobbin, 2014, pp. 125–126; Hadler, 2008b, p. 48), which are generally considered contrary to Islamic teachings. According to Gibb (1945, p. 25). The character of Minangkabau Sufistic Islam is the typical character of the Sufi brotherhood, regardless of the place they evolve.

Despite being widely accepted, Islam in Minangkabau society played a limited role. Islam was only a religion that dealt with the private spheres. Meanwhile, public affairs were still under the adat institutions. Penghulu, as the leader of the institutions who acted as executive, legislative, and judiciary, related to clans' prosperity (Dobbin, 2014, p. 19,126). Meanwhile, the authority of the Ulama was commonly limited in the scope of the surau. As Abdullah stated (1981, p. 158), the spread of Islam in the Minangkabau world was not political as only in Aceh and in Java, which made the absence of radical changes in the existing social order in Minangkabau. The social circumstance led Ulama not to have a fundamental role in social life.

Adat law, which every nagaris were governed based on, was not a single legal system of the Minangkabau world (Dobbin, 2014, pp. 126–127). Each nagaris, with its federalists' independence and autonomy, established its adat laws which were adequate to be enforced only its indigenous inhabitant and within Nagari's geographical scope. It caused disputes involving people from different nagaris to be put on the negotiating table, and often the negotiations failed, suspending the disputes without the just ending. Traveler traders who often became victims of robbery while traveling outside their Nagari were among the most aggrieved parties observing the situation.

Tuanku Nan Tuo, a progressive surau ulama of his time, realized it as a change for introducing the Islamic law, a universal legal system. In the 1780s, he opened an Islamic law class in his surau, which attracted many people from across nagaris (Dobbin, 2014, pp. 127–128). Other suraus to some extent likely followed the attempt, considering, as Azra (2017) pointed, Minangkabau suraus linked each other.

The attempt marked the dawn of Minangkabau reformation. From the side of surau, the attempt was an initial breakthrough since Minangkabau surau, for the first time, showed a character shift: expanding to account for public affairs. Minangkabau people from outside the surau circle, such as traders, also began to recognize other aspects of Islam that they did not know so far, namely Islam as a comprehensive legal system. The circumstance allows for the expansion surau followers, which was

evidenced by the surau's ability to create troop units that were often used to attack the position of bandits who continued to carry out robberies (Dobbin, 2014, p. 127). The introduction and campaign of implementing Islamic law was the next transformation process in Minangkabau, where this process contributed to strengthening the religious identity of the Minangkabau community.

Arabic was a fundamental resource behind the transformation process. Mastery of Arabic as a tool for comprehending religious texts, not for communicative purposes, enabled the introduction of Islamic laws to the Minangkabau world. With their mastery of Arabic, Minangkabau ulama claimed their authority in religion, which allowed them to run the campaign. Mastery of Arabic was an essential human resource to explore Islamic law knowledge, which was previously absent from the Minangkabau world and introduced to the society. The emergence of new knowledge about Islam, the religion they have accepted so far, has led, to some extent, to the strengthening of the religious identity of the Minangkabau people.

The Second Wave of Reformists and the Minangkabau Civil War. In terms of its influence on the existing order, the previous movement was not very successful since traditional practices that were contrary to Islamic teachings, such as gambling, cockfighting, tuak (alcohol), and madat (opium) use, not yet to stop (Dobbin, 2014, p. 130; Hadler, 2008b, p. 48). At that time, many penghulus (adat leaders) refused to stop the activities since they saw that it was part of the adat or tradition. Even some of them involved themselves in the opium business (Dobbin, 2014, p. 149). The circumstance caused social unrest and damage in the Minangkabau world. The market, where usually the activities took place, gained a bad reputation as fights and chaos frequently happened, making people feel insecure for economic transactions (Dobbin, 2014, pp. 49, 89). The activities also destroyed many households in Minangkabau (Dobbin, 2014, p. 90). Meanwhile, robbery on traders was still commonly happening (Dobbin, 2014, p. 131).

The previous social problems triggered the -so called- Padri movement in 1803. The movement began with three hajis who had just returned from Mecca, proposing more uncompromising efforts to stop the various activities causing social chaos in the Minangkabau world. They invited several influential scholars to join them, including Tuanku Nan Tuo, but he refused. They strongly criticized Tuanku Nan Tuo, asserting that his method failed to bring up proper conduct in the Minangkabau world. Eventually, the alliance was formed, consisting of eight influential scholars. They

were known as Harimau Nan Salapan (the eight tigers) (Dobbin, 2014, p. 132). The alliance then formed troops and attacked the villages and nagaris that did not want to leave the activities. It sparked a first civil war in Minangkabau, between the Padri and their opposition who named themselves as adat group. In addition to that, the Padris also launched their attack on the group of bandits. The crosswords between Padris and the adat group lasted from 1803 to the beginning of the third decade of the 19th CE.

The Padri movement in the sense of the Minangkabau civil war stopped due to two-way awareness. Tuanku Imam Bonjol, as the prominent leader of the Padri of his moment, decided to rethink the movement, perhaps after realizing the damage caused by the war and the irregularities that occurred within the Padri troops themselves. In 1820, he sent four envoys to travel to Makkah to re-learn the Islamic teachings and laws. After returning from Mecca, the information and explanations he received from the four envoys led Tuanku Imam Bonjol to revise his approach. He then consolidated with kaum adat (Sutan Chaniago, 1939).

On the other hand, many kaum adats accepted Tuanku Imam Bonjol's offer and accepted it as a new convention in Minangkabau. In addition to that, they saw that the cooperation they had with the Dutch against the Padri was more detrimental than beneficial. Consciousness as fellow Minangkabau people also seemed to play a role in the emergence of this awareness. Adat basandi syara', syara' basandi kitabullah (adat is based on sharia and sharia is based on the Book of God) and Syara' mangato, adat mamakai (sharia' designs and adat applies) then became a Minangkabau convention (Abdullah, 1970, p. 9). Adat law and penghulu's position were still valid as long they do not conflict with Islamic law and tenets. It is the most prominent legacy of the Padri war for the Minangkabau world. Since then, the Paderi war as a civil war ended and turned into a war against colonialism as the Dutch had many opportunities to colonialize the Minangkabau world.

The third wave of the Minangkabau transformation resulted in the strengthening of the religious identity of the Minangkabau people, which can be traced in two distinct ways. Firstly, the strengthening of surau's role in the life of the Minangkabau community. They widely accepted the leadership of the ulama and allowed them a more significant social role. The acceptance of the Minangkabau world on the aphorism of adat basandi syara' syarak basandi Kitabullah (adat is based on sharia and sharia is based on the Book of God) as the imperative philosophy of

Minangkabau adat is the second indicator. There is no historical record that shows any rejection of the philosophy, and to the present time, it is still recognized as it was. The two-attitude (social acceptance of the more significant ulama role and the acceptance of Islam as the basis of local custom and law) came from the religious identity that strengthened.

Considering the transformation process occurred by the efforts and encouragement of the Minangkabau ulama, it is acceptable to state that the transformation process was made possible due to the authority of the Ulama. The authority allowed scholars to become active agents of transformation. In this regard, Arabic mastery was one of the essential aspects that based the authority. Mastery of Arabic maintained the existence of the surau, its Ulama, and their followers and led them to offer breakthroughs in the transformational process of the Minangkabau world. It means that without mastery of Arabic, the third stage of Minangkabau identity transformation could not have occurred, as explained above. It illustrates that Arabic is a resource of transformation.

Highlighting the events behind the emergence of the agreement on the adat basandi syara' syarak basandi Kitabullah (adat is based on sharia, and sharia is based on the Book of God) allows for another impression on the role of Arabic as a resource of Minangkabau transformation. As has been explained, sending a messenger to Mecca to learn more about religious aspects that might have escaped the attention of the Paderi movement was a crucial point. When the Padri realized something was wrong with the movement all this time, it did not take them long to decide to send their people to Makkah to study. That is, mastery of Arabic makes them ready for re-reading and re-thinking process on their Islamic interpretation, which history recorded that has paved the way for Minangkabau consolidation and the achievement of the agreement. That was impossible without Arabic.

The Minangkabau Reformists Movement at the Beginning of 20th CE. The Paderi War completely ended in 1837 with the defeat of the Paderi and the success of the Dutch to exert its force and influence in Minangkabau. By exiling Tuanku Imam Bonjol and other influential Padri leaders, the Dutch managed to extinguish Minangkabau physical opposition. Through offering the Plakat Panjang (The Long Declaration), a peace agreement and declaration between the Dutch and Minangkabau, the Dutch also generally managed to avoid physical conflicts with the Minangkabau which could endanger their colonialization agenda.

With all the approaches that the Dutch applied in Minangkabau, they gained a considerable economic benefit. Through a forced cultivation policy, the Dutch ordered the Minangkabau to plant coffee and monopolized its trading. According to historians, such as Dobbin (2014) and Amran (1985), the implementation of the coffee plant cultur-stelseel in Minangkabau meant that the Netherlands could not only cover the costs of the Padri war, one of the most challenging wars facing the Dutch but also allowed the Dutch to generate enormous profits.

However, to a certain extent, the Minangkabau also benefited from this situation. Many Minangkabau could travel to Mecca for the pilgrimage and study there. Returned hajis made surau continue to exist as the center of Islamic education institution in Minangkabau. Post Padri was marked by the strengthening of the role of Ulama and surau despite being under the strict supervision of the Dutch (Abdullah, 1966, p. 17).

Besides ensuring the sustainability of surau as the center of Islamic education in Minangkabau, the Minangkabau hajis also triggered the next transformation (Abdullah 1966; Azra 2017; Hamka 2020). Ahmad Khatib Al-Minangkabauwi (1860-1916), the Minangkabau ulama who became the Imam of the Grand Mosque, published an article attacking the Minangkabau adat system on inheritance distribution. According to his interpretation of the Qur'an, he denounced the inheritance system of communal properties in Minangkabau is unlawful and heretic (*bid'ah*). Ahmad Khatib's critic was the first open attack on Minangkabau adat foundations. However, it seems that Minangkabau ulama, who live in Minangkabau, found theological arguments to answer the critic. They stated that communal property is communal waqf, which makes it excluded from Islamic inheritance law regulating private property.

Ahmad Khatib's reputation led many Minangkabau want to study Islam with him (Abdullah 1966; Hamka 2020). He had several students who would later become Islamic reformers in Minangkabau and Indonesia. One of the most prominent figures amongst the Minangkabau reformers who studied from Ahmad Khatib was Abdul Karim Amrullah or Haji Rasul (1879-1945). Inspired by progressives thought of notable scholars, such as Rashid Ridha and Jamaluddin al-Afghani, he denounced it as full of unlawful innovation (*bid'ah*) and prevented Minangkabau from obtaining advancement. He stated that to become a progressive modern Muslim, Minangkabau should directly refer to the Qur'an and Hadith and stop to be *taqlid* (blind obedience).

In campaigning for their idea, Kaum Muda ulama reformed Islamic educational institutions. They managed to get a legal loophole that allowed them to establish a modern religious school. Sumatra Thawalib, located in Padang Panjang, is the first Kaum Muda's modern school, founded by Haji Rasul early in 20th CE. After that, Rahmah el Yunusiyah, a progressive woman from Kaum Muda ulama, founded a modern Islamic school for women. The schools impressed Syaikh al-Azhar and granted her Doctor Honoris Causa, which is the first for women in al-Azhar history. In Padang, Kaum Muda ulama established several schools, one of which was Adabiyah.

Apart from schools, the Kaum Muda also managed to use printed media to spread their ideas. Inspired by the success of al-Manar and al-Urwatul Wuthqa (Azra and Burhanudin 2015; Hamka 2020), Minangkabau Islamic reformers and revivalists published their media to spread their Islamic thoughts. Some media and journals that they ever published and circulated, such as al-Imam and al-Munir (Hamka, 108-121). The effort not only resonated within the Minangkabau world but also spread many places in Indonesia, making the Minangkabau the center of Islamic reformists and revivalist movement (Hamka 121-129).

Traditionalist Islam in Minangkabau, known as the Kaum Tua (the Old Group), had defended themselves in respond to the movement of Kaum Muda had defended themselves by strengthening their bases in surau. They had denounced educational innovations by stating it as an infidel education system. However, in the end, the situation encouraged them to do the same thing: establish their educational institutions using the western system, to maintain their understanding and social base. In addition to that, to stem the influence of Kaum Muda, they also finally should imitate another method of Kaum Muda: establishing their political organizations (Abdullah, 1970, p. 24) and educational institution as well (Rais 1994). The Kaum Tua denounced the Kaum Muda as "rootless" in response to the Kaum Muda, which called them "backward" and "conservative" (Abdullah, 1971, p. 19).

The intellectual contestation and debate between these two groups were quite severe, especially related to *ijtihad* and *bid'ah* (Rais, 1994). They openly differed in determining the beginning and the end of Ramadan (Abdullah, 1970, p. 23). The Kaum Muda, as the result of their *ijtihad*, decided to use astronomical measurement and calculation (*hisab* method) in determining the beginning of a new moon. Meanwhile, the Kaum Tua was strictly loyal to their conventional method: observing and sighting

the presence of a crescent moon. Despite the fierce debate, the Kaum Muda and Kaum Tua ulama were still able to maintain the unity of the ummah and did not turn their attention to fighting Dutch colonialism. In 1950 and 1951 ulama from both sides established a large-scale meeting, discussing existing various social phenomena in the Minangkabau society of West Sumatra (Asnan, 2007, p. 22).

Arabic as a Transformational Resource. Minangkabau's transformation in the early 20th CE also lay in the ability to harness Arabic as a resource. In addition to ensuring the existence of ulama, as happened before, mastery of Arabic was also a door for the introduction of Islamic reformation and revivalist movement that Rashid Rida and Jamaluddin al-Afghani coined. The language allowed Minangkabau reformers and revivalists to campaign for *ijtihad* to re-examine the old Islamic tradition of Minangkabau.

Without mastering Arabic, it is challenging to re-investigate the Islamic tradition developed in the Minangkabau world. The tradition resulted from at least three centuries of the transformational process, starting from the appearance of a figure named Sheikh Burhanuddin. The tradition was then strengthened in the Tuanku nan Tuo era, the second wave of the Minangkabau transformation. The third wave was when the Padri movement took place, which claimed many victims. With such a process, the Minangkabau had established their religious identity over the centuries. Concerning this, what Minangkabau Kaum Muda ulama did in the early 20th CE was an extraordinary effort, where they succeeded in changing many aspects of the Islamic tradition in Minangkabau, even making the Minangkabau Islamic Tradition identical with their interpretation. It is fair to say that without the firm authority that came with mastery of Arabic, it could not be done.

The transformational process of the Minangkabau world was Islamization: the process by which the Islamic worldview was introduced and accepted. The transformation was a process in which Minangkabau claimed the Islamic identity and strengthened it since the identity came after accepting the Islamic worldview. The Minangkabau world has undergone significant changes since the introduction of Islam. In the first dawn of the transformation, Minangkabau society moved from an animist society to become part of the ummah. The second wave of transformation, which Tuanku Nan Tuo initiated, is how Islamic identity began to aggrandize. The Padri movement, the third wave, is how Minangkabau fundamentally accepted Islam as the primary basis of their identity. In comparison, the fourth wave is when the

Minangkabau world absorbed new reformation ideas spread in the Islamic world, leading them to acquire an Islamic identity that was not the same as before.

Seen from the perspective of social transformation theory, agents who can manage resources made the Islamization of Minangkabau possible. This thesis attempts to show that Arabic, precisely Classical Arabic, was an essential resource behind the transformation process. Arabic was a fundamental resource behind the four-wave of Minangkabau transformational process, started in the 17th CE.

The emergence of Minangkabau ulama in the first and subsequent waves resulted from the Minangkabau people's ability to master Arabic. Their status as the native agents enabled them to introduce Islam relatively without dealing with the extreme rejection since they were well acquainted with the existing social schema and were able to formulate strategies based on that knowledge. Researchers' analysis of Islam in Minangkabau, such as Kato (1982) and Hadler (2008), have indicated that no other region in Indonesia has accepted Islam in the way Minangkabau people accept Islam, which -to my personal perspective- could significantly lay on the individuals who played the agency. In Java, for instance, according to some scholars such as Azra and Burhanudin (2015:49), some ulama who introduced Islam to the society were non-native Javanese. Mastering Arabic allowed the enlightened Minangkabau natives to claim the authority to introduce and teach Islam to society. In other words, Arabic was a non-human resource that allowed them to become the efficacious native agent of Islamization of the Minangkabau world.

With this analysis as my point of departure, I also conclude that identity transformation through the Islamization process cannot run properly without realizing the scalability of Arabic as a non-human resource. Mastery of Arabic enabled people to study and further understand the Islamic worldview. It is the first step in forming the Islamic identity and strengthening it, arguing that identity is the self-embedded worldview. Hence, any subsequent attempts for the identity strengthening process should begin from the awareness of Arabic's scalability -to be precisely the Classical Arabic-behind that on the existing social schema.

A Glimpse of Arabic in Minangkabau Today

The Common View of Arabic Among the Minangkabau people. Qur'anic Arabic is very different from the style of language used in day-to-day interactions in Arabic-speaking countries; while the knowledge of both varieties is low in Indonesia,

many Indonesians do wish to improve their understanding of the language for religious purposes (Bolland, 1971). Throughout his work, Boland described and explained the Indonesian Muslim effort to understand Arabic for religious purposes, noting for example that he wrote:

Instruction in religious duties is concerned with the performance of prayer, including the necessary Arabic formulas, the meaning of Islamic feasts, precepts for Ramadan and the payment of zakat at its end, and finally the pilgrimage to Mecca. In the second half of the fifth class the Arabic alphabet is taught, followed by reading the Qur'an and learning a few passages by heart, particularly some well-known short suras (Bolland, 1971, p. 199)

It seems to relate to a growing sense of identification with people of the same religion in other locations in Indonesia and the world. Most Minangkabau people likely approved that improvement in mastery of Arabic will enhance their religious experience. My assumption is being supported by ethnographic research by Simon (2014). He reported his interview to an ordinary Minangnese, namely Da Jik:

“...Da Jik, however, reasoned that it was merely his own inability to comprehend the Qur'an in its original Arabic (a limitation shared by almost all Minangkabau people) and his own lack of religious training that would prevent him from accessing its comprehensiveness. Any shortcomings were by definition grounded in the limitations of his own experience and knowledge, not in the Qur'an itself, let alone in Islam. Being perfect and whole, Islam by definition cannot be called into question by experience” (Simon, 2014, p. 199).

It is implicitly stated there that the interviewee admitted that the Arabic is importance for understanding the Qur'an.

Nonetheless, knowledge and interpretation of religious precepts likely vary across the region as well as across different population demographics. It has been suggested that one factor that contributes to this is that mastery of the Arabic language, which is required to understand religious writings and the Qur'an itself, tends to be low, as Simon, (2014a, p. 271) wrote:

“The words recited are, of course, taken directly from the Qur'an and are, therefore, in Arabic. The general meaning of the first sura is commonly known to Minangkabau people, but very few Minangkabau people understand Arabic. It is considered more important to recite the words properly, and to recite them with the proper intention, than it is to understand the words themselves. Similarly, when Minangkabau children learn to recite the Koran, they learn the proper pronunciation”

Research by Fanani and Effendi (1999) had indicated the use of Arabic tends to be symbolic and highly ritualistic in West Sumatra, as the majority of Minangkabau rely on rote recitation, rather than comprehension, even in religious contexts. It can be assumed that Arabic mastery in Minangkabau people tends to lower as than it should be. They wrote:

Minang is spoken in non-official contexts, such as discussion of general topics in family settings and in the workplace. English is the language of the educational elite and serves primarily as a status language rather than a language of communication. Arabic, the language of religion, is used in a range of greetings and exclamations and also for daily prayers and the Friday sermon in mosques (Fanany & Effendi, 1999, p. 108).

Arabic among Islamic Preachers in Minangkabau. Muballighs (people who speak about the teachings of Islam in mosques and become trusted by many people having authority in Islamic tenets), who themselves may not master Arabic well. Research conducted by Syafri et al (2016) has indicated this. It is found that some religious preachers incorrectly interpreted hadiths (prophetic traditions) during Friday sermons. Regarding that, they wrote:

“Masih ada muballigh yang menyampaikan hadis yang tidak ada sangkut-pautnya dengan materi ceramah yang disampaikan. Hal ini membuktikan bahwa penceramah tersebut tidak paham dengan apa yang disampaikan”

“There are preachers who still deliver hadiths that have no relationship to the theme that they intended to deliver. It proves that they did not understand what he was delivering to the audiences” (Safri & Chalida, 2016, p. 83).

Further research conducted by Hadi et al. (2019) also indicated the low ability of some muballighs in Arabic in the region. They found many Arabic linguistic errors in the names of mosques in Padang of West Sumatera. Regarding that muballighs and religious leaders are among who are the subject of critique here. They wrote:

The community ignorance at the errors found in the name of the mosques in Padang and their ignorance on the emergence of the errors have been caused at least by two factors. The first is the lack of religious and Arabic knowledge. It has made the member of communities to entrust the naming of mosques to individual that was considered having a proper religious knowledge, even though, in fact, the trusted individual did not understand Arabic. Once the members of community think that the individual has a proper knowledge, they fully accepted any given names for their mosques,

without either willing to ask whether the names is linguistically proper or not, or to criticize. (Hadi et al., 2019, p. 136)

The Existence of Learning Arabic Group in Minangkabau Society of West Sumatera. Arabic is a compulsory subject in the mainstream Islamic educational institutions of Indonesia such as madrasa's (formal Islamic schools), pesantren (Islamic boarding school) and Islamic universities. Arabic is taught from elementary to senior levels in madrasa and pesantren, Arabic is also a compulsory subject of all departments in Islamic universities, mainly in the first year.

In West Sumatra, some groups of people, neither school pupils nor university students, join the non-formal Arabic courses. The learners come from different backgrounds, such as fresh-grad, housewives, farmers, teachers, and government employees. Concerning the circumstance in which they learn Arabic, which is fundamentally different from the students within formal Islamic educational institutions, they may be called voluntary learners of Arabic.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSING COLLECTIVE RELIGIOUS MEMORY, ATTITUDE AND MOTIVATION

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| Me | : What motivates you to learn Arabic? |
| Participant | : I want to know [the Qur'an]. We read the Qur'an. The melody is very good. It is nice to listen to it rather than listening to others. But we don't understand the meaning. We do salat. We enjoy it. But we don't know the meaning. I think it doesn't make sense |

This chapter offers a definition and understanding of collective religious memory. When believers decide to engage themselves in religious practices such as religious traditions and rites, in which words, languages, and gestures are involved, part of what they are doing is recollecting their religious memory. The process that symbolically brings them back to the past in which some believe the “purest” concept of their religion has attached within the life of religious founder(s).

The framework is constructed based on the conceptual work of two French sociologists, Maurice Halbwachs (1877-1945) and Daniele Hervieu-Léger (1947-now). Their theories are widely accessible through English translated books, are *On Collective Memory* (1992, University of Chicago Press) and *Religions as a Chain of Memory* (1992, Cambridge), respectively.

Although Halbwachs is not the first to talk about memory (Russell 2006), he has been widely recognized as the first scholar who comprehensively explains the role memory plays and its dynamics in shaping social phenomena. Halbwachs' idea of collective memory resulted from his observations and thoughts on the context in which he lives: Europe in the early-mid 20th century.

Unlike Halbwachs (1992), Hervieu-Léger (2000) harnessed the notion of collective memory to capture one of the most striking European social phenomena: the religious revival amid modernity. She suggested that it has to do with the role of collective religious memory. One could argue that Hervieu-Léger provides an example

of how powerful collective memory is in restoring religious identity amid a considerable challenge of modern life on the religious sphere: modernity.

The combination of the ideas of both scholars, to my perspective, provides a more intricate theoretical framework for analyzing the data gathered in this project. The quote above has been extracted from my field data, which in my view, requires this theoretical framework. In light of this, this research adds to the list of studies that harness religious collective memory as a theoretical framework.

The theoretical framework outlined in this chapter includes some features of the notion of collective memory: the definition of collective memory itself and then collective religious memory specifically, the act of recollection, religious traditions and rites, and the role of language in the process of recollection. To enrich our perspective in these topics, I will include another part in which memory within Islamic tradition is discussed. All these features are respectively discussed in subchapters. Before furtherly coming to those topics, it is seemed important to start with argument of choosing this theory as the theoretical framework of this research, which I will explain in “Argument Behind Theory”

In the last part of this chapter, a discussion of the concepts of motivation and attitude is included. It provides an understanding on the concept of how both terms can be used to inform this research, which are used as research variable as it can be seen from research title.

Argument Behind Theory

This research responds to one of the most influential theories of foreign language learning motivation, proposed by Gartner and Lamberd (1972). They suggested two types of language learning motivation: instrumental and integrative. Instrumental motivation relates to students' pragmatical purpose of learning a foreign language, such as getting a job and making way for a better career. Integrative motivation relates to learners' purpose to integrate themselves into a community whose language is learned. A learner who learns English since he/she loves western arts, music, and films, is those who learn English going from integrative motivation.

The theory does not seem very applicable in the case of learning Arabic among Muslims. Most Muslims worldwide, including the Minangkabau people, learn Arabic to some extent. Generally, the extent Arabic learning exists among Muslims is mainly related to learning to pronounce the Arabic phonemes precisely, which aims to recite

the Qur'an correctly. It is religious since Muslims believe that the Qur'an is a sacred revelation of God. This religious motivation is out of the scope of the integrative-instrumental theory of language learning motivation, although some studies (Al-Osaimi & Wedell, 2014; Jaspal & Coyle, 2010; Seymour-Jorn, 2004) indicate the religious-driven motivation. The absence of engagement with concerning sacred language during its development has made the existing theory unable to portray the religious dimension behind learners' motivation in learning a foreign language.

Pertaining to the existing gap, this research's significance lies in its exceptional dedication to addressing the role of the sacred languages, which -in this case- is Arabic, in shaping learners' attitude and motivation toward the language. The studies by Al-Osaimi and Wedell (2014, Jaspal and Coyle 2010, Seymour-Jorn (2004) as I explained in Chapter 2, indicate the religious motivation behind learning Arabic among Muslims. However, exploring student religious motivation concerning Arabic as the Islamic sacred language is specifically designed for addressing the role of sacred language.

When it comes to the methodology issue, ethnographic research seems to be highly promising to lead a researcher to address the role of religiosity in shaping learners' motivation in learning a sacred language, such as Arabic. Grewal (2014), through ethnographic research, managed to provide an insightful explanation on the struggle of young American Muslims to claim religious authority within their community in the U.S by traveling, living, and studying in the Middle Eastern countries, which is not easy for them concerning many social differences between those countries with the U.S, the countries from which they are coming from. The study, to some extent, shows the importance of Arabic for Muslims, regardless of their nationality and native language.

An ethnography study by Norton (2013) is specifically aimed to explore the motivation of a group of immigrants who study English. The research revealed that their motivation relates to a complicated cultural and social background and context surrounding the students' lives. Superficially, motivation to learn a foreign language may be about securing a job. Norton's research revealed that a student's motivation to learn a foreign language is more than that; it is about immigrants' struggle to gain equal power in the work environment.

Research by Grewal (2014) and Norton (2013) demonstrated the efficacy of ethnography in exploring the role of Arabic in the context I described earlier, primarily

when research is conducted in the context of the life of an ethnic group, which is the Minangkabau community. For this purpose, I formulated an essential question: how religious identity plays a role in forming and shaping peoples' attitude toward Arabic and their motivation to learn it in the social context of Minangkabau people? There are three key points emerge from the question, which are religious identity of Minangkabau people, Arabic, and attitude and motivation.

Collective memory itself is a theory that talks about the past (historical aspect) and tradition (cultural aspect) and how both are precious for society to deal with present conditions.

Meanwhile, Arabic and Minangkabau establish a close relationship with tradition in their way. Islamic tradition, to which Arabic relates, is another name of Islamic religiosity since it involves traditions with religious dimensions such as rituals. I explained previously in the previous chapter that the type of Arabic closely related to Islamic religiosity is Classical Arabic, which is the type of Arabic in the Qur'an. Arabic is the only language that Muslims believe is the Qur'anic language, so the Qur'anic translation is never concerned as the Qur'an. Instead, it is only the translation of the Qur'an. As the Qur'anic language, Arabic is strongly associated with tradition since Muslims believe that reciting the Qur'an, which means engaging to Arabic to some extent, is part of good deeds in Islam, something that has been Muslim tradition since the life of the Prophet. Classical Arabic is also the language of hadith, the collection of the Prophet's statements and acts, which is in Islam is the second ultimate resource of Islamic tenets and laws after the Qur'an. Besides that, Arabic is also the language of classical Islamic references, from which many Muslims still extract supporting religious arguments in dealing with the issue of the presents state.

Regarding Minangkabau and its relationship to tradition, Minangkabau does establish a robust relationship to its tradition and Islamic tradition. It is an Indonesian ethnicity that experienced at least four stages of the transformational process -as described in chapter 3- which has transformed the ethic from a pagan society to being part of an Islamic society. Experts even call Minangkabau society as devoted Islamic society (Hadler 2008b; Kato 1982). Nevertheless, being transformed into a Muslim society, part of the global umma, did not lead Minangkabau society to its fundamental tradition from the pagan era, namely the matrilineal Minangkabau adat. Today, Minangkabau society is recognized as the largest matrilineal society globally. In the view of those experts, this kind of relationship is unique and even enigmatic.

As I explained in the previous chapter, Arabic is one of the primary resources behind the four transformational processes of Minangkabau society. In the case of Minangkabau, local Islamic scholars were the leading transformational active agent. They are a group of Minangkabau people who gradually claimed a religious authority, by which they claimed social authority. The authorities made ways for transformational progress, which is the installation of an Islamic worldview within Minangkabau adat without having to abandon the matrilineal system. Mastery Arabic was one of the main requirements for typical Minangkabau people to be recognized as the local Islamic scholars and ready for playing a more significant role in society. Concerning the importance of Arabic in this case, Arabic was always a compulsory subject within educational institutions they established and managed.

So, Minangkabau and Arabic and their interactions are about loyalty to tradition and struggle for it, both cultural and religious traditions, and endless efforts to keep traditions relevant. From my perspective, selecting the theory of collective memory in which tradition is its main issue is very appropriate to approach Minangkabau and Arabic, as this thesis aims to address.

Awareness of the historical and cultural side of Minangkabau and Arabic allows me to comprehend that participants' expression during the interview emanates the historical and cultural struggle of Minangkabau society in accepting Islam as the essential part of their identity and, at the same time, in preserving their matrilineal system. It is about engaging in religious and cultural tradition, in which Arabic takes an essential role, and negotiating between them. Realizing this context, I am fully confident to function the theory of collective memory as the theoretical framework of this thesis.

Collective Religious Memory

In Halbwachs' (1992, pp. 84–119) perspective, religious memory is an inseparable aspect of religion. It, for instance, manifests itself in the form of religious traditions and rites (Halbwachs, 1992, p. 116). The instance of memory is recognizable as a mental site from which believers may recall the past event in which the founder of the religion lived and established the religion. Memory and religion, based on Hervieu-Léger's explanation (2000, pp. 124 & 126), are structurally connected and inherently parted within the structure of the religious group, which means, for most religious group memory is one of the substantive reasons of their existence.

Religious memory is significant concerning the religious identity of believers. Since, according to Halbwachs (1992, pp. 84–119), the preservation of memory aims to perpetuate identity, collective religious memory normatively is among the fundamental aspects that constitutes believers' religious identity. According to Hervieu-Léger (2000), the crisis of religious identity that has taken place within modern society, especially western society, is not the result of the implementation of rational ways of thinking. Instead, it results from the inability to recollect the religious memory, which makes them the "amnesic society" (Hervieu-Léger, 2000, p. ix). According to Hervieu-Léger (2000, p. 123), collective religious memory is an urgent matter for religion because of its ability to determine the future of religion.

The function of memory concerning strengthening identity, including religious identity, through connecting community groups with a point in the past is referred to as the "normative character of religious memory" (Hervieu-Léger, 2000, p. 124). Memory and identity reciprocally relate to each other since the memory sustains as believers view themselves as part of a chain of belief. At the same time, we recognize that part of a lineage of belief is enduring by preserving and recollecting the religious memory. Hervieu-Léger (2000, p. 126) wrote:

In the case of religious memory, the normativity of collective memory is reinforced by the fact of the group's defining itself, objectively and subjectively, as a lineage of belief. And so its formation and reproductionveness spring entirely from the efforts of memory feeding this self-definition. At the source of all religious belief, as we have seen, there is belief in the continuity of the lineage of believers. This continuity transcends history. It is affirmed and manifested in the essentially religious act of recalling a past which gives meaning to the present and contains the future.

The connection between religion, believers, and memory led to the coining of a specific term of memory, "collective religious memory", to distinguish it from other types of collective memory, such as collective cultural memory or collective historical memory. The term collective religious memory comes from Halbwachs' (1992, pp. 37–40) explanation of memory using what he termed as the "framework of memory".

According to this perspective, individuals always remember within their capacity as members of a social group living in a particular social context. The process of remembering is practicable due to social interaction. The act of recalling memory always takes place within a social situation through conversations and interactions of social actors. He wrote: "...I believe that the mind reconstructs its memories under the

pressure of society. Is it not strange then that society causes the mind to transfigure the past to the point of yearning for it?" (Halbwachs, 1992, p. 51). However, the social framework of memory does not negate autobiographic memory, which is individual memory. As Hervieu-Léger (2000, p. 124) stated, collective memory regulates individual memory.

The notion of mobilization of religious memory, which Hervieu-Léger (2000, p. 124) suggested, also asserts the social dimension of collective religious memory. Memory mobilization implies that memory exists and is relevant since it is socially transferrable from one generation to another. The notion of mobilization of memory is also noticeable within Halbwachs' (1992) explanation, such as it appears in this explanation:

"Undoubtedly the fidelity, wealth, and intensity of religious remembrances varied, as one passed from the body of the clerics to the totality of the assembled laity gathering in the churches, and from the assemblies of believers to the groups that responded to profane needs: families, professional bodies, tribunals, armies, etc." (Halbwachs, 1992, p. 113).

Collective Religious Memory and the Process of Recollection

The process of recalling the past, as Halbwachs (1992) suggests, is called the process of recollection or the act of recollection, which attributes meaning to collective religious memory. While remembrance is the recalling process that humans do daily, recollection is "a conscious effort to recall something into mind" (Meriam Webster n.d.). Halbwachs suggested that recollection is possible within social contexts, as he (1992, p. 38) stated, "if we examine a little more closely how we recollect things, we will surely realize that the greatest number of memories come back to us when our parents, our friends, or other persons recall them to us".

A more detailed investigation into Halbwachs explanation on recollection has established that another two terms rush up with the presumably similar meaning to the term of recollection: reproduction and reconstruction. The first term is observable, for instance, within his (1992, p. 47) explanation as follows: "We preserve memories of each epoch in our lives, and these are continually reproduced; through them, as by a continual relationship, a sense of our identity is perpetuated." Another instance in which Halbwachs employs the term within this context is when he (1992, p. 51) writes: "Society from time to time obligates people not just to reproduce in thought previous

events of their lives, but also to touch them up, to shorten them, or to complete them so that, however, convinced we are that our memories are exact, we give them a prestige that reality did not possess."

Similar to the previous term, reconstruction was another term with a contextual meaning that is similar to recollection. Other than that, the term serves as one of Halbwachs' chapter titles, namely Reconstruction of the Past. In concluding his explanation within the chapter, Halbwachs (1992, p. 51), as I previously cited, explained that reconstruction of memory within human mind takes place after the society pressure which leads to transfiguration of the past as the effort to make it relevant for the present live. He also (1992, p. 182) wrote: "The individual calls recollections to mind by relying on the frameworks of social memory. In other words, the various groups that compose society are capable at every moment of reconstructing their past."

In addition to that, in his book Halbwachs also conceived another term in a way that allows an interpretation that it is part of the recollection, namely reflection. This term is described as the initial trigger of the entire recollection process. He (1992, p. 183) elaborates on this point:

Recollections which have not been thought about for a long time are reproduced without change. But when reflection begins to operate, when instead of letting the past reoccur, we reconstruct it through an effort of reasoning, what happens is that we distort that past, because we wish to introduce greater coherence"

To this point, we find that recollection, reproduction, and reconstruction and reflection are terms with interchangeable meanings. From my perspective, reproduction, reconstruction and reflection are part of recollection. Etymologically, recollection is "the action or power of recalling to mind" (Definition of RECOLLECTION, n.d.). Respecting the definition, recalling something through recollection takes place after the mental process of reconstructing and reproducing the past. Both actions begin from reflection. Recollection is absent without those actions. This understanding regulates me to function the term recollection as to the primary term of this thesis.

Besides the brief etymological analysis, my conviction to pick up recollection also comes from the other two concerns. The first one concerns the fact that recollection is the first term that Halbwachs (1992, p. 37) used in his book to describe the process of recalling the memory, and it is also discoverable repeatedly throughout

the book for the same purpose. Secondly, I found that Sakaranaho (2011), in her brief review of Halbwachs' thoughts on collective memory, also identified recollection as one of the fundamental elements of Halbwachs' idea.

The act of recollection, which involves reflection, reconstruction, and reproduction, unquestionably materializes as the individual mental process. However, it does not mean that recollection is a purely individual process; it is socially driven concerning the collective framework of memory. Halbwach (1992, p. 40) explains: "Collective frameworks are, to the contrary, precisely the instruments used by the collective memory to reconstruct an image of the past, which is in accord, in each epoch, with the predominant thoughts of the society". He (1992:40) also states, "individuals always use social frameworks when they remember." Recollection materializes based on "a collective experience" (Halbwachs, 1992, p. 184). In fact, an individual is a place in which "memory of the group realizes and manifests itself in individual memories" (Halbwachs, 1992, p. 40).

Religious Traditions and Rites

Discussing religious traditions -verbal behaviors and rituals- is fundamental with respect to the concept of collective religious memory. Halbwach (1992, p. 40) suggests that collective religious memory manifests itself in religious traditions. In another word, religious tradition and rites are a preserving site of collective religious memory, which may function as an essential factor that allows recollection.

Religious tradition and rites contain two terms with interlinked meanings. It is urgent to explain, based on my understanding, the terms to disallow the bias during their use in this thesis. The theoretical understanding of both terms is supposed by referring to Halbwachs and Hervieu-Léger.

The first term, namely religious tradition, is a term that exhibits the role of tradition in the religious sphere. Hervieu-Léger (2000, p. 86) states that tradition is not only a way of thinking and behaving that comes from the past, but more than that. Tradition is something that contains the "transcendent authority of the past" (Halbwachs, 1992, p. 86), which continuously enables a social group to "constitute" a title of authority in the present (Halbwachs, 1992, p. 86). The significance of a tradition does not lie in the degree of its ancientness. However, it lies in the capability of the tradition to be malleable and to change, as Hervieu-Léger describes: "capable of incorporating even the innovations and reinterpretations demanded by the present"

(Hervieu-Léger, 2000, p. 87). In connection with that, she (Halbwachs, 1992, p. 87) states that "the degree of ancientness is an extra value of tradition." Continuity, according to Halbwachs (1992, p. 17), is the goal of the existence of tradition. Tradition in the present day is the result of "the permanent reprocessing of the data which a group or a society receives from its past" (Hervieu-Léger, 2000, p. 87). Thus, religious tradition is something with the features described above, which has its roots in the believers' interpretation of religious teachings, and has shaped specific ways of thinking and behaving.

A rite, as Hervieu-Léger explained, functions, in a certain sense, in a similar way to religious tradition. However, the continuity that rites tend to establish is the elemental religious experience. Hervieu-Léger (2000, p. 53) states: "...rites have as their function to perpetuate, commemorate, organize, communicate, transmit, propagate, perhaps reawaken - or keep alive - an elemental experience, in itself unbearable, ephemeral, ineffable and circumscribed, in short, to render them viable, durable, unforgettable and universal in time and space". In contrast to religious traditions, according to Halbwachs, rites entail a material form. The material form is recognizable from the combination of gestures, words, and liturgical objects, which manifest themselves in repeated activities. Rites are the most solid element of religion. Halbwachs states:

Rites consist of a body of gestures, words, and liturgical objects established in a material form. From this point of view, the sacred texts have a ritual character. They have not changed since the beginning. They are literally repeated during the ceremonies, and they are closely linked to the cult. The rite may be the most stable element of religion, since it is largely based on material operations which are constantly reproduced, and which are assured uniformity in time and in space by rituals and the priestly body (1992, p. 116).

Anamnesis is a term that Hervieu-Léger suggested as having the same meaning as religious rites. She (2000, p. 125) explained that it is not only limited to Christian traditions but also found in the religious practice of other religions, such as Judaism. The essence of anamnesis is recalling the past in which the religious founder lived as she describes:

The practice of anamnesis, of the recalling to memory of the past, is most often observed as a rite. And what characterizes a religious rite in relation to all other forms of social ritualization is that the regular repetition of a ritually set pattern of word and gesture exists in order to mark the passage of time (as well as the transience of each

individual life incorporated in the chain) with the recall of the foundational events that enabled the chain to form and/or affirm its power to persist through whatever vicissitudes have come, and will still come, to threaten it (2000, p. 125).

Collective Religious Memory and Language

In Halbwachs' (1992, pp. 43–45) perspective, language or verbal convention should not be disregarded in using the concept of collective memory in analyzing data regarding the practice of religious traditions or the collective religious memory. According to Hervieu-Léger (2000, p. 124), language, together with others such as structure and organization, is a site that accommodates religious collective memory (Hervieu-Léger, 2000, p. 124).

According to Halbwachs (1992b, p. 44), a circumstance in which language use is absent jeopardizes the connection between thought and memory. The circumstance may happen to someone with aphasia for a long time or someone who, for some reason, is forced to live in a foreign sphere for a long time. The absence of language for a long duration makes people gradually forget the essential concepts from their past memory due to the unavailability of conversation related to the memory. Illustrating this, Halbwachs (1992, pp. 43–44) gives the following example:

“A word heard or read by him is not accompanied by the feeling that he understands its sense; images of objects pass before his eyes without his being able to attach a name to them-to recognize their nature and role. Under certain circumstances he can no longer identify his thought with that of others or attain that form of social representation which is exemplified by a notion, a scheme, or a symbol of a gesture or of a thing. Contact between his thought and the collective memory becomes interrupted at a certain number of detailed points”

He (1992, p. 173) stated that language is a precondition of collective memory in another explanation. It also functions as an instrument through which humans are enabled to express their memory. Regarding the connection between language and memory, Halbwachs states (1992, p. 45):

“Hence verbal conventions constitute what is at the same time the most elementary and the most stable framework of collective memory. This framework is however rather slack, since it fails to encompass all memories that are even slightly complex and since it retains only isolated details and discontinuous elements of our representations”

However, according to Hervieu-Léger, there is a particular situation in which something so-called glossolalia appears. In contrast to language, which entails meaning, glossolalia is the language of the tongue that delivers no meaning. It serves as a means of religious expression, which typically appears in certain rituals. Although without meaning, just like the language, glossolalia assists believers in recollecting their collective religious memory. Hervieu-Léger wrote (2000, p. 59):

Glossolalia, defined by Samarin as ‘a phonologically structured human expression without meaning, which the speaker takes to be a real language but which in fact bears no resemblance to any language living or dead’, is not a vehicle for communication but for expression. The content, Samarin emphasizes, is of little importance: glossolalia finds its meaning not in what is said, but in the very fact of speaking and responding, in this form, to an immediate experience of great emotional intensity. In the emotive response . . . there is a general sensation of the presence of the divine, profound joy and inward well-being which finds the means of expressing itself.’

Talking about glossolalia, a common practice of Pentecostalism would also lead to discussing xenolalia, which refers to speaking with an unlearned language without knowing the meaning. Some works implied that xenolalia is a religious practice and containing some extent of spiritual value (Cartledge, 2012; King & Selvendran, 2019). From my perspective, it is easy to understand xenolalia relates to spirituality. On the contrary, it is mostly hard to understand the point of why people should consciously invest their time to speak in unlearned language for any secular reasons. Regarding the practice of glossolalia Cartledge (2012, pp. 1–2) writes:

The earliest Pentecostals believed that glossolalia was xenolalia and that individuals had received such a gift in order to conduct evangelism in the foreign mission field. Unfortunately, this belief was proven false and many missionaries failed to speak the language sufficiently to communicate the gospel. This led Pentecostals to modify their belief that tongues speech was an evangelistic language and instead to focus on the sign and prayer function of glossolalia.

Observing the narrative above, I tend to view that the difference between glossolalia and xenolalia lies in one, which is the unlearned language. If an utterance is recognizable as coming from an unlearned language, then it is categorized as xenolalia. When people fail to learn an unlearned language, and it completely becomes an unlearned language, as experienced by the Pentecostals, then xenolalia is

considered glossolalia. I tend to say that the problem between the two lies in language comprehension. As long as an utterance is uttered without an understanding and exists as a religious practice, it can be considered glossolalia. The conclusion is in line with Cartlidge's words at the beginning of his writings: "However, many commentators on tongues speech now tend to use glossolalia as the most basic term for the phenomenon, and when they wish to construe the linguistic nature of the speech as real unlearned human languages then they use the term xenolalia as a further descriptor"

Although glossolalia is something outside of language, I see that it is necessary to discuss their similarities in two respects. They contain the patterns of phones, and they are an inseparable aspect of some kinds of religious rites.

Memory Within Islamic Tradition

Before going any further, a brief explanation of the term Islamic tradition in this context is essential. It aims to refer to the primary Islamic inventories in which memory is presented implicitly and explicitly. It involves fundamental writing documents within the Islamic tradition, including Islamic sacred texts and classical Islamic works. Hence, some explanation is theological as I cited some Qur'anic verses and Hadith, which is a record of the Prophet's acts and actions that could be perceivably delivering the basic concept of memory. After exploring those Islamic sacred texts, I then explore the thought of Ibn Khaldun (1132-1406), a most prominent classical Islamic scholar in the field of sociology, within his influential work: *The Muqaddima* (Prologomena).

As this chapter aims to explain, memory is firmly attached to the Islamic tradition. Concerning it, Islam is similar to Christianity which, in the explanation of Hervieu-Léger is a religion in which memory is crucial for the identity of believers.

Islamic Myth and Memories (2014) is a collection of articles that discuss the role of memory in the life of the present umma, another name for Muslim society, in the era of globalization, especially about the existence of myths. Myths, which refer to specific past figures and eras that Muslim preserve in their memory, are essential in shaping, maintaining, and reviving their religious identity in the present contemporary era. Unfortunately, an explanation of the roots of Muslim interaction with memory and how memory is discussed within the Muslim scientific tradition is absent from the book.

Knowing Arabic words for memory is a fundamental requirement before further talking about memory in Islamic tradition, as it leads us to deal with Arabic written references. Consideration to pick up an Arabic word that is perceivable as the translation of the word of memory starts from a comprehensive etymological understanding of the word of memory. The understanding allows a conscious and responsible nomination of the perceivable equivalent Arabic word for memory by which talking about memory in Islamic tradition gets its primary stepstone.

Etymological Perspective

Etymologically, my understanding of the meaning of memory in English is mainly based on a comprehensive explanation by Meriam Webster. The word memory is a noun with reference to meanings as explained above:

“the power of process of reproducing and recalling what has been learned and retained, especially through associative mechanism.”

“the store of things learned and retained from an organism’s activity or experience as evidenced by modification of structure or behavior or by recall and recognition.”

“commemorative remembrance”

“The fact or condition of being remembered”

“a particular act of recall or recollection”

“An image or impression of one that is remembered”

“the time within which past events can be or are remembered”

“a capacity for showing effects as the result of past treatment or for returning to a former condition-used especially of a material”

“A device (such as a chip) or a component of an electronic device (such as a computer or smartphone) in which information can be inserted and stored and from which may be extracted when wanted”

“capacity for storing information”

“a capacity for showing effects as the result of past treatment or for returning to a former condition-used especially of a material”

Two common meanings could be extracted after all the etymological explanations were considered. Memory is substantially (1) information about the past and (2) cognitive ability to store and retrieve that information, both through the learning process and experience. These two basic meanings show that memory is

always related to the past. Past exists as memory after the human effort to make it remain relevant to the present condition. Without relevance to the present condition, it will not be a memory.

The meanings that the word memory refers could fit the word *zikr* (ذكر). According to Ibn Manzur (1981), the word means (1) keeping a thing [in mind] so that you can remember or recall it, (2) Something that your tongue practice or mention frequently, (3) practicing or mentioning something with your tongue frequently, (4) to learn. The verb of *zikr* is *z-k-r* (ذكر). This word may be derived into many words in Arabic by establishing its three original consonants: *z-k-r*. Since they are derived from the same root of words, all meanings, theoretically, should also connect to at least the three primary meanings.

Zikr also conveys many contextual meanings such as the Qur'an, Islamic prayer, a glorious thing, a well-known thing (Manzhur, 1981, p. 1508). The relationship between those words with the basic meanings of *zikr* (memory) is apparent. One of the ultimate aims of the Qur'an and prayer is to guide Muslims always to remember God or be mindful of God. Muslims also believe that their Qur'an and Islamic rituals, also called *zikr*, have come from the era of Prophet Muhammad in the original form of practice. There are well-known glorious things in Islamic tradition, and it is perfectly preserved within Muslim society in the form of memory and tradition.

Another word that is derived from *zikr*-which means warning (Manzhur, 1981, pp. 1508–1509). It could be stated that in the logic of the Arabic word, to warn someone is to remind him to stay away from things that may harm him/her. In this sense, to remind is to make someone remember something. Muslims believe that one of the Qur'an's functions is providing warnings on things that may endanger their lives.

The word *zikr*, in specific contexts, works as an adjective. The word, in this state, refers to “a glorious thing” and “a well-known thing.” (Manzhur, 1981, p. 1509). Another derivation of the word *zikr*, namely *muzakkir*, conveys the opposite meaning: something terrible. When the word is used together with another word, which is *yaum* (day); *yaum muzakkir*, the meaning the phrase conveys is a hard day, a scary period, or wartime. The relationship of meaning here with the primary meaning is also obvious. Dramatic events in the past, whether bad or good, usually remain in the human memory.

To conclude, the Arabic word for memory is *zikr*, and it may derive from many words whose meanings are connected to each another. This point is essential as the entering gate to explore the notion of memory within the Islamic tradition, which -as I previously explained- will refer to three primary written sources: Qur'an, Hadith, and classical Islamic references.

The Perspective from Qur'an and Hadith

The word *zikr*, which means memory, is mentioned within the Qur'an 256 times², covering most of its meanings. The first Qur'anic verse that uses the word is Al-Baqarah (the Cow): 40, which is translated as follows: Children of Israel, remember how I blessed you. Honor your pledge to me and I will honor My pledge to you: I am the One you should fear" (Haleem, 2005, p. 7).

The word "remember" is the translation of the word *zikr* (memory) in its verb form: *أذكروا*. God reminds, through the verse, the Children of Israel to always remember all blessings that He offered to them, aiming to remind them to express their gratitude to Him by obeying Him.

It is also found in the *Al-Baqarah* (the Cow): 114, which is translated as follows:

"Who could be more wicked than those who prohibit the mention of God's name in His places of worship and strive to have them deserted? Such people should not enter them without fear: there is disgrace for them in this world and painful punishment in the Hereafter" (Haleem, 2005, p. 14).

The word "mention" is translated from another verb version of *zikr*, which is *yazkuru* (يذكرون). From the perspective of Arabic derivation rules, the word *يذكرون* and the word *أذكروا* are the verbs with a different purpose. The first one is a past tense form of a verb, and another one is the imperative form.

In another translated verse, which is Tha ha: 14, it said: I am God; there is no god but Me, so worship Me and keep up the prayer so that you remember Me. (Haleem, 2005, p. 196). The word "remember" is also translated from the word *zikr*. The verse tells the believers that performing rituals (worshiping God and keeping up the prayer) is the way that they can always remember God.

If we agree that memory is to keep something in mind, memory within Qur'an is not always explicitly stated by using the word *zikr*. It is also implicitly embedded

² Searching feature of Quran app by Quran.com is used to get the number.

within one of what Islamic scholars term *qasas al-Qur'an* or the Qur'anic stories. According to scholars, Telling stories is one of the Qur'anic methods of delivering its message to readers. Qur'anic stories involve many prominent figures such as Abraham, Joseph, Moses, and Jesus. It also tells stories about anonymous people or groups, such as companions of the cave (seven sleepers). It is also clear that the stories convey and deliver memories to believers. Qur'anic stories eternalize specific names and events eternal within the mind of many believers.

Among Qur'anic stories that inspire believers is the story of Abraham with his son Ismael. Events surrounding their lives in an empty place called Mecca have made Abraham and Ismael being most known figures among Muslims. Annually hajj (pilgrimage) ritual is the "anamnesis" of their activities in Mecca. Throwing stones at some pillars in Mecca during the hajj emanates from when Abraham did the same thing to the devil that wanted to persuade him to disobey God's command, as Qur'anic stories tell the readers.

Hadith, which is the record of the prophet's sayings and acts, is another sacred text in which the use of the word memory is found. The word (*zikr*) has more to do with the suggestion always to remember God. For instances:

Do not indulge in an excessive talk except when remembering Allah. Excessive talk without the remembrance of Allah is hardens the heart; and those who are the farthest from Allah are those whose hearts are hard."

Another instance is:

"When Allah desires good for a ruler, He appoints for him a sincere adviser who will remind him if he forgets and helps him if he remembers. When Allah wishes for him the contrary, He appoints for him a bad adviser who will not remind him if he forgets, nor will he help him if he remembers."

The word "remembering" is translated from the Arabic word *zikr*, which could also be translated to English as memory.

After exploring the use of the word memory in the Qur'an and Hadith, it is clear that remembering (and reminding) is one of the fundamental purposes of Islam. To some extent, the way the texts use the word is casual, making it not too relevant to the concept of memory as Halbwachs and Hervieu-L  ger describe. However, it is not the case by concerning that the word appears in sacred texts which have been the primary reference for Muslims for more than 1400 years, counting from AD 610 when, according to Muslim belief, Prophet Muhammad declared for the first time that God

revealed the Qur'an through himself. These divine words have been the main inspiration for the emergence of believers' understanding of the urgency of remembering their religious identity. If something ancient like that has survived until modern times, then it is a sign of the existence of memory and tradition as described in the conceptions of Halbwachs and Hervieu-Léger.

Ibn Khaldun's Perspective

Ibn Khaldun (1132-1406) is a name that comes first to mind when exploring the talk about memory in Islamic scholarly tradition. The Muqqadima (Prologomena) is his notable work that Irwin (2018, p. x) describes "a lengthy theoretical consideration of the laws of history as well as a general survey of Islamic societies and their arts and sciences". His work, mainly The Muqqadima, has influenced many global scholarly efforts until our contemporary.

Ibn Khaldun mentions in many parts of the Muqaddima about memory and tradition. Unlike the Qur'an, zikr, Ibn Khaldun uses another term for memory: hafizah (Ibn Khaldun, 2003, p. 208). This part will cite some quotes in which Ibn Khaldun explained his thought about memory and tradition in the context that part intends to discuss.

According to Ibn Khaldun, the existence of memory starts from human interaction that produces perception and imagination. He acknowledges the role of human brain behind the process. He wrote in Arabic, and followed by its English translation:

Tsumma yua'ddihi hiss al-mushtarik ila al-khayali, wa hiya quwwatun tumassilu al-shay'a al mahmusa fi al-nafsi, kama huwa mujarradun 'an al-mawadi al-kharjah faqat. Wa alatun hataini fi tasrifiha: al-batnu al-awwalu min al-dima-i. Muqaddamuhi li al-ula wa mu'akkharuhu li al-sani. (Ibn Khaldun, 2003, p. 208).

(The common-sense transfers (the perceptions) to the imagination, which is the power that pictures an object of sensual perception in the soul, as it is, abstracted from all external matter. The organ for the activity of these two powers (common sense and imagination) is the first cavity of the brain. The front part of that cavity is for the common sense, and the back part for imagination) (Khaldun, 2015, p. 143).

In this regard, memory functions as the storage of human perception and imagination. Both determines human individualities which I believe is human personal identity. Memory will allow human recall their perception and imagination in certain

time when human think needs them. He explains in Arabic, and followed by its English translation:

Tsumma yurqa al-khayalu ila al-wahimah wa al-hafizah. Fa al-wahimah li idraki al-ma'ani al-muta'alliqah bi al-shakhsiyyah...wa al hafizah li ida'I al-mudrikat kulliha mutakhalliyah, wa hiya ka al-khizanah tahfuzuha lil waqti al-haajahi ilaiha (Ibn Khaldun 2003:208)

Imagination leads up to the estimative power, and the estimative power serves for perceiving ideas that refer to individualities... the power of memory serves as a repository for all objects of perception, whether they are imagined or not. It is like a storehouse that preserves the for the time when they are needed. (Khaldun, 2015, p. 143).

Ibn Khaldun's explanation implies that memory is the human mental storage of past experiences, and it determines human identity, which shapes the way humans think and responds to reality. Such memory ability relies on the human capacity to imagine, which, according to Ibn Khaldun, results from the interaction between human perception and common sense. The explanation implies that human identity is collectively constructed through social interaction, it is well-preserved in memory, and human body is the locus of memory and identity.

According Ibn Khaldun political power could be a good analogy for identity. The analogy came from his observation on how family of rulers maintain their power. which also means preserving their identity as rulers. For them, tradition guarantees that power can be maintained and passed down from generation to generation. The gradual loss of power after several generations of rulers results from the latest generation's inability to comprehend the meaning behind their family tradition. The inability causes losing loyalty to tradition, leading them to fail to preserve it. Such loyalty has guaranteed their family's power. In the context of the ruling family, tradition is an instrument for maintaining power.

Therefore, if tradition (al-taqlid) can maintain power, according to Ibn Khaldun, then -logically- tradition also maintains identity. Tradition functions as a site in which memory is preserved and restored. In addition, Ibn Khaldun stated that following the tradition is a natural human instinct. Ibn Khaldun wrote in Arabic, following by its English translation:

Tsumma inna nihayati fi arab'ati aba', wa zalika anna baniya al-mujiddi 'alimun bima 'anahu fi bana'ih, wa muhafazun al al-khilali allati hiya asbabu kaunihi wa baqaihi, wa ibnuhu min ba'dihi mubasyirun li abihi, faqad sami'a minhu zalika wa akhzu anhu illa

annahu muqassirun fi zalika taqdir al-sami'i bi al-syai'in 'an al-ma'any. Iza ja'a tsalitsun kana hazzuhu al-iqtifa'u wa al-taqalidu khasahatan faqassara 'an al-tsani taqdir al-muqallidi 'ani al-mujtahid. (Ibn Khaldun, 2003, p. 268).

It reaches its end in a single family within four successive generations. This is as follows: The builder of the family's glory knows what it cost him to do the work, and he keeps the qualities that created his glory and made it last. The son who comes after him had personal contact with his father and thus learned those things from him. However, he is inferior to him in this respect, inasmuch as a person who learns things through study is inferior to a person who knows them from practical application. The third generation must be content with imitation and, in particular, with reliance upon tradition. This member is inferior to him of the second generation, inasmuch as a person who relies upon tradition is inferior to a person who exercises independent judgment. (Khaldun, 2015, p. 215).

Respecting the explanation, I may suggest that the discussion of identity has been scholarly concerned before Halbwach and Hervieu-Léger successfully formulated and organized their thought on it and delivered it to us.

I have identified the utility in harnessing the concept of collective religious memory as a theoretical framework in which to analyze my research data. The combination of Halbwachs and Hervieu-Léger is easily meshed together in order to establish a customized theoretical framework. Unlike the use made of it by previous researchers, I use this theoretical framework to examine a new social milieu: religious phenomena among Minangkabau people who live in West Sumatra of Indonesia. This theoretical framework involves several essential features, namely the definition of collective memory, collective religious memory and the process of recollection, religious tradition and rite, and how collective religious memory relates to language.

Collective memory is a concept that conceives how human efforts to remember is characteristically materializing within social contexts and works to strengthen identity. Collective religious memory is a manifestation of collective memory in the religious sphere, which maintains the believers' religious identity and consequently maintains the existence of religion. The act of recollection is the human attempt to functionally use memory that comes from the past in a way that is relevant within the present day. It involves some mental processes which are: reflection, reconstruction, and reproduction. Concerning the religious sphere, religious tradition and rites are the manifestations of collective religious memory so that they become the object of recollection. In respect to this, language serves two fundamental functions: a site of

memory and a tool to access the memory. Like language, glossolalia may play an essential role since it shows some similarity to language.

Islam is a religion that has a strong relationship with memory. Exploration of the Qur'anic verses uncovers the use of hundreds of the words *zikr*, an Arabic word for memory, with various derivations within Qur'anic narratives. One of the Qur'anic features, namely the Qur'anic stories, also supports this conclusion because the stories preserve memory within the mind of believers on past figures and events. The records of prophet sayings, called *hadith*, also show several narratives that show the urgency of remembering for believers. The discussion of memory is also found in the Islamic scientific tradition, which in this case is in the work of Ibn Khaldun. For Ibn Khaldun, one of the most influential Muslim scholars, memory and tradition are essential to maintaining a certain order. It also means they are also essential in maintaining collective identity.

Identity, Attitudes and Motivation in Language Learning

Attitudes

Attitudes form and shape human behavior, such as how attitudes toward race may influence the way an employer to decide for hiring someone for a job (Albarracín et al., 2008). Besides shaping behavior at individual level, attitudes also shape human behavior at social level. Regarding this -the influence of attitudes in the formation of behavior in the social level- there is a contemporary case explained by Ajzen & Fishbein (2018, p. 6) regarding how people in the U.S decide to vote in last presidential election. At the U.S presidential election in 2016, Trump emerged as a candidate with sort of negative attitudes towards immigrants. His negative attitude was being recognized through his statements alongside the presidential campaign. Trump's core supporters who maintain a similar attitude massively supported the campaign, mainly through various internet platforms. The attitude shaped the social behavior in form of people decision to vote for Trump, although by all means not every single voter who vote for Trump were being encouraged by negative attitudes toward immigrants.

Discussing about attitude and behavior, will exactly involve another term which is the object of attitude. It is classified into two classification which are physical matters and behaviors (Ajzen et al., 2018; Albarracín et al., 2008). The first classification will include physical objects (i.e tourism objects and buildings); races, ethnics, or other social group (Semitic race, Malay ethnicity, Muslims community

or ummah), social institutions (i.e educational institutions or political parties), policies (i.e gun control, immigrant restrictions), and events or moments (i.e Black Tuesday or elections). While behavior as the subject of attitude is inseparable from the first. A news report (Chris Leadbeater, n.d.) about a case relates to Macchu Picchu in Peru is regarded as a good example that can be used to explain how the classification takes place in a real case. Visitors to Macchu Picchu can be considered as people who maintain a positive attitude toward an ancient historical object. Their attitude makes a social behavior in form of visiting the place. Given that Macchu Picchu is a vulnerable historical site, visiting it then being viewed as threat to the sustainability of the site. In this case, the view indicates that visiting Macchu Picchu have become the subject of attitude. Relating to this research Arabic is a physical subject of attitude. Attitudes toward Arabic shape behaviors in the learning of Arabic. Meanwhile the attitude toward learning Arabic is excluded from this discussion.

Previous explanations have an impression that attitude is responsible for various human behavior both in individual and social scale. However, attitude itself is not the ultimate cause of human behavior since it comes from something fundamental within a person. It means, like behavior, attitudes also have an origin. The origin of attitude is one of the most appealing topics that has sparked dynamic discussions among psychologists and sociologists since decades ago. The long-term scholarly discussions then being crystalized into two different perspectives of the origin of attitudes, which are individual perspective and social perspective.

Regarding the individual perspective Olson & Kendrick (2008) introduce what they refer to as the Tripartite Model. The Tripartite Model itself is their conclusion after reviewing scholarly publications on the origins of attitudes. This model includes three origins, which are (1) cognitive origins, (2) affective origins, and (3) behavioral origins.

Regarding the cognitive origins, an attitude to an object of attitude is viewed as an outcome of a rational cognitive processes. Cognitive origins including four theories, which are (1) Value Models, (2) Information Integration Theory, (3) Reception Yield Models, and (4) Cognitive Responses (Olson & Kendrick, 2008, pp. 113-115). The first theory, which is Expectancy-value, views that attitudes are formed after a cognitive process in which an individual makes judgments about an attitude object based on obtained information about the object. The judgment then generates belief and expectancy on the value of the attitude object. In this respect, attitude is

structured by the belief and expectancy. The second theory, which is information integration theory, views that attitude is formed after information on the attitude subject being cognitively processed to generate certain interpretation. The interpretation then being integrated to the existing belief. The integration establishes a new belief which forms an attitude. The last theory, which is reception yield models, viewed that attitude is formed after someone receive information on a subject of attitude then simply accept it. This kind of attitude is commonly happened when an individual has no prior information on a subject of attitude, such as when an interviewer does some adjustment after receiving information about interviewee through a curriculum vitae. The fourth, which is cognitive process, describes that attitude is formed from self-generated thoughts. This theory assumed that when an individual receive information about an attitude object, before attitude being formed after receiving information, individual would combine the newly received information with old existing information about any similar attitude object.

Meanwhile according to perspective of affective origins, attitude is originated from emotional responses that arise when individual interact with an object. There are at least three theories that affective nature of attitude; (1) Operant conditioning, (2) Classical Conditioning and (3) Mere Exposure (Olson & Kendrick, 2008, pp. 115–116). The first theory, which is the operant conditioning, theorized that attitude is generated from individual emotional frequencies that arise during interaction with the object of attitude. When positive emotional responses dominate the interaction, the positive attitude is generated and vice versa. The second theory, which is classical conditioning, theorized that when an individual interacts with a neutral object, which is an object of attitude the individual never interacts before, the individual tends to refer to other similar subjects that he/she ever interacted before. In a state when attitude to the referred object is positive, then attitude toward the new object would be positive. Negative attitude toward the referred object forms the negative attitude toward the new object. The last theory -mere exposure- states that frequency of interaction toward an object determines the attitude toward the object, whether positive or negative. The more familiar an individual is to an object, the more positive the attitude toward the object. Likewise, the more unfamiliar the individual is toward an object, the less positive their attitude toward it.

The last perspective on the Tripartite Model after cognitive model and affective model is the behavioral origins. According to this model or perspective, self-

perception on past behavior is that will be referred by individual concerning his/her attitudes, whether it is positive or negative, in a state the individual has no anything that may activate their cognitive and affective potential. To illustrate how the process works, Olson & Kendrick wrote:

I may not have any solid beliefs about the benefits of safe sex, nor does the idea of safe sex practices elicit any emotion. However, I may recall that I have engaged in safe sex practices such as condom use, and I therefore conclude that I must have a positive attitude toward safe sex — why else would I have behaved so? (2008, p. 117).

Based on these illustrations, it appears that an individual does not have information that he/she can completely trust to determine attitudes towards a particular issue. Up to this moment, he/she also does not recognize the emotional aspects that he/she is able to obtain from safe-sex activities, which may form an attitude. But in the end, the individual show a positive attitude toward the safe sex since he/she was once involved in a safe sex which is a past behavior.

I tend to see the previous explanation fully talks about the mechanism of attitude formation within individual level. However, it should be underlined that everyone has a social identity because they live in certain social groups —a society or a community—where values, norms and beliefs (ideological systems) are passed down from generation to generation. Even though every individual in the group are unique, still the discourse that occurs in a social group greatly contributes to the way a person processes his/her cognitive and affective domain. For example, a media report (Hewson, n.d.) illustrated that the issue of sex before marriage has become a controversial issue in Indonesia. The report said that some Indonesian youths show their acceptance towards sex before marriage since they consider it as a personal matter. However, many consider that it should be avoided concerning religious and cultural value. At the same time in Ireland, another report (Donnellan, n.d.) that addressed a same issue, showed that sex before marriage has not been as controversial as in Indonesia. The way members of the two societies (Indonesia and Ireland) in seeing this issue is influenced by the social discourse that occurs in both places. Considering this, some experts suggest that social aspects ought to be a main consideration in attitude study. As stated by Smith & Hogg (2008, p. 338).

The main point we make is that attitudes are grounded in group memberships; thus, attitude research must consider more completely the way in which attitudes are socially formed, configured, and enacted. This is not to say that attitudes are not

cognitively represented by individual people: they are. Rather, we emphasize the way that attitudes are normative and embedded in wider representational and ideological systems attached to social groups and categories.

Talking about the formation of attitudes in respect to social identity, it is found that two points of view describe the process of attitudes formation, namely "Prototypes and Normative Attitudes" and "Depersonalization and Referent Informational Influences" (Smith & Hogg, 2008, pp. 340–341). Based on this point of view, attitudes toward Arabic among Muslims should be analyzed using social context, which is by considering their social identity as member of the Ummah. In this respect, attitude formation toward Arabic may fall into prototypes and normative attitudes or depersonalization and referent informational influence.

In the first type, humans are cognitive representations of a social group, (e.g, country, religion, ethnicity). Regarding this, Hogg (2005) stated that existing prototypes provide similarities within groups and difference between groups. Prototypes do not only illustrate different categories, but also function to evaluate individuals and prescribing membership-related attitudes. Prototypes determine how individuals ought to behave as group members, what attitudes they ought to hold, and so forth. Prototypes form and shape the nature of social groups and define the characteristics and uniqueness of a group which make it different from other groups. In this sense, prototypes are considered as norms; that is, "because a particular perception, behavior, or attitude is shared within a group, it is normative of that particular group" (Sherif, 1936; Turner, 1991). Contextually speaking, positive attitude toward Arabic among Muslim -as being indicated in the previously reviewed studies and research- is considered as "prototype" since it comes from belief that has naturally shared within Ummah since the first time Qur'an was revealed in 6th CE.

Meanwhile, "Depersonalization and referent informational influence" which is the second type is closely related to the concept of self-categorization and depersonalization. When individuals define themselves as members of a group, the individual internalizes group attributes and behaves in line with group norms. It explains the process of internalizing in-group normative attitudes as own attitudes. When people define themselves as members of a group and notice that the group is essential for them, then occurs an individual assimilation process into the group prototype. The norms, stereotypes, attitudes, and other features that are commonly ascribed to the social group become internalized; they become subjectively

interchangeable with personal norms, stereotypes, and attitudes, influencing thoughts and guiding actions (Smith & Hogg, 2008, pp. 340–341). Referent informational influence forms attitudes through a process in which individual members conform norms of a social group. These norms are obtained from shared information among group members. It should be underlined, the willingness to refer to the information is not because individuals are being influenced by other individuals within group, but because they realize themselves as group members. Using this perspective, Muslims students' attitudes towards Arabic were formed since they accepted one of the norms that emerged in the Ummah, namely respecting Arabic as the only sacred language of Islam. This norm is an inseparable part of Muslim belief that the Qur'an is God revelation.

Motivation

Based on the previous explanation, I conclude that social identity forms an attitude towards the subject of attitude, whether it is a physical object or a non-physical object. Muslims attitude towards Arabic is formed and shaped by their social identity as a member of the Ummah. Ummah, like other social groups, has ideological aspects that manifest in the form of norms and beliefs. When an individual cognitively and affectively sees himself as part of the ummah, he will accept norms that have become part of group identity, which may come through the process described by "prototype-normative attitudes" or the process of "Depersonalization and referent informational influence". Attitudes towards Arabic, then, can be transformed into social behavior in the form of learning Arabic activities, as seen in the results of several studies that I have reviewed in the previous chapter. Motivation is an important aspect that makes attitudes more available to be observed.

Fazio's (1990) review on studies about relationship between attitudes and behavior showed that there are three models that may be used to explain how a behavior forms attitudes, namely (1) "Spontaneous Processing Model of the Attitude-Behavior Relation", (2) "Deliberative Processing Model of the Attitude-Behavior", and (3) "Integrative model". The first model, which is spontaneous processing model, is conceptualized based on an assumption that not all social behavior is deliberative. Even this model viewed that, as Fazio cited from work of Langer (1978), the behavior is spontaneous. Many daily observed social behaviors fall into this category. The model theorized that the social behavior of an individual is largely a function of his/her

perception in the immediate situation in which the attitude object is encountered. Latane and Darley's, as cited by Fazio's (1990), analysis on observer intervention in a state of emergency produced an excellent illustration of the importance of the human perception on an ongoing event in forming spontaneous behavior. As individuals consider a situation as an emergency, he/she will intervene in a critical step. For example, the failure to recognize smoke-like vapors as an indicant of fire decreased the possibility that a subject would report the event to the experimenter. Likewise, failing to recognize a person following a crash as cries of anguish from a real victim decreased the possibility that an observer would intervene. Regarding this, Fazio wrote;

“Thus, when an individual encounter an attitude object, his/her attitude is able to guide perceptions of the object in the immediate situation. These immediate perceptions, congruent as they are with one's attitude, can then prompt attitudinally consistent behavior. According to the spontaneous processing model, whether such differential perceptions occur depends on whether the individuals' attitudes are activated from memory”

In contrary to the previous model, deliberative processing model of the attitude-behavior describes that a behavior derived from unspontaneous deliberative processes. For attitude to be actualized as behavior, an individual should undergo a process in which he considers beliefs and norms for actualizing an attitude into behavior. This consideration leads an individual to think and consider, whether the intended behavior is appropriate or not with beliefs and norms. The best-known assumption underlying this model is the one written by Ajzen and Fishbein. They, as cited by Fazio (1990, p. 89) wrote;

Generally speaking, the theory is based on the assumption that human beings are usually quite rational and make systematic use of the information available to them. We do not subscribe to the view that human social behavior is controlled by unconscious motives or overpowering desires, nor do we believe that it can be characterized as capricious or thoughtless. We argue that people consider the implications of their actions before they decide to engage or not engage in a given behavior. For this reason we refer to our approach as “a theory of reasoned action” . . . We make the assumption that most actions of social relevance are under volitional control and. consistent with this assumption, our theory views a person's intention to perform (or to not perform) a behavior as the immediate determinant of the action.

After an individual considers beliefs and norms, he/she enters a stage called "behavioral intention". This behavioral intention is where a behavior is stemmed.

The integrative model, which is the third model, is a model proposed by Fazio (1990, pp. 91–96) himself. The model was introduced as MODE (Motivation, Opportunity, and Determinants). The main idea is that in order to be manifested in the form of a behavior, an attitude relies on three aspects, namely motivation, opportunity, and determinants. The three-aspect is available to operate both in spontaneous and deliberative situations. This model views that motivation is one of the important aspects in actualizing an attitude into a behavior. A strong motivation leads to the activation of attitude. If motivation is strong, the attitude would be activated well. On the contrary, less attitude activation takes part as motivation or cognitive capacity is low.

If we look back at how Muslim students explain their motivation in learning Arabic, it can be recognized that their Arabic learning activity is a behavior that arises after their attitude toward the language. I tend to see that it is almost impossible to consider Arabic learning as a spontaneous act as illustrated in the first model. The second model is very likely to be used to explain the emergence of Arabic learning as behavior. Based on the second model, the student's decision to learn Arabic is a deliberative manner, starting from a cognitive process to consider whether Arabic learning is or not following norms and beliefs which are the basic aspects of attitude. When that consideration states that learning Arabic is in line with attitude, then intention to learn Arabic emerges. However, this in itself is not an adequate explanation of how an intention to learn Arabic is transformed into the activity of Arabic learning. The third model, the integrative model, seems the best equipped to explain how this happens.

CHAPTER 5

COLLECTIVE RELIGIOUS MEMORY AND ARABIC LEARNING IN MINANGKABAU TODAY

This analytical chapter will present an overview of the necessity of Arabic among research participants who come from the Minangkabau background and live within its social climate. As previously explained, Arabic-learning activities materialize within the unique Minangkabau Islamic sphere. The attempts take place in the framework of analysis of the ethnographic data which includes two fundamental activities: description and analysis.

It will include the concern of macro and micro spheres in which Arabic learning activities materialize. Macro spheres include Minangkabau cities' social conditions which are the result of a dynamic historical interaction between Islam and Minangkabau. Meanwhile, the micro spheres are the Arabic learning venues with all associated situational factors that relate to them. The analysis uses the theory of collective religious memory described in Chapter V.

The theory of collective religious memory suggested by Halbwachs (1950) and Hervieu-Léger (2000) is harnessed to analyze the interview data. It leads me to uncover that the distinctive position of Arabic among the Minangkabau is best understood by consideration of at least four aspects: religious rituals, religious authority, Qur'anic language, and identity or "Minangkabauness".

Research Participants: Young and Old Minangkabau Learners

Research participants come from two different groups. The first one is a group of people who learn Arabic and the other is a group of those who do not learn Arabic.

Arabic learners who participated in this research are 26 people. I have known some participants for a long time and have been involved, to some degree, in their Arabic learning activities. I met the rest of them following the recommendation from Arabic instructors and my friends that already know my research. Data that I collected from the participants already well known to me is generally identical to that I harvested from groups that I have just met during my research.

Participants who studied Arabic voluntarily had a very diverse profile in terms of age in my data sample. The youngest was 19 years old, and the oldest aged 79 years old, consisting of both males and females. They came from various occupational backgrounds, which typically do not require them to learn Arabic, such as professionals, farmers, government workers, retirees, teachers, and religious teachers. In the current context of West Sumatra and Indonesia, it should be noted that teaching religious subjects in schools does not require someone to master Arabic. In my research I've found that many people even regularly go to mosques to give religious speeches without themselves mastering Arabic, as some research data indicated and some research as well, such as by Edi, et al (2016) and Faisol et al (2019).

Including groups who do not study Arabic as research participants is based on a concern that Arabic is a highly familiar foreign language to the Minangkabau people, as Fanani and Efendi (1999) suggested. This familiarity, as the research explains, is due to a religious factor: Arabic is the language of the Qur'an and five-time Islamic daily prayer. Society's day-to-day engagement with Arabic indeed makes attitude toward the language, not only within those who develop motivation to learn it but also within those who do not learn it.

Most of them can be categorized as passionate religious devotees concerning their religious activities, such as engaging Islamic organizations, teaching the Qur'anic recitation, or regularly giving religious speeches in mosques. They are also classified into two subgroups, namely people I have known for a long time, and I have observed their activities, and those I have only recently met. Those groups also present a generally similar pattern of opinions regarding Arabic.

All participants are Minangkabau people who spend most of their lives in West Sumatra, the Minangkabau homeland. Theoretically speaking, interviewing those participants means capturing the present social condition of Minangkabau. Its present social circumstance, referring to the theory of collective memory by Halbwachs (1950), are shaped and influenced by their collective memory. The memory enables the community to recall past events and maintain their traditional treasures, not only for remembrance but also for forming and strengthening their social identity. As mentioned by many experts such as Norton (2013), identity determines how a person sees himself and the outer world and how to understand today's conditions. In other words, identity form and shape human thoughts, attitudes, and actions. The role of the individual in this dynamic is socially driven, as Halbwachs (1992) suggested.

Individuals indeed have unique personal memories, but collective memory drives how people interpret them. Since memory shape identity, it also means that collective identity transcends personal identity. Regarding that, participants thoughts that the interviews revealed is socially constructed. It comes from Minangkabau social condition and it -at the same time- describe the condition.

Not all participants who learn Arabic are subject to formal Islamic educational institutions. This profile is akin to Norton's research (2013), whose participants are not affiliated with any single formal educational institution. Norton's analysis tells us that these are immigrants who struggle, through learning a new language, to claim a new identity and assimilate into the social state of Canada, which is their new country. In this context, identity and cultural belonging play a significant role in learners' attitudes toward a foreign language and motivation to learn it.

Macro and Micro Sphere of Arabic Learning; A Thick Memory Space

Before going further to the analytical chapter which is about participants attitude toward Arabic and motivation to learn, it is important to provide an explanation regarding the social setting where they live and the places where they learn Arabic, which can be termed as the "macro and micro sphere of Arabic learning".

The explanation is essential for a deeper understanding of the dynamics behind the participants thought and action regarding the Arabic. The examination is based on a sense that social context influences thoughts and actions at the individual level, as many sociologists mention, including Becchio, Sartori, and Castiello (2010). It may allow the reader to obtain an idea and a mental picture of participants' attitude toward Arabic and their motivation of learning it and the extent to which social climate shapes their motivation and attitude toward what is so-called the sacred language of Islam.

In addition to explaining briefly the present Minangkabau socio-religious state, it is important to include its historical background. It may assist the reader in gaining a sufficient understanding that today's social circumstance does not come from an empty space but has a history that serves as the root.

Arabic Learning Spheres

The need to include the concept of the sphere in this work is realized after realizing the social sphere's role in influencing human thought and action. Galligan (2006, p. 103) suggests that the social sphere can be understood as "an area of activity in which the participants share understanding and conventions about the activity, and

which influence and guide the way they engage in it." Thus, exploring the sphere in this context will provide a valuable instrument to allow for a richer meaning, especially related to participant motivation in learning Arabic.

In addition, the inclusion of the concept of the sphere in this work is the implementation of the thick description of culture, as Geertz (1973) suggested. Thick description demands a researcher to reveal participants' thoughts through interviews and incorporate an understanding of the social context that may illuminate their thoughts. In this respect, describing the sphere that may influence the participants' ideas and decision relating to Arabic is essential.

The "sphere" I have analyzed encompasses four major Minangkabau cities where I met participants: Padang, Padang Panjang, Bukittinggi, and Payakumbuh. Considering its immensity in terms of geographical area, I identify this as the "macro sphere" of Arabic learning in the context of my data sample. As a consequence of the existence of the macro sphere, the "microsphere" of Arabic learning is then identified as specific locations are related to Arabic learning, which in this research incorporate locations with vigorous religious nuance.

Macro Sphere of Arabic Learning

The social context here is described through the geographical situation and the population of the cities where I met the participants. This gives the reader an idea of what kind of city situation where Arabic learning takes place and how that situation contributes to the participants' attitudes (at least, as they are communicated through interviews) and motivations to learn Arabic.

I find Minangkabau cities, as the macro sphere of Arabic learning, have two striking attributes. The first, it has an intense religious nuance that allows the transfer and preservation of collective religious memory of the community. Secondly, the local aspect of collective religious memory. In this case, the memory not only relates to the universal Islamic rites and rituals, such as five-time prayer and Qur'anic recitation, but also connects to local history in which Islam gradually assimilated to the social scheme of the biggest matrilineal society worldly. The extent of the assimilation is Islam is accepted as the cultural identity of Minangkabau people: to become a Minangkabau person, one should have a Minangkabau mother and being Muslim as well.

Islamic religious nuance of Minangkabau cities where I met research participants can be identified by observing the existence of mosques, which is perceived as a robust indication of Islamic religiosity. Research by Wardak (2002) showed that a mosque is a center for maintaining the order of a Muslim community. A mosque allows Muslim community members to engage in conversation through various means, such as establishing Islamic education and meeting during congregation prayer, in which they preserve their social identity. On the other hand, Muslim status as the supermajority also strengthen the nuance. With this in mind, I will start my explanation orderly from Padang, Padang Panjang, Bukittinggi, and Payakumbuh.

Padang is the province's capital city, where the Muslim population overwhelms the demographic. As the biggest city in the western coastal area of Sumatra, the place is home to nearly one million residents, with Minangkabau people constituting most of the population, which is more than 90% in number (Badan Pusat Statistik Kota Padang, n.d.). According to the same source, other ethnic groups living in Padang are Nias, Chinese, Javanese, and Tamils.

The data inform that Muslims comprise most of the population, with a figure of more than 97% of residents, mostly Minangkabau people. Other religions are Catholic, Protestant, Buddhist, and Hindu, with 1.4%, 0.7%, 0.3%, and 0.1% adherents, respectively. There are over 1500 mosques, seven Protestant churches, five Catholic churches, and five monasteries. In 2019, there was one Hindu temple; however, referring to the latest data, the temple no longer exists.

Having 1500 mosques in Padang which has an area of about 693 km. Statistically, this means having two mosques in every 2 km sq. Most of the area consist of natural conservation zones and coastal waters, yet only about 45% of the area is available for the residential zone (Bappeda Kota Padang 2023), meaning that Padang has more than two mosques in every 2 km sq. Based on the observation, mosques are overwhelming the city, even in many places between mosques are separated by only a hundred meters distance.

Padang Panjang is a small city with only an area of 20.68 square km, equivalent to 0.05% of the province of West Sumatra (BPS Sumatera Barat, 2019). It is home to over sixty thousand people, mostly Minangkabau. According to the data, Islam is the religion of more than 59460 people or 98.87%. Other religions in Padang Panjang are Christianity, Catholicism, and Buddhism. The followers of these religions are 385

people (0.64%), 346 people (0.58%), and 45 people (0.07%), respectively. In 2021, there will be 114 mosques and 1 Catholic church. The data for 2019 shows that there are two Protestant churches. However, according to 2021 data, these churches are no longer available.

Bukittinggi is a small city with an area of 25 square km. The city is home to more than one hundred and thirty thousand people. Most of the population are adherents of Islam, which is 126,801 or equivalent to 97.38%. The rest are Christians, Catholics, Hindus, and Buddhists, the numbers of which are 2,111 people (0.16%), 1,140 people (0.87%), five people (0.003%), and 154 people (0.11%). In addition to the 198 mosques, other houses of worship belong to the Catholic church, the Protestant church, and the Vihara, each of which only has 1 unit.

The last city to describe is Payakumbuh. With an area of 80.43 square km, the city is home to 141,285 people. One hundred thirty-nine thousand six hundred forty-three people are adherents of Islam, or equivalent to 98.8%. Other religions in Payakumbuh are Christianity, Catholicism, Hinduism, and Buddhism. The number of followers of each religion is 846 people (0.59%), 678 people (0.46%), seven people (0.004%), and 111 people (0.07%). It has 460 mosques in it. Meanwhile, each Catholic, Protestant, and Buddhism have a place of worship (Jumlah Tempat Peribadatan Menurut Kabupaten/Kota Dan Agama (Unit), 2019-2021, 2021).

The data emphasize the Islamic religious nuance in those cities. Padang Panjang has about 5-6 mosques in every kilometer, and there are about eight mosques in every square km in Bukittinggi. Meanwhile, Payakumbuh is quite similar to Padang Panjang: every square km has 5 to 6 mosques. Referring back to Wardak (2002), as I cited before, it can be stated that Minangkabau cities have a thick Islamic influence. This circumstance, referring to Halbwachs and Hervieu-Léger, provides a supportive collective religious environment for memory preservation and transfer, in which Arabic, the Islamic sacred language, is a part.

The second aspect related to the sphere is the local historical root, which I previously explained. Islam was introduced to the Minangkabau world in about 17th CE by the native Minangkabau figures who returned to the homeland after traveling abroad. Harnessing their understanding of the Minangkabau social scheme, they successfully made the Minangkabau world accept Islam, specifically Sufistic Islam, as a formal religion replacing animism. It is the first wave of Minangkabau social transformation.

The main characteristic of this kind of Islam, as Gibb (1945, p. 24) stated, is a robust interest in self-purification, which makes it tends to neglect the social issue. However, in the late 18th CE, the Sufistic Islam of Minangkabau started to change their behavior. A group of Minangkabau Islamic devotees launched their campaign for implementing Islamic law to tackle some problems raised after common law inexistence. The Minangkabau world consists of nagaris (equally to small states) that agree to accept the matrilineal system that makes up Minangkabau culture. However, outside the common agreement, every Nagari makes their law system independently.

In many cases, it caused a problem when a dispute between two parties from different nagaris happened: everyone tended to encourage their nagari's law as the reference. To solve this issue, Islamic devotees opened the Islamic law class to introduce Islamic law to society. Secondly, many inter-Nagari traders were subjected to robbery without getting any justice. To tackle the problem, they established a group whose task was to attack and eliminate bandits. According to historians, it raised Minangkabau awareness of Islam as a religion that not only discusses about individual-self but also about social life.

The second phase of Minangkabau social transformation led to the third phase, which began at the beginning of the 1800s. A Minangkabau civil war took place after some Minangkabau Islamic devotees group efforts from the youth group to eliminate gambling and opium use. They received a severe reaction from many traditional leaders who protected the practice and obtained financial advantage from it. The physical escalation then expanded into the fight between two radical ideas: the comprehensive implementation of Islamic law and the total preservation of Minangkabau traditional law. However, after nearly two decades of disputes, the two groups agreed to a common agreement that the acceptance of Islamic law in Minangkabau takes place without having to abandon the Minangkabau adat (traditional law and custom). This agreement latterly is well-known through Minangkabau local aphorism: *adat basandi syara', syara' basandi kitabullah* (adat is based on sharia, sharia is based on the book of God). The third phase provides a strong foundation for Islam to be a part of the Minangkabau cultural identity.

Another dramatic dynamic between Minangkabau society and Islam happened at the beginning of the 20th CE. A young group of Minangkabau Islamic devotees started to argue about the practice of Sufism Islam in Minangkabau. In their view, the practice is identical to blind obedience, superstition, and heresy, which (1) contradicts

the essence of Islamic values and (2) fails to make the Minangkabau people ready to deal with the recent and future challenges. The movement managed to make Minangkabau the center of the Islamic reformist movement in the region. As a result of the situation, the reformist Islamic understanding and practice in Minangkabau have become one of a mainstream Islamic understanding in Minangkabau today.

Regarding the historical dynamic between Minangkabau and Islam, the cities where I met participants played a vital role. Bukittinggi and Payakumbuh, for instance, were at the center of the social dynamic in the second phase of Islam in Minangkabau. Padang Panjang was the center of the reformist movement at the beginning of the 20th CE. As the capital city since Dutch colonialization, Padang was also a contestation field between Minangkabau Islamic traditionalist group and the Islamic reformists' group. As a result of the historical dynamics, Minangkabau has many religious figures that are well-known among the Minangkabau people, becoming part of their collective memory.

To conclude, the macro sphere of Minangkabau has a striking religious nuance that comes from the existence of many mosques and the Muslims' status as the super majority in West Sumatra. From the perspective of collective religious memory, this kind of situation provides a wide opportunity for social conversation and engagement in which collective Islamic religious memory is recalled. On the other hand, it also comes from historical dynamics between Islam and Minangkabau people that give them a local historical Islamic collective memory.

Micro Sphere of Arabic Learning

The term micro sphere here refers to the learning locations or places in which Arabic learning activities are conducted. In this research, I found learning venues have a robust religious nuance. Most learning locations take place in mosques.

In Padang, I found three groups of learning Arabic, and all learning activities situate in mosques or a facility related to a mosque. Taqwa Mosque is the first learning place. The mosque, owned by Muhammadiyah, one of Indonesia's biggest Islamic organizations, establishes Arabic learning activities every weekend in the morning. The management transformed an office mosque to be a classroom. The tables in the room are organized in a u-shape, and the table for the teacher is placed in the center front of the classroom.

The second learning venue in Padang takes place in Masjid Mujahidin. Participants come three times a week every evening to learn Arabic. They make the additional prayer hall on the ground level of the mosque a “classroom.” There are no chairs and tables as it is regularly found in a classroom. Participants and teachers simply sit on the mosque carpet to learn Arabic, making a circle, while a whiteboard is placed near them. Teachers are required to make more of an effort to write a lesson on the whiteboard since they need to stand up from sitting on the floor. Mosque management provides floor desks to ease participants to take notes during learning. Learning usually takes two hours, starting after the isha prayer and finishing at 10 pm.

The third learning location in Padang takes place in a learning building that was built using funding from a mosque, namely Nurul Iman. However, a learning classroom is unlike a regular classroom. Participants learn in that facility like participants who learn Arabic in Masjid Mujahidin. Learning participants come to the facility to learn Arabic every Sunday morning, from 7 am until 8 am.

Most learning locations in Padang Panjang, Bukittinggi, and Payakumbuh also take place in mosques. The way they arrange the learning is typical: sitting on the floor. In Padang Panjang, they made a little circle in the prayer hall; everyone brought their Arabic books. It is the only facility that supports learning activities. In Bukittinggi, they also sit on the floor making lines, with the teacher sitting in front. There is a whiteboard that is ready to be used if needed. In Payakumbuh, learning also takes place in a mosque, with participants sitting on the prayer hall floor. They have a copy of the Qur'an with them while the teacher explains its language aspect by standing at the mosque pulpit.

I found two learning locations in Payakumbuh situated completely outside mosques. The first one is an Arabic course established in a two-floor shophouse that functions as an office of a travel agency that focuses on umrah trips to Mecca, Saudi Arabia. Learning Arabic takes place on the second floor, and only one room exists. Armchairs, a whiteboard, and a teacher's desk are available inside the room. Arabic learners come there three days a week, from four to six in the evening, to learn Arabic. All of them are women of various ages, from the beginning of twenty to fifty.

Another learning location for Arabic is an educational institution: Ma'had al Fath: an Arabic name that means the College of Glory. It is hard to recognize it through a glimpse since it runs its activities in an ordinary rented wooden house. Rooms inside the house function as classrooms, providing each room with a whiteboard and several

floor desks to make learning activities possible. The students sit on the carpeted floor. In this kind of facility, the students learn Arabic and Islamic studies from 8 am to 12 pm from Monday to Friday. It creates an unusual learning condition because the house is not designed to function as a learning facility; however, they have become accustomed to the environment.

Arabic Learning Sphere as a Thick Memory Place

The term “Thick Memory Places” is inspired by Geertz’s (1979) term of thick description of culture. The word “thick” refers to density, deepness, and richness. Based on the idea, a place with a dense, deep, and rich symbol that functions as the anchor of memory, which allows everyone to recall the tradition and history, comes with this term: a thick memory place.

The above descriptions and explanation show that Arabic-learning activities materialize within the unique Minangkabau Islamic sphere and climate. West Sumatran cities, which are the macro spheres of Arabic learning, are home to Minangkabau, whose Islam is their religious identity and an integral part of their ethnic identity. Minangkabau is among the region’s most devoted ethnic groups to Islam (Hadler 2008a; Kato 1982; Simon 2014). Their sphere of life results from an intense and dynamic historical relation with Islam, as I explained in the previous chapter. I have summarized the history of the unique transformational process of Minangkabau from an animistic community to a Muslim umma who accepts Islam as a religious and ethnic identity while still being able to preserve their matrilineal culture. The influence of Islam based on the Minangkabau interpretation is deeply felt and inherited. It affects all aspects of the life of the Minangkabau community, even though the degree of influence on aspects of their life varies.

These cities, with distinctive historical and social backgrounds, make themselves thick memory spaces. Religious schools are ubiquitous; even students in public non-madrasah schools study the subject of religion as a compulsory subject. Muslim female students wear hijab at schools, and the sound of the azan (Islamic-Arabic call to prayer) fills public spaces coming from every angle in every prayer time. These cities provide an environment that makes people easily engaged in and exposed to Islamic traditions and rituals. Such an atmosphere offers a fertile environment for memory transfer to appear in unexpected forms, such as Arabic learning activities for religious purposes.

The microsphere of Arabic learning is a specific environment with distinctive -but still within the influence of the macro- characteristics in which learning activities occur. In this case, the microspheres of Arabic learning maintain the robust religious attribute. Every city has at least a mosque as an Arabic learning location. The mosque within the Minangkabau community is an open social institution where everyone can come to do salah and listen to religious preaching and discuss it. Mosques that function as the microsphere of Arabic learning have preachers who have the ability to use an Arabic linguistic approach to deliver their religious lectures.

There are other venues, namely the Nurul Islam Foundation, *Ma'had al Fath*, and the Unnamed Arabic Course, which are not physically carried out in the mosque but have an inseparable connection. The Nurul Islam Foundation is an institution that stands on land belonging to the mosque, is located not far from the mosque, and has the same name as the name of the mosque that owns the land where the facilities of this foundation are located. Even though two other venues, *Ma'had al Fath* and the Unnamed Arabic Course, do not take place within a mosque, those courses still relate to the mosque considering the people behind them are "urang surau." The term is common among Minangkabau to refer to everyone who actively engages in mosques, such as performing the five-time daily prayers.

To state this means that the conception of sacred and profane is not applicable to understand the pulse of life in Minangkabau spheres. Accepting the conception of sacred and profane means acknowledging that there is a solid barrier in social life which offers the impossibility for sacred and profane to mingle each another. Sacred is the inexistence of profanity and vice versa, which is hardly to imagine the Minangkabau world in such condition.

Insight about the macro and microsphere of Arabic learning looks identical to Seymour-Jorn (2004) explanation about learning Arabic among Arabs in Milwaukee. The group of Arab Muslim immigrants shows their enormous contribution in establishing a non-formal Islamic educational institution, called Salam School, in a mosque. Arabic is a compulsory subject whose goal is not only culturally related but also religiously connected, such as to help the second generation who are born and raised in the USA to be able to read and understand the Qur'an. The city of Milwaukee provides a social space for the community of Arab Muslim immigrants, which allows them to maintain their identity. The social space, with all its dynamics, creates the

macro sphere of Arabic learning. The mosque in which they learn Arabic in the Sunday School is the microsphere.

Arabic, Islamic Rites and Traditions, and Collective Memory

The interview, as presented in this section, shows that the Minangkabau participants, both non-Arabic learners and Arabic learners, shares an attitude that views Arabic as the language of Islamic rites and religious tradition. Arabic is used in reciting prayers during the daily five-time prayers. Within the framework of the theory of collective religious memory, religious rites are regarded as traditions—practices those believers have regularly observed since they were introduced by the religion's founder(s) in the past.

Non-learners view

The first participant is a mid-forty-year-old woman that I will call her Ni³ Des. Based on my observation, she works at the Muhammadiyah University of Sumatera Barat as the head of general affairs. She also voluntarily works for an organization, called Aisyiah.

Aisyiah is an Islamic women organization, an autonomous part of the Muhammadiyah. The organization establishes and manages dozens of orphanages, kindergartens, clinics, and hospitals. It also runs educational institutions at every level, ranging from pre-school to higher degree institution.

Ni Des is one of the leading members of West Sumatra Aisyiah. She is one of the leading and senior members of the organization. She acts as a secretary at the organization's provincial level.

Regarding her engagement in the organization, she stated: “Aisyiah is a social organization that works for...” She paused slightly to think and continued by saying: “it is a women’s organization that works for society and *da’wa*. I believe that is what Aisyiah should mean. We work in the field of education, health, and many more. We also establish many orphan houses.” She could not hold back her tears when telling her activities and achievements in the organization as the indication of the mixture of pride and a deep sense of belongingness to the organization. She believes that her engagement in Aisyiah is for fulfilling religious duty for community development following Islamic values, which is called as *da’wa*.

³ Local word that means the older sister

Terminologically, the word *da'wa* means the act of inviting people to be more accepting of the Islamic value. In the perspective of Muhammadiyah, *da'wa* also includes the social actions for the betterment of human life, as H Nashir stated:

In *da'wah*, the Muhammadiyah cannot be separated from the spirit of reform...Verbal *dak'wa*, nevertheless was updated into a non-conventional method, among others is the emergence of *Suara Muhammadiyah* magazine (1915) and numerous publication which was a new phenomenon propaganda since most of *da'wah* was done in one-way communication. The establishment of PKO (Penolong Kesangsaraan Oemoem, or literally, Assistance for the Relief of Public Suffering), which later became PKU (Pembina Kesejahteraan Umat) or *weisshouse* as the orphanage and service for the poor, were the evidence of the reform in *da'wah* by Muhammadiyah (2015, p 4-5)

After discussing about her recent activities in Aisyiah, I led her to discuss about Arabic. She mentioned that she learned Arabic in madrasah and university more than 20 years ago. Among the subjects, we were talking about a topic: Does God accept the five-time prayer of someone who does not know Arabic, like her? I asked a question: "do you think God will accept a prayer from those who does not understand what he/she recites during the prayer?" She said, "it is not our business. God will decide."

At first glance, the way she answered the question showed some degree of uncertainty. It was presumably the act of evasion in which a participant ignored telling the truth by narrating something normative. When asking Muslims whether the prayer will be accepted without having an Islamic abolition (*wuḍū'*), most Muslims will answer that it is unacceptable. One of the orthodoxies of Islamic jurisprudence is that Islamic abolition is a mandatory prayer requirement. It is not the case with Arabic recitation in prayer. Muslims are required to articulate the recitations accurately, though they are not obligated to comprehend its meaning. It is one of the common primary pieces of knowledge that exist among most Muslims, which makes it hardly surprising that we find so many Muslims who are fluent in saying prayers in Arabic or reading the Qur'an without knowing its meaning.

Several other participants also offered a similar statement. Another participant I interacted with is Mas. I will call him Bang⁴ Mas. He is one of the young Muhammadiyah widely recognized activists in West Sumatra. He actively takes part in the management role in Taqwa Muhammadiyah Mosque in West Sumatra, as he

⁴ A Minangkabau word means, the old brother. Another word with similar meaning is *Uda*. They are used to address someone older than you in a common range of age between siblings.

acts as the general secretary of the mosque board. The position allows him to secure a fixed schedule for Islamic preaching at the Taqwa Muhammadiyah Mosque in West Sumatra. Many Islamic preachers who affiliate themselves with the Muhammadiyah want to have an opportunity to be religious preachers in the mosque. Nevertheless, the opportunity is not for everyone since it requires a preacher to have a strong reputation, such as being a well-known academician and *ulama* or being a top leader in the Muhammadiyah.

In terms of whether a Muslim must master Arabic to make his/her prayer receive God's acceptance, he said that Arabic is important but it is not imperative for prayers to be accepted by God. The most important thing is to keep reciting the prayer recitation in Arabic. He said:

The recitation is a *ta'abbudy* thing in Islam. The recitations are the same as the Prophet practiced. He said "*ṣallū kamā ra'aytumūnī 'uṣallī*"⁵. It is *ta'abbudy*, which means something fixed and unchanging. It is one of the main rules in Islam. Islamic tenets come from the Qur'an and Hadith. It is said in Hadith, recitation of salat must be in Arabic. You cannot add something new into it or remove something from it, even if you think what you are doing is the. Salat is main ibadah in Islam. The Prophet exemplified how to do it. It is in Arabic recitations. We don't find any *dalil* that state salat can be practiced using other languages.

His view of that five-time daily prayers should be performed in Arabic is the general understanding among Muslims. Mentioning the recitation as *ta'abbudy* means the recitation is an integral part of the rituals. Therefore, it is not the subject of modification and should be strictly implemented as is.

Muslims can have a different mosque architecture in which they hold the prayer in the congregation or use a different style of fashion during the prayer as long it covers the part of the human body that in Islam is considered should be covered. Architecture and dressing style are out of *ta'abbudy* categorization in Islam as long they do not contravene the general principle of the Islamic tenets.

Another similar view comes from an elementary school teacher. Regarding Arabic recitation, he said "It is clearly unacceptable. We can translate a book to Bahasa, but not to replace the prayer recitations. It is something... (being silent for a

⁵ Prophet saying which means: do prayers as you have seen me praying.

while) The recitations are not the subject of modification." He asserted this confidently and with a serious expression.

The views above are the views of people living in Muhammadiyah circles. The circumstance allows them to be engaged in religious discourse that is common among Muhammadiyah members.

To further understand this matter, I also interviewed other common citizens' views on the issue. These are people who are not too exposed to religious discourse. This kind of person, in my perspective, is a Minangkabau Muslim who is not affiliated with any religious organization and does not appear to be actively involved in religious movements such as Muhammadiyah and other Islamic organizations.

I met a young man who I call Bujang, studying public health as a university student. He studied Islam in a non-*madrasah* school. Like most other Minangkabau people, he received religious and Qur'anic lessons in the non-formal Islamic educational institutions that are commonly held in mosques, called TPA (Taman Pendidikan Al Qur'an or The Qur'anic Educational Garden).

Regarding the existence of Arabic in rituals and traditions, I asked him: "We do salat using Arabic recitations. Some people said it is better to change it to Bahasa to allow everyone to understand. What do you think?" Responding to the question, he believes that reciting Arabic in prayer is compulsory. He said: "I think it is wrong to change the recitations. *Salat* has rules that are based on what the Prophet taught us. The Prophet used Arabic, so we need to use it too. It is wrong when we use other languages in salat. It is not acceptable." This young person, who studies public health at university, stated this clearly and with confidence.

All participants in the first group, namely those who did not study Arabic, shared similar opinions regarding the Arabic recitation in prayer. In their opinion, the language is irreplaceable, and Muslims should perform the prayer in Arabic even though they do not understand the meaning or do not entirely comprehend it.

The data above shows that Minangkabau participants develop a certain social attitude of the urgency of Arabic, which is an integral part of a ritual that they practice daily. The social environment of Minangkabau, which has a thick religious nuance, relates to the awareness. My explanation of the macro sphere of Arabic learning shows that Minangkabau cities share a typical environmental character than makes Minangkabau highly exposed to Islamic traditions and rituals. Regarding the five-time prayer and its Arabic recitation, the sphere highly nudges and supports people to

practice them since mosques are mostly ubiquitous, and the sound of the call for prayer (*azan*) overwhelms the public space every time prayer is called. Frequent Islamic lectures in mosques may include a contributing factor. Minangkabau social spheres is a space with a thick collective religious memory. As this research shows, it does not always contribute to one's motivation to learn Arabic. Regardless, this situation continues to foster a positive attitude toward Arabic.

Admittedly, not all Minangkabau will perform the five-daily prayers, and however, I think the context I explained has produced at least a sense of familiarity and respect for Arabic as the sacred language. Fanany and Efendi (1999) found that Minangkabau sees Arabic as "the language of religion, is used in a range of greetings and exclamations, and also for daily prayers and the Friday sermon in the mosques."

Islamic traditions and rituals, which in this case is the five-time daily prayer, are collective religious memory sites from which Minangkabau develop their attitudes toward Arabic. The language is commonly seen as the sacred language of Islam, the irreplaceable language of prayer recitation. Minangkabau people have never seen the opportunity to change the recitation to Bahasa and decide to keep it as is, even though they do not understand the meaning behind the recitations.

Reciting Arabic in prayer without comprehension may put Arabic in the glossolalia framework, emphasizing the role of collective religious memory in shaping Minangkabau attitude toward Arabic. Reciting Arabic in prayer without comprehending the meaning is similar to the practice of glossolalia. Indeed, Arabic is not the subject of glossolalia because Arabic is a language. However, for those who do not master the language, Arabic functions like glossolalia in their Islamic traditions and rituals.

With this in mind, I am compelled to refer to Arabic in this context as quasi-Islamic glossolalia⁶. The term quasi shows that the status of glossolalia Arabic is not absolute and is invalid if people understand the meaning behind Arabic expressions that they recite while performing prayer. Arabic as a *Quasi* Islamic glossolalia strengthens the enormity of the role of collective memory among Muslims to position Arabic, through rituals and traditions, as the only sacred language of Islam. Muslims have no choice but to accept the Arabic recitation, which is an integral part of prayer.

⁶ I found the term is used in a short writing in a weblog: https://scribalterror.blogs.com/scribal_terror/2006/04/quasiislamic_gl.html

Arabic as the quasi-Islamic glossolalia is the result of a combination of Islamic tradition and rituals, a decent attitude toward Arabic as the Islamic sacred language, the lack of motivation in learning Arabic, and the belief that reciting without understanding is accepted in Islam.

Learners' views

While the first group finds it sufficient to have a decent attitude toward Arabic, the second group goes further by deciding to learn the language. This part will explain why some people think learning Arabic is essential, even though they know that learning the language is not required for their prayer to be accepted.

It was a Sunday morning when most residents were supposed to enjoy their time. At that time, life still felt different because the city of Padang had just passed the peak of the first wave of Covid-19. People were trying to restart the city life as it seemed to be paused due to the frightening spread of the pandemic. Everyone struggles to apply the New Normal way of life. Nevertheless, daily cases remain high.

The government offices at that time had been open for several weeks, with 50% capacity. Mosques began to be visited again for prayer in congregation with unusual rules following the physical distancing; prayers should stand in the row where 2 meters of space separated them. Schools and universities are still completely closed.

That Sunday, the Taqwa Mosque began to open several facilities which had been closed for several months. The only facility that remained active was the charity management department, which distributed aid during the covid peak season. Another office, the Muhammadiyah Ulama Cadre Education Program, was reopening that day, and it functioned as a classroom for learning Arabic. Learners, who are active Muhammadiyah supporters and preachers from Padang, were coming one by one to the office. About twenty people were coming that day to learn in the narrow classroom when other classrooms in the city were closed entirely.

All learning participants who came on that Sunday morning wore a face mask, following health protocol. Learning tables were organized in a U-shape facing the whiteboard, and chairs were put at distances following the physical distancing protocol. The teacher's desk was behind the whiteboard. However, in the end, participants sat closely with each other, mainly when they thought a discussion was needed. Traditional snacks and drinks, purchased using participants' donations, were distributed during learning to make the learning condition more relaxed and enjoyable.

I have known well most of the learning participants who study Arabic. They varied in terms of their ability to read classical Arabic references. Some of them are good and even very good at reading classical Arabic references, and some have very little knowledge about Arabic grammar, making them struggle to read the Arabic references. The first group was likely able to follow the learning activities, while the second group admitted that it was hard to follow the lesson. Regarding the situation, they mentioned, "The important thing for us now is joining this class for learning, at least it makes us know the content of the *turath* (classical Arabic references). "

A learning participant was a student at the university where I teach, and he seemed to be the youngest learner, possibly in his early 20s. Another participant, a 50-year-old gentleman, was the faculty dean when I work as a lecturer. Interestingly, both affiliate with the same faculty. The oldest participant was a senior preacher in Padang, and he is probably in his 60s.

Different Arabic tutors came every week. They were Muhammadiyah's leading figures that the community recognized as prominent academics, ulama, and preachers. A tutor is a professor in tafsir (Qur'anic exegesis) who work in an Islamic university in Padang, and another is a doctor and among the most expert in the science of hadith in West Sumatra. They usually bring reading materials within their expertise in the learning subject. Besides explaining the content of the text, they also explained the linguistic analysis of the Arabic text, including *nahw* (syntax) and *şarf* (morphology).

I met a research participant, namely Ambo. He is a young person whose age is in his late 20s. He works at the Muhammadiyah charity organization, whose office is also on the first floor of Taqwa mosque. He is one of the few participants who are proficient at reading classical Arabic references. However, for him, it does not mean he will stop learning Arabic, and he decides to come every Sunday to Taqwa Mosque rather than enjoy his weekend. Even though he is excellent in Arabic and highly active in engaging in discussions on Islamic law and jurisprudence frequently held in the mosque, he frequently avoids preaching. I first asked him about his thoughts on Arabic and prayer.

Regarding Arabic and the prayer, especially on the idea to replace the Arabic recitation to Bahasa or any language that a prayer comprehends, I asked him: "How about an idea that suggests replacing the Arabic recitations in salat with those in our own language, so everyone can understand?" He said that Arabic recitation is not the subject to modification and change. Confidently, he stated his opinion: "That is a fatal

mistake because the Prophet said "*ṣallū kamā ra'aytumūnī 'uṣallī*". The Prophet practiced the salat using the Arabic recitations. Why would we do it in Bahasa? It is not right. It is a failure of understanding."

Ambo was hardly surprised when I asked the questions. The idea of changing the Arabic recitation was becoming a pros and cons topic in Indonesia not long before the interview. According to him, modifying and changing is -in his language- "a fatal mistake" and the result of "failure to understand." His excellent knowledge of Islamic law and good ability in Arabic makes him comfortable and fluent in quoting the hadith of the Prophet, "*ṣallū kamā ra'aytumūnī 'uṣallī*" which means "pray as you have seen me praying."

Ambo saw no solution for people who did not understand the prayer recitation except by learning the meaning. Reciting without comprehending, in his mind, is like speaking out of a consciousness like a speaking drunk person. He said: He is like a drunk person because he does not know what he recites. It is not good, I think. It is good if one understands what they are praying for.

Research participants who learn Arabic fall into two main categories regarding their engagement in Islamic education. The first is a group of participants who experienced the Islamic higher education background, and Ambo represents the group. They share a similar opinion about Arabic in this case, and their background may highly influence their view. Their experience as Muslim devotees, such as through engaging in an Islamic organization, and their status as Minangkabau who lives in the Minangkabau sphere with a thick religious nuance may include factors that shape their attitude.

It is also interesting to see the view of another group toward Arabic. It includes participants without a formal Islamic education background, making it fair to categorize them as common citizens who decide to learn Arabic. Buk Sari is a participant with an exciting profile. She is a lady in her 50s; a Mathematics teacher at a public high school in Payakumbuh. In the evening, three days a week, she always visits a shophouse which, in addition to functioning as an Umrah travel office, also functions as an Arabic course.

That day, Buk Sari was sitting in the class with a dozen other learners, paying attention to the Arabic lesson about grammar. The Arabic tutor was a very young man who could be the same age as her children. She constantly and intensely makes a note and looks at the whiteboard in which the tutor draws a table for the derivation of Arabic

verbs. She usually comes on every learning schedule, which is on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday.

Regarding the idea of replacing the Arabic recitation in prayer with another language, such as Bahasa, she only gave a succinct answer: “It is unlawful. That's what I know.” The answer is unlike Ambo's which is a sharp and argumentative answer. Probably her lack of Islamic formal educational background prevents her to elaborate more. When I tried to move forward by asking what people should do if they find themselves not understanding the Arabic prayer recitation, she said:

Yes, if you don't understand the meaning, just read it. Then we can learn about it. I once read [a book that said]: if we want to experience *khusu* in *salat*, we should know its meaning. I ever came to *pengajian*, and then an *ustazah* explained the meaning of one of surah in the Qur'an. It was about people that will not care anymore about their children and wife in the hereafter. I could understand the explanation. I then recited the ayah during my *salah*, and I cried.

Khushu is a mental state in which a Muslims feels a strong connection with God while performing the prayer. It results from optimal concentration, serenity, and understanding of Arabic prayer recitation.

Both groups of Arabic learners agree that understanding is essential in prayer, even though, in the perspective of Islamic jurisprudence, the state does not determine the validity of the prayer. I found no statements from all participants that mention the lack of understanding of the Arabic recitation brings invalidity to the prayer, which means they agree and believe that God accepts a prayer without understanding the meaning of Arabic recitation.

A comparison between learners and non-learners reveals that all participants develop a decent attitude toward Arabic. However, that kind of attitude does not always bring a motivation to learn Arabic. I firmly see that the interpretation of the validity of prayer contributes to the lack of motivation. Based on their knowledge of the interpretation, people may feel no urgency regarding their religious practice that push them to learn the language.

This gives rise to an important question. If Muslims do not need to learn Arabic to make God accept their prayer, why do some people put a burden on themselves to learn Arabic? The theory of collective religious memory leads to the conclusion that learning Arabic is an act of deeper self-engagement and involvement with Islamic religious traditions and rites. Arabic is an integral part of Islamic prayer, and the prayer

is among the traditions and rites that Muslims have practiced by following its strict rules for close to one and half millennia. Hence, performing prayer is celebrating an Islamic old tradition and rite.

Concerning religious traditions and rites are preservation sites of religious memory; as Halbwachs and Hervieu-L  ger explain, performing prayer for Muslims is an act of growing and establishing their religious identity. The Islamic orthodoxy interpretation of the validity of prayer mentions that reciting Arabic in prayer determines its validity. However, understanding is excluded from the determining factors. Learning Arabic to understand the Arabic recitation is an act of deeper self-engagement and involvement in Islamic religious traditions and rites, which aim to gain a greater sense of Islamic identity.

Collective Memory, Religious Authority, and Learning Arabic

West Sumatra, the homeland of the Minangkabau, is a region in which mosques are ubiquitous, which indicates the devoutness of the Minangkabau people as scholars have described it. Almost every neighborhood has one mosque, and some have one large mosque with an additional smaller mosque. Certain conditions exist where two big mosques are tens of meters apart. Public facilities like government offices, supermarkets, and fuel stations also have mosques or dedicated places that function as mosques. Almost the entire mosques were built with non-governmental funds. Only a handful of mosques were built by the government, while most were built by neighborhoods, communities, or individuals.

Besides its primary function as a place for prayer, mosques in Minangkabau also function as Islamic non-formal educational institutions. Mosques have become the center for training elementary school-aged pupils to recite the Qur'an and to learn basic knowledge about Islamic tenets, practices, and rituals. Mosques also usually conduct a religious lecture that adults can attend at least once a week, usually after maghrib prayer. During Ramadhan, mosques conduct the lecture every night for one month. Some mosques strictly list the lecture topics, and some let the preachers talk about a topic he or she wants. The invited preachers are usually called *Ustaz*, an Arabic word for religious teachers. People also called them, especially the senior preachers, *Buya*: a local language which also means someone who masters religious knowledge.

In Minangkabau, the group of *Ustaz* or *Buya* is a class that people recognize them having Islamic authority. However, some studies indicate that some people who

are considered to have authority by the public in Minangkabau have, probably, limited capacities that put their authority in question. Edi et al (2019). found some errors among preachers when reciting hadith in lectures at the mosque in the city of Padang. Faisol et al (2016) found many Arabic grammatical errors within the Arabic-named mosques in Padang, which are out of the consciousness of those who often give religious preachers there, which may be caused by their limitations in Arabic. The condition, to some extent, is similar to Grewal's (2014) description that there are groups within Muslim society that are very passionate discussing about Islam, unfortunately with lack of systemized knowledge of Islamic tenets.

The situation where only specific groups are trusted as religious spokespersons in the Minangkabau community shows that despite the information above, that religious authority is urgent for them. There is almost no practice among the Minangkabau where the lay persons in a mosque take turns talking about Islam. Instead, they prefer to invite someone called *Ustaz* or *Buya* and pay for them to ensure that the person is ready to preach. It shows that the opportunity to speak about Islam in the mosque is given to those who, at least, are considered by society having the authority.

Religious authority is enormously critical within the Muslim community. Islam is widely believed to be a religion that regulates in every aspect of Muslim life, which some of which are rigid, and the rest are flexibly implemented. The regulations are perceived as the result of scholarly reading and interpretation of the two primary sources of Islamic law and ethic, which is the Qur'an and the Hadith. Islamic history has witnessed the emergence and maintenance of four primary schools of Islamic law: Shafi'i, Hanbali, Maliki, and Hanafi -not to mention other less-influencing schools of law- which are the fruit of Islamic scholarly interpretation of both scriptural texts. The schools have offered authoritative references on the regulations for Muslim society or *umma*.

According to Mandaville (2007, p 101), Islamic authority results from the interaction of three aspects called the tripod of authority: "text, discursive method, and personified knowledge." The texts, as he explains, are Islamic scriptural texts, namely the Qur'an and Hadith, the main and the second sources of Islamic law and ethics. Muslim tradition in approaching, interpreting, and discussing the texts has crystalized the Islamic discursive method in today's Islamic sciences such as Fiqh or Islamic jurisprudence, Tafseer or Islamic exegesis and *ulum al-hadith* (the sciences of hadith).

In other words, the discursive method results from scholarly interpretative efforts on Islamic scriptural text and discussion around it. Islamic schools of law are organized discursive methods in Islamic tradition. Personified knowledge comes from Islamic-trained scholars who participate in the scriptural interpretation and disseminate it to Muslim society. Mandaville saw that personified knowledge does not mean exclusive to Fuqaha or Mufassir and so on, and it may include the Sufi, the leader of the Sufism brotherhood.

Theoretically, Arabic is essential regarding the tripod of Islamic authority. Arabic is the language of Islamic sacred texts, Qur'an, and Hadith, from which Muslims extract the Islamic tenets, values, ethics, and creeds. Various interpretation during the extraction process has made the discursive method within the Islamic tradition, which mostly have Arabic as the language of communication between scholars, particularly in the beginning phase of the development of Islamic sciences. Early Islamic scholars whose language of dissemination was Arabic made Arabic identical to the figures of Islamic personified knowledge.

With Arabic becoming a compulsory subject within Islamic educational institutions worldly, despite any decrease in learning quality, as Rahman (1982) explained, we witness a circumstance in Muslim society the effort to keep Arabic as one of the common heritages of Islamic traditions. This part will reveal how this perspective drives Minangkabau people to develop their attitude and motivation toward Arabic.

It is possible to approach Islamic authority from the standpoint of collective religious memory. Islamic authority has been a collective religious commitment among Muslims since the dawn of Islam. Islamic sacred texts have always been part of Muslims' daily life and the main subject of religious discourse among Muslim intellectuals and scholars, which make a path for what Mandaville (2007) term as Islamic discursive method. Muslim intellectuals and scholars are respected individuals in the Muslim world whose names are remembered and told from one generation to another.

In the realm of Islamic authority, participants see Arabic, as data has revealed, from two related perspectives. First, Arabic is the language of the authoritative Islamic figures: the ulama or Islamic trained scholars. In this context, Arabic is seen as one of the basic requirements of becoming an ulama. Second, Arabic is a language that is recognized as the only key to understanding the Muslims' scholarly work, which they

call kitab. The second perspective emerges with the realization that these so-called ulama wrote their works in Arabic even though they were not Arabs. Al-Ghazali and Bukhari who come from Iran and Uzbek are among prominent scholars in Islamic history who write their *magnum opus* in Arabic.

Regarding the first perspective, participants learn Arabic in the frame of mind in which they remember the existence of the ulama. In addition, some participants also develop a willingness to become the ulama. Their reference to ulama comes from the collective religious memory. Participants know mainly about past figures that are mostly remembered by Minangkabau through social conversations such as mosque lectures and interactions in Islamic educational institutions, both formal and non-formal.

This research reveals that, for them, Arabic is identical to the ulama. Andi, a learning participant who works as a manager in a multinational company, clearly articulated the identification of Arabic and ulama by saying: "Arabic is the language of Ulama." Some participants admitted that their goal in learning Arabic is to allow for a religious authority which means becoming ulama. Some students do see themselves, to some extent, as ulama or at least in the process of becoming ulama. Hence, participants feel awkward if they do not learn Arabic.

Andi straightforwardly said that he wanted to become an ulama. He mentioned: "Besides that, who knows, I would be an Islamic preacher alongside my commitment to be a better person. It is not good being a preacher without having Arabic". This participant argues that Arabic is essential to become a preacher and scholar, which comes from an awareness that Arabic is one of the primary objects that enable the Islamic authority.

A corresponding view comes from Ibas, a teacher in Padang Panjang. He teaches the subject of religion in a public senior high school and is a religious active devotee in the small city. It has led him to claim a position in MUI (*Majelis Ulama Indonesia*/Indonesian Council of Ulama), an Indonesian organization that unites religious devotees and scholars from different backgrounds of religious interpretations and affiliations. When I asked him his thought about the urgency of Arabic: "How important is Arabic?". He said:

I think it is very important, especially for Muslims. I am a muballigh (preacher) who usually delivers religious preaches in Padang Panjang, and I am also a member of the MUI committee as well. I think it is weird if I don't learn Arabic. It is weird if you don't

want to learn Arabic when you do many religious activities. That is my motivation.

Ulama, in the mental mind of Minangkabau people, are not always historically Arabs and Middle East figures. They also refer to notable Minangkabau ulama who live in the past. The notion of Minangkabau ulama is present when talking about their motivation to learn Arabic. A participant, namely Andi, said:

We had many notable ulama, such as Haji Sumanik, Haji Miskin, and Haji Piobang, they came back from Makkah and led the Padri war. After that we had Sheikh Ahmad Khatib al Minangkabawi, the imam of the grand mosque. It was impossible for him to be the Imam without mastering Arabic. It was impossible without that. Can you imagine, with his ability in Arabic and memorizing the Qur'an, he could correct the misspelling of Qur'anic verses that the recent Imam was reading. He impressed people by doing that. After that, we had Haji Agus Salim, who mastered nine languages, including Arabic. Sutan Shahrir could also be like that. The Minangkabau is very famous of their *ghirah*, including in learning Arabic. Regarding the history, I think the Minangkabau should learn Arabic. If you want to revive the Minangkabau pride, as a group of intelligent people, nation unifier, they should learn Arabic.

Data shows that, Islamic authority is another factor that contribute to learners' attitude toward Arabic and motivation to learn it. Participants are aware that Islamic authority is very important, and Arabic is one of the major requirements that may allow them to claim such authority. The sense of admiration toward ulama as historical personified knowledge also contributes to attitude and motivation. Participants want to make themselves in the position of the admired ulama, by following their capacity such as mastering Arabic.

The root of the notion of Islamic religious authority is traceable since the time of the Prophet and has continued to exist until today through the collective religious memory of the Muslim umma. A hadith containing a report on the sayings of the Prophet shows that knowledge is the basis of authority, and the ulama is the authoritative entity concerning their expert of knowledge. It is reported that the Prophet Mohammed once said:

If anyone travels on road in search of knowledge, God will cause him to travel on one of the roads of paradise. The angels will lower their wings in their good pleasure with one who seeks knowledge, and the inhabitants of heavens and the earth and the fish in the depth of the water will ask forgiveness for him. The superiority of the learned man over the devout man is like the moon on the night when it is full over the rest of the stars. The learned are the heirs of the

Prophets, for the Prophets did not leave behind a Dinar or Dirham, rather than they leave behind the knowledge, so whoever takes it has taken a great share.

The hadith inspired the early generation of Muslim society to make a path for emerging notable ulama, who are still widely referred to today. The easiest way to recognize some figures is by looking at the field of Fiqh or Islamic jurisprudence. The mainstream of the Muslim world is grouped into four schools of laws (*mazhab*), which are named after their founders: Shafi'i, Hanbali, Maliki, and Hanafi. Those schools were founded around the 6th and 7th CE, one century after the Prophet passed away, by Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn Idris al-Shafi'i, Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Abdullah Malik ibn Anas, and Abu Hanifah al-Numan ibn Thabit, respectively.

Like many Muslims around the world, the Minangkabau community knows these figures very well. Their story, which includes their piety, intellectual quality, passion, and struggle, is widely told in mosques, madrasahs, and Islamic universities. They are portrayed as the ideal Muslims after the first generation of Muslims living during the Prophet Muhammad's era. They are perceived as the most notable ulama in Islamic jurisprudence. Referring to Mandaville's explanation, these figures are the most remembered Islamic personified knowledge globally.

Contextually speaking, collective religious memory plays a role in participants' attitudes of the urgency of Arabic behind the idea of becoming ulama. It is frequently told within Minangkabau in West Sumatra, probably also around the world, that the figures of ulama across history are those with specific capacities and personalities, one of which is mastering Arabic. They wrote their work in Arabic and mastering the language allowed them to be the figures that Muslims widely recognized. Things related to them have been subject to discussion and conversation in Islamic educational institutions from elementary to university levels. The discussion and conversation strengthen the collective religious memory; in this case, it develops an attitude toward it and motivation to learn it.

In the context of the life of the Minangkabau people, their collective memory does not solely preserve the existence of Muslim scholars or ulama -let us say- that come from Arab and Middle East backgrounds. Minangkabau religious collective memory also registers and preserves the list of local *ulama*, such as Sheikh Ahmad Khatib, Hamka, and Haji Rasul. As I explained in Chapter 3, they are prominent figures behind Minangkabau social transformational processes and are well-respected

in the region of *Nusantara*⁷. Their names are preserved and transferred from one generation to another through social conversation. Participants know that they have Arabic proficiency, even though the language is not their native and not their daily tool of communication. Hence, it is hardly surprising some participants mention their name when explaining their motivation in learning Arabic.

The collective religious memory of the Muslim community has placed Arabic as the language of the ulama, one of the most respectful classes within Muslim society. Some participants, and probably many Muslims, show some degree of intention to be part of the group. Regarding the intention, they are aware that the language will allow them to develop an ability to interact with Islamic scriptural texts and discursive methods, abilities inherent in ulama. To put it into perspective, the identification of Arabic with ulama is similar to the identification of Latin to the catholic priests, as it is seen from the following statement:

“Spoken Latin might sound like the preserve of hobbyists, like spoken Elvish or Klingon, but being able to speak a language is the ultimate test of fluency, and for the Church, Latin isn’t just any other language. As well as being the sacred language of the liturgy, it is an indispensable key to the Church’s theology, history, law, philosophy, and poetry. As Pope Benedict XVI described it, it is the language the Church considers as her own. It is for this reason that Latin has always formed an essential part of the education of the clergy. The Second Vatican Council’s decree on Priestly Training, *Optatam Totius*, says seminarians “are to acquire a knowledge of Latin which will enable them to understand and make use of the sources of so many sciences and of the documents of the Church” (13). This means a serious grasp of the language: being able to sit down and read St. Augustine, for example—not as a homework exercise, but because you want to know what he says about something” (Shaw 2021).

Non learners’ view

Participants in this group also admit that Arabic is one of the fundamental requirements for becoming an ulama. Some participants from this group actively visit mosques to answer invitations to give to religious preachers. Even though people widely recognized them as preachers, they did not learn Arabic. Bang Pur is a participant that represents this group, and he is a popular preacher. Participants like

⁷ Melayu world in the South-East, which include Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei, and some part of Thailand, Cambodia and Philippines

him do not want people to recognize them as ulama but as preachers. In their mind, unlike ulama, preachers do not need to master Arabic. He said:

I don't think so. Here, we don't need to use Arabic in tabligh⁸. Sometimes I use Bahasa, and sometimes I use Minangkabau. It depends on the audiences. We don't need to use Arabic texts in da'wa... To be honest, my limitation in Arabic prevents me from increasing my quality. But the limitation does not prevent me from giving tabligh.

Another participant is Bang Wan, and he is a reasonably popular speaker. He is not only actively speaking in mosques but also involves himself in voluntary community activities, making him famous in certain areas in Padang, particularly in his neighborhood. Concerning that, I comfortably call him a local religious leader. He mentions an identical view to the previous participant that his inability in Arabic does not prevent him from contributing to society through his role. He said:

I don't think so. A good Muslim is one who can solve people's problems. When someone in a community passes away, you should lead people to prepare for the funeral, bathe and wrap the corpse, and also lead the funeral prayer. People will not judge you whether you know Arabic or not. If they invite you to give a religious speech in *pengajian*⁹, they don't expect too much. If you talk about *salat*, you just need to give examples, how the recitation is and how the movement is.

It shows that participants believe that society in general needs someone ready to help them in their religious needs, such as taking care of the dead and giving advice related to religion. To do that, one does not have to master Arabic.

However, Bang Wan, admitted that it is better for a preacher to master Arabic. He said: "... When I go to the mosque to give a religious speech about tafsir, I will teach people word-by-word translations. But actually, I am not so good at that. I think I am only 40 percent good. I just memorize them. That's why I believe Muslims should learn Arabic.

In the same meaning, Bang Pur said: "It is important. It is important. It is important, moreover for *Muballigh*. Because mastering Arabic will make you not dependent only on translated works of literature."

Another participant who teaches children to recite the Qur'an and to learn Qur'an by heart stated an identical statement: "It is an urgent language...But I just have little knowledge of Arabic. I don't think it will prevent me from playing a role in da'wa

⁸ Religious lecturing in mosques

to spread the Qur'anic spirit. I just do what I can do. Hopefully, I could find someone that can teach me Arabic."

The last participant, Melati, is a lay person who is passionate about teaching religion, and her passion is primarily teaching children to read and memorize the Koran. He saw that he did not need to learn Arabic to do what he called *da'wa*.

Previous participants, as far as I know, are individuals who develop a passion for becoming a religious worker through teaching the Qur'an, giving preaches in mosques, and helping people fulfilling their religious needs. Even though they have not studied Arabic and have a lack of understanding of the language, they still think that Arabic is a language that is fundamentally important to become a person with Islamic authority. However, they have seen that being an active religious devotee does not have to be an ulama, so Arabic is not something they have to master to contribute to society.

My observations and interviews show that almost all participants view Arabic as the language of scholarly work, influencing their attitude and motivation toward the language. Ambo is one of the participants whose statement is quite clear on this matter. Answering a question about what he thinks of Arabic, he responded with: "It is the language for communication, for understanding the *kitab* of scholars...."

It is essential to highlight the phrase the above participant uses: the *kitab* of scholars. *Kitab* is an Arabic word for book (English) and *buku* (Bahasa). In the Indonesian and Minangkabau context, students who dedicate themselves to learning Islam prefer to mention all Islamic references written in Arabic as *Kitab* rather than *Buku* or *Book*. To some extent, it shows attitudes among Minangkabau participants that Arabic is the language of Islamic authority: the only language to unlock the Islamic scholars' thought and the language that allows exploring the Islamic authority.

The participants, especially those studying Arabic, recognize the urgency of Arabic in this view, and their attitudes of it is an encouraging factor in learning Arabic. Indeed, there are many translated works of the *kitab*; nevertheless, the participants see that reading the translated books would not lead to the finest understanding.

Regarding the translation works, a participant, Arul, clearly states that those works are not convincing enough to bring a good understanding of Arabic references. The 34-years-old man who traveled daily from Bukittinggi to Payakumbuh to learn Arabic in a Salafi-affiliated institution said:

Ulama's thoughts are written in Arabic. If we don't understand Arabic, we will not be the same as those who understand it. The translation is not as beautiful as the original sources. The language has its beauty, and translation will not be able to show it. Translation also depends on the understanding of the translator. Like you, you can speak English, and I just rely on your translation. But I don't know whether it is right or not.

Another participant who clearly articulated the same thing was a girl; namely Suci. The girl, who had recently graduated in economics at a well-known university in Sumatra, said that studying Arabic helped her to understand Islamic references better. He admits that translation is beneficial, but she believes reading the primary sources would be better for her. She said: "I heard from an ustaz, it is better to learn [the religion] from the primary sources, not from translation. It will make us better understand. That's why I learn Arabic even though I don't know if I would master it or not. God better knows. Bismillah. Just starting it." The goal made her excited to learn Arabic in a shophouse near a traditional market in Payakumbuh.

As is widely known, the most fundamental works on Islamic teachings are the work of classical scholars, written in classical Arabic. Islamic tradition has a long list of important Islamic classical books, which participants called kitab, such as al-Umm, by Imam Shafi'i (767-820 CE), al-Muwatta' by Imam Malik (711-795 CE), and Ihya' al-Ulum al-Din by Imam al-Ghazali (1058-1111 CE). Al-Umm is considered one of the most intensive compendiums of the Islamic code of law which is widely used by followers of the Shafi'i school, which amounts to 15% of Muslims globally, as one of their primary references. The second book is considered the most valid hadith collection by global Muslims. At the same time, the third book is a book that discusses psychological themes in the framework of Islamic spirituality and the purification of the heart.

Arabic books, primarily the classical Islamic reference, are treasures aged about a hundred years, even some of them aged more than one millennium, which makes them an inherent aspect of Islamic collective religious memory. Those books are mentioned, studied, and widely referred to in mosques and Islamic educational institutions. It is not an exaggeration to say it that way, concerning that there is a list of crucial religious works that have been forgotten and are no longer known, except some scholars find it among abandoned old scriptures and reintroduce it to the public. The case happened to Seyder Tkhines: an important book about Judaism and women,

first published in 1648. A scholar, namely Kay (2004), revealed the book, and she wrote:

"The *Seyder Thkhines*, which first appeared in print in Amsterdam in 1648, is a landmark in the history of women. It represents an age of religious, sexual, linguistic, and literary revolution within the Jews community across Europe, an age when mysticism pervaded mainstream Judaism. Yet this exceptional episode, along with its literature, has disappeared from the Jewish collective memory. "

Regarding the importance of classical Islamic references, translation efforts are progressing to make the references more accessible for Muslims. It allows Muslims without Arabic proficiency to interact with many masterpieces, at least to some extent. However, participants do not see it as a reason to stop learning Arabic because they believe mastering the language will lead them to a more complete and deeper understanding.

Deciding to learn Arabic instead of reading a translated book is another act of deeper involvement with Islamic traditions, which in this case relates to Islamic authority. It is analogous to learning Arabic to understand the Arabic recitation of Islamic prayer. An inability to understand the meaning will not lead to questioning the identity of Muslims. However, participants want a more profound engagement in the tradition and ritual. In this context, incompetence in understanding Arabic books or classical Islamic references is not a big deal for Muslims; moreover, translated books are widely available. Despite that, participants decide to learn Arabic.

Minangkabau social circumstance, which I refer to as the macro sphere of Arabic learning in the context of this research, strongly supports the emergence and development of participants' attitudes toward Arabic and motivations to learning it concerning the Islamic authority. Minangkabau sphere provides many social institutions, such as mosques and Islamic educational institutions, that consistently allow dialogue where collective religious memory transfers occur, which in this case, raises attitudes of the role and urgency of Arabic. It creates a positive attitude towards Arabic, and some participants evolve their learning motivation around the attitude.

Non-learners View

Not much data is available regarding participants' views on this matter, which may stem from their lack of attention to Arabic books and references. Moreover, the translated books are circulating quite widely, making reading more manageable for those who do not know Arabic.

I met Bujang, and He is a young man who is studying at one of the best universities in Indonesia. He is, from my perspective, just an ordinary Muslim; he is not an active religious devotee like many other participants I have met. He is also not an Arabic learner. However, he is probably a devoted young Muslim, going daily and mostly every five-time prayers to a mosque in his neighborhood. Regarding the issue of Arabic-translated books, he said: "...Now, translations are available everywhere. The ulama's writing are also easy to find. So, the sources of knowledge are not inclusive in Arabic anymore. They are available in many languages. We don't need to master Arabic to be acknowledged."

Another participant: Bang Pur, who is an active religious devotee, has a different opinion regarding this issue. He said:

The *Kitabs* about Islam are written in Arabic. It is surely not the same between those who have an ability in Arabic and those who have not in understanding what is written in the books. Even though we can read translated books, we just get less. It is because the personal thought of the translator will interfere during the translation process. Always there is a subjectivity behind the translation. Yes, the substance is the same between the translation and the original version. But there is always subjectivity behind the translation.

The expression seemingly confirms the idea that Arabic is the language of ulama, as we discussed earlier. Participants see that translated books provide a way for those who do not know Arabic to interact with the works of these scholars. However, a participant said that referring to the translated book would not bring authenticity because he realized that interpretation inside a translation is inherently embedded in the translator.

This view is typical among religious workers who do not study Arabic. It is probably because their activities put them in a situation that naturally makes them see the issue of translated Arabic book differently compared to Muslim laypersons like Bujang, who is not a religious worker. It is just that the attitude, for various reasons, does not transform into motivation to learn Arabic.

Collective Memory, The Qur'anic Language and Learning Arabic

The Qur'anic Language is Arabic, to be precise, Classical Arabic. It is the language variant used as lingua franca in the Arabian Peninsula during the time of Qur'anic revelation, which Muslims believe happened in the 6th CE. According to Muslims' belief, the process of revelation takes about 23 years long. It started for the

first time when prophet Muhammad, aged 40, in Ramadhan, when God revealed his first word: "Iqra bismi rabbikallazi khalaq!" which means: "Read! In the name of your Lord who created". The moment is also marked as the beginning of Muhammad's prophetic missions. Arabic has become an imperative language for Muslims concerning the position and role of the Qur'an for Muslims. Qur'an is the central source of Islamic tenets, which includes rituals, creed, ethics, and law. In addition, Muslims believe that the Qur'an has only one version, the Arabic one. Other than that, is the translated version.

Muslims' treatment of the Qur'an, which makes it one of the most apparent instances of how a religious component is widely preserved, made Arabic become a fundamental language, at least for the Muslim community. Since its presence in the dawn of Islam, Qur'an has been widely learned, which carved a path to what so-called today the Islamic sciences, such as *Tafsir* (Qur'anic exegesis), *Fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) and the *Usul Fiqh* (The principal of Islamic jurisprudence). This context makes Arabic a vital language. Arabic linguistics was born to serve the Qur'an, making it possible for non-Arabs to understand the Qur'an.

In the modern day, Qur'an continues to play its vital role and becomes inseparable part of Islamic tradition. Haleem describes it as follows:

"Muslim children start to learn the portions of Qur'an by heart in their normal schooling: the tradition of learning the entire Qur'an by heart in their normal schooling: the tradition of learning the entire Qur'an by heart started during the lifetime of the Prophet and continues to the present day. A person attaining this distinction becomes known as hafiz, and this is still prerequisite for admission to certain religious schools in Muslim countries. Nowadays the Qur'an is recited in number of times daily on the radio and television in the Muslim world and some Muslim countries devote a broadcasting channel for long hours daily exclusively to the recitation and study of the Qur'an. Muslims swear on the Qur'an for solemn oaths in the lawcourts and in everyday life." (p x).

The intimate interaction between Muslims and the Qur'an that has been sustained from the beginning supposedly makes the Qur'anic language an inalienable part of Muslim society. With the Qur'an being remarkably well-preserved within Muslim collective religious memory, the existence of Arabic is naturally conserved amid the language no longer usable in formal and casual conversation of modern life. These days, Arabic is widely taught in Islamic educational institutions in Muslim

countries, aiming to assist students in learning Islam and Qur'an. In the context of Minangkabau life, despite only a small group of people who know the language, Arabic is one of the most foreign languages that Minangkabau is exposed to, besides English.

This section will look at how collective religious memory of the Qur'an relates to attitude toward Arabic and motivation for learning it in the context of the later social circumstances of the Minangkabau people. Participants see Arabic as an irreplaceable language in terms of its status as the language of the Qur'an. Another group of participants, including those who do not learn Arabic, also develop an identical attitude.

Learners' View

Regarding its sustainability and continuity, the unity of Arabic and the Qur'an is an enduring and powerful tradition. It comes from the past, about one and half millennia ago, and remains relevant today. Participants see that Arabic is an integral part of the Qur'an itself. When I asked participants about the idea of changing the Qur'anic language into another language, aiming to make it becomes more accessible to those who do not learn Arabic, it can be stated that all participants did not agree with the idea. According to them, the translated version of the Qur'an does not represent the Qur'an.

Bu¹⁰ Yanti is a full-time government worker who works in the agriculture department. This 52-year-old woman lives in Payakumbuh, a small city with quite intense religious activities. Her educational background and work do not relate to Arabic. Nevertheless, she took her time to come to her Arabic course three times a week, which takes place in the same building with a small travel company. She said that learning Arabic is her priority, even though her working schedule often prevents her from coming to learn based on the learning schedule. Regarding the Qur'anic translation, she said:

The translation that I read doesn't represent the true meaning of the Qur'an. Arabic is a rich language. One word can be derived into many words. They have different meanings. One form of word has one meaning. That's why there are many mistakes in understanding [based on translation]. When we try to translate, it cannot represent the meaning.

¹⁰ It is a polite way to call a lady. The word "Bu" means madam.

Another participant, Bu Sari, is a 54-year-old lady who works as a Mathematics teacher at a Senior High School in Payakumbuh. Unlike Bu Yanti, Bu Sari can generally come to study three times a week because school activities usually end at 2 or 3 pm. Regarding whether the translation of the Qur'an can replace the Qur'an, she said:

I don't think so. There are many examples that our teacher provided us, such as an Arabic word that means "no." It means "no" for the present time. Another "no" is for the future time. Another "no" is for expressing "will never." If we don't learn Arabic, the messages of the Qur'an will not be embedded inside us. Like the word "lan". It means "never and never." In translation, it is written just "never". It feels plain.

Arul, a 34-year-old man, is a participant who works teaching children to recite the Qur'an. According to him, his meager income to support his family does not dampen him from learning Arabic at a Salafi educational institution in Payakumbuh. He had to travel back and forth between Bukittinggi and Payakumbuh every day on his motorbike to learn Arabic. Regarding the translation of the Qur'an, he said:

It will be sufficient, In sha Allah. But it is better to directly read the source. I would say it is not sufficient. We know that not all people can learn Arabic. That's why the translation is there. However, as I mentioned earlier, Arabic is more beautiful than our language. Some words, if we translate them to our language, becomes shallow in meaning. That's what I know. The translation causes a narrowing of meaning.

Participants' views show their awareness of the irreplaceable position of Arabic in the Qur'an. All research participants stated that relying only on the Qur'anic translation is insufficient to understand the Qur'anic meaning. Even a participant's arguments regarding this matter are relatively detailed, which is seen from their ability to provide an example that shows some cases in which the translation could not fully accommodate the meaning of the Qur'anic Arabic.

Participants' rejection of the idea of replacing the Qur'an with the translated version probably does not solely come from the knowledge they gain from learning Arabic. From my perspective, collective religious memory also plays an important role. As previously explained, the Qur'an has been central to Muslim life since its first appearance. How Muslims treat the Qur'an and interact with it is one of the best cases of how the religious aspect is very tightly guarded and preserved. From this point of

view, Muslim beliefs and attitudes towards the Qur'an are the most obvious traditions of Muslim societies everywhere and at all times.

Arabic as a science appeared no longer after the Prophet announced that the Qur'an had been fully revealed before he died. The development of science was initially to prevent errors in reading the Qur'an (Al-Salih, 2009; Tawwab, 1999; Wāfi, 2004). Muslims, especially after the death of the Prophet, have become more diverse in terms of cultural and language background. The situation has led to widespread errors in reading the Qur'an, which was not found in Muslims whose native language is Arabic. As a solution, Arabic is persistently and intensely transformed from a practice into a science. The beginning of this effort was the formulation of language rules and changes in the symbols of the Arabic script, all to make the Qur'an more accessible to non-Arab Muslims without the intensity of changing the language.

Besides preventing errors in reading and reciting the Qur'an, Arabic also functions to allow people to explore the Qur'anic meaning. Nahwu and sarf, Arabic syntax and morphology, are the most basic Arabic sciences that may allow people to understand the etymological and textual meaning of the Qur'anic verses. Balaghah, which consists of three branches: badi', ma'ani, and bayan, is another science that enables people to understand Qur'anic sentences beyond their etymological and textual meaning. Those sciences are essential for mastering other sciences, such as Islamic jurisprudence and Qur'anic exegesis or *tafsir*.

Learning Arabic, thus, has become a tradition among Muslims, specifically for those who devote themselves to learning about Islam thoughtfully. Arabic then has become a compulsory subject in Islamic educational institutions to this day. In Indonesia, Islamic educational institutions, whose primary focus is to help students understand Islam, make up most of the time studying Arabic, especially in the early years of education.

In the Minangkabau context, as explained in Chapter 3, Arabic has been taught in the surau since the early period of the surau transformation into an Islamic educational institution. Old surau scriptures regarding Arabic show that the language was taught to understand religious texts, just like the spirit of the early emergence of Arabic itself. In Minangkabau, the idea of teaching Arabic as a communicative language emerged for the first time at the beginning of the 20th century, with the impetus for better communication between people whose nations are members of the

Pan-Islamism movement, which most member countries are Arabic-speaking countries.

The participants tried to be part of the tradition that lasted almost 1500 years. The Qur'an is one of the main factors forming their motivation to learn Arabic. Muslim collective religious memory has made participants aware that Arabic is indispensable concerning the Qur'an. It is the irreplicable Qur'anic language, which Muslims should learn to gain a deeper understanding. Although it may help people get a broad picture of Qur'anic meanings, translation is not enough, according to participants. That is why the oldest participant, a 70-year-old lady who learns Arabic in the village mosque, namely Niar, said: "It is better to learn Arabic. We can understand [the Qur'an] word by word."

Non learners' view

Participants who do not learn Arabic also develop the same view as those who studied Arabic in regard to the indispensable position of Arabic as the Qur'anic language. Bang Pur said: "I disagree...I disagree when the language of the Qur'an is changed." Another participant, Melati, said: "In my opinion, it is not allowed to do it... So, make it as the Bahasa version of Qur'an is not allowed in Islam. It is not allowed in Islam...They should accept it as is. They should convince that the Qur'an is the words of God. It is unquestionable." While Boril, a 30-year-old teacher, has a similar opinion. He said:

"Reading the Qur'an is unlike reading the Qur'anic translation in Bahasa. I ever read a Hadith, reciting one alphabet in the Qur'an is awarded by God ten *pahala*¹¹. It is not equivalent to read the Qur'anic translations."

A participant, Ni Des, even connected her view with a situation of Gospel. She mentioned:

"So, what would make it different from the Gospel? If we accept the translation as we accept the Quranic Arabic, nothing would differentiate us [with the Christians] (smiling). We are Muslim. The Qur'an is in Arabic. If we change it to Bahasa, it will be like the Gospel. That is what I understand. The Qur'an is different. "

Their expressions indicate that there is a collective thought among participants to maintain the Qur'an as is, regardless of whether or not they understand the Arabic sentences they read in the Qur'an. Non-learners find that they are comfortable just

¹¹ Reward from God.

reciting the Arabic Qur'an even though they do not understand the meaning. Qur'an should be in what they believe in its original form. It has to be paid for by the willingness of some Muslims to allow themselves to be in a situation called Islamic quasi-glossolalia, which is not knowing the meaning when reciting the Qur'an. In comparison, efforts to make versions of the Gospels for various languages easy to understand are commonly practiced among Christians. It takes place with such intensity that losing track of the original text written in Hebrew is not seen as a loss (Biblica).

Collective Memory, Minangkabauness, and Learning Arabic

Minangkabauness, a term that I use to refer to a strong feeling of being Minangkabau, emerged as one of the reasons for some participants to learn Arabic. They suggested that learning Arabic is beneficial for strengthening their Minangkabau identity. It is an unusual finding, realizing that Minangkabau participants see learning Arabic, which is a foreign language, in this way considering Arabs and Arabic and Minangkabau hold limited cultural, linguistic, and geographical connections.

A participant, namely Marlis, is a 79-year-old-woman was among participants whose attitude toward Arabic and motivation to learn it is based on this perspective. She was learning Arabic sitting with other participants; some were probably the same age as her grandchildren. She learned Arabic at the Nurul Islam Foundation, whose assets belong to a mosque a few hundred meters from the foundation building. When I asked her: "is Arabic learning important for Minangkabau people" her answer indicated that learning Arabic was a must. She said:

Yes, for sure. We have Adat basandi syarak, syarak basandi kitabullah, but we have not applied it well. Not all laws are implemented well. The answer demonstrated her view that the aphorism has not been well-implemented, and Arabic is among the fundamental requirements for further implementation of the aphorism in the Minangkabau world.

Rumza, a 52-year-old-man also learned Arabic at the Nurul Islam Foundation. This man, who recently retired from marketing work in a photography studio, saw that Arabic is important for Muslims, and moreover for Minangkabau people. He said:

" [it is important] moreover for the Minangkabau people. Adat Basandi Shara-Shara Basandi Kitabullah. We really need to know Arabic. That is [part of] our adat. The basic of our adat is adat basandai shara'-shara' basandi kitabullah. Minangkabau people should master Arabic well. It should be like that. "

The interview data shows that all participants mention a Minangkabau aphorism: *adat basandi shara' shara' basandi kitabullah* when explaining their learning motivation. The aphorism means *adat* (local-indigenous Minangkabau law and culture) is based on *sharia*, and *sharia* is based on the book of God (the Quran). The aphorism, as it is previously explained in Chapter 3, is the integration symbol between the Minangkabau culture and Islam, as the result of the dynamic history of Islam in Minangkabau.

Another participant with a clear articulation regarding the relationship between the aphorism and their attitudes and motivations was Ambo. He was learning Arabic in Taqwa Mosque of Muhammadiyah. When I asked: "do you think Arabic is important for Minangkabau?" He said:

"Yes, I do. Because the *adat* is *adat basandi syarak syarak basandi kitabullah*. The source is in Arabic. How could Minangkabau people do not master Arabic?" *Ini line with Ambo*, Alfi, a participant who works as a teacher of religious subject, responded: Minangkabau is identic with Islam, as you can see in history. We have *adat basandi syarak syarak basandi kitabullah*. "

The data show that the learners see Arabic learning as a means to be a proper Minangkabau person. The idea is developed around participants' knowledge and interpretation of the aphorism. Participants see that the aphorism symbolizes the ideal world of Minangkabau, which is the existence of integration between *Adat* and Islam. Departing from this idea, understanding Islam is fundamental. Concerning the Quran as an Arabic book, participants believe that mastery of Arabic becomes urgent to understand the Quran, which is the foundation of Minangkabau *adat*. Therefore, participants suggest that learning Arabic is essential for strengthening the Minangkabau identity.

Although a product of past events, the aphorism is still well-maintained within the Minangkabau collective memory, as the interview shows. It is part of Minangkabau conversation and public discourse: it frequently appears in casual discussions among Minangkabau people, Islamic preaching in mosques, and scholarly discussions in universities.

Due to the popularity of the aphorism, it is also often narrated in political campaigns in West Sumatra, such as during the last gubernatorial election in December 2020. The elected candidates were seemingly very good at making this aphorism one of the campaign materials. In the inauguration's first speech, the elected

governor said that all of his policies would be in the framework of implementing the aphorism. After being sworn in, the candidate who won the election legally and formally referred to the aphorism as the basic foundation of his policies. In 2022, Minangkabau in West Sumatera succeeded in including the aphorism in a national constitution for the first time in history. National act no 17/2022 mention that one of the main fundamentals of West Sumatera Province is the principle of adat basandi syarak, syarak basandi kitabullah. It means the local government has a firmer footing to legally implement the aphorism in public policy.

The aphorism, which Minangkabau often abbreviates as ABS-SBK, seemingly has a strong influence on the lives of the Minangkabau people. As many researchers noticed, it has made an undeniable contribution making them one of the most devoted ethnic groups to Islam across Indonesia. Simon (p 51) provides a relatively accurate picture of how ABS-SBK has become an inseparable part of Minangkabau today. He said:

"The expressions appear widely in most general discussions about life in West Sumatra and are regularly included in almost any West Sumatrans newspaper article that touches on moral or social issues. The phrase has become so central to Minangkabau ideology that it usually appears as ABS-SBK often without explanation. "

The Minangkabau life sphere, which has a robust religious nuance, contributes to attitudes toward Arabic and motivation to learn the language, as revealed through the above participant's explanation. Some participants mentioned ABS-SBK, a historical heritage, as an aspect influencing their attitude and motivation to learn Arabic. Learning Arabic in the participants' perspectives is a form of their contribution to maintaining the existence of the aphorism in the life of the Minangkabau community. In other words, learning Arabic is seen as an effort to strengthen Islam in Minangkabau. By referring to Simon's scholarly opinion above, the effort also means strengthening the Minangkabauness, the strong sense of Minangkabau identity.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION, LIMITATION AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

In this final chapter, I will provide my final reflections that bring this work to a close. In addition to presenting the research conclusion, which constitutes the first part of this chapter, I will also discuss research limitations and future directions. Concerning research limitations, I will address certain aspects beyond my control as a researcher that may have influenced research results. In the final section, which pertains to future directions, I will explore the possibilities and opportunities for future research that build upon the limitations and unexplored areas identified in this study.

Conclusion

This research is built upon one fundamental question: How does religious identity influence the attitudes of Minangkabau people toward Arabic and their motivation to learn it within the social context of the Minangkabau? To address this question, an ethnographic approach is employed for data collection and analysis. The theory of collective religious memory, proposed by Halbwachs and Hervieu-Léger, serves as the analytical framework for interpreting the data. The research is conducted in four cities in West Sumatra, which is the homeland of the Minangkabau people. These cities include Padang, Padang Panjang, Bukittinggi, and Payakumbuh.

Research participants are divided into two distinct groups: Arabic learners and non-Arabic learners. The focus of the study is to explore both the attitudes and motivations of the Arabic learners. However, including the non-Arabic learners as research participants is justified because having a positive attitude toward Arabic does not necessarily guarantee motivation to learn the language. While a favorable attitude serves as a foundation, other factors and intrinsic motivations play a crucial role in driving the process of Arabic learning. By including both groups, the study aims to provide a comparative analysis, particularly in terms of the attitudes toward Arabic, between those who actively engage in learning activities and those who do not.

Meanwhile, the research participants who do not learn Arabic represent various occupational backgrounds. However, they share a common characteristic: they are Muslim devotees who actively engage in Islamic activities, such as teaching the Qur'an, delivering Islamic sermons in mosques, and regularly attending the five daily prayers. Including this group of participants provides valuable insights into their respectful attitude towards Arabic, despite not actively pursuing language learning.

Overall, both groups exhibit a positive attitude toward Arabic. It is evident that religious reasons greatly outweigh other factors in shaping the Minangkabau people's attitude toward the language. Participants' attitude towards Arabic primarily stems from their reverence for it as the language of the Qur'an and the language used in the recitations during the Islamic daily five-time prayers. Additionally, Arabic is highly regarded as the language of Islamic authority and the language of the scholarly Islamic world.

I found that there is a limited emphasis on instrumental and integrative factors driving their positive attitude toward Arabic. The majority of participants from both groups do emphasize the instrumental dimensions of Arabic, such as viewing it as a language that can provide economic opportunities or support their career development. Furthermore, they rarely perceive Arabic as a means to integrate into Arab culture.

The situation is influenced by the limited connection between Minangkabau culture and the Arabic world. The two societies have no direct connection and are geographically separated by thousands of miles of the Indian Ocean. Furthermore, their languages belong to different language families. Another significant factor is the stark contrast between Minangkabau's matrilineal culture, which is the largest of its kind globally, and the predominantly patrilineal culture of the Arab world.

Islam is the sole factor that serves as a bridge between these distinct communities. For approximately 3-4 centuries, Minangkabau has maintained a strong historical connection with Islam. Since their initial acceptance of Islam, the Minangkabau people have undergone a transformative journey in at least four stages. The society has gradually evolved from an animistic society to becoming an integral part of the global umma (Islamic community). It is important to note that the Minangkabau people not only embrace Islam as their religion but also view it as an inherent aspect of their cultural and heritage identity.

It implies that being a Muslim is one of the fundamental requirements of being considered a Minangkabau person, in addition to having a Minangkabau mother. The

Minangkabau people have chosen to harmonize their local customs, known as *adat*, with Islamic values and teachings. This communal agreement is reflected in the well-known Minangkabau aphorism: "*adat basandi syara' syara' basandi kitabullah*," which means that their customs are based on Islamic law, and Islamic law is based on the Book of God. Considering this context and the Arabic language, one can draw the conclusion that the relationship between the Minangkabau people and the Arabic language stems from religious factors.

Arabic learning motivation is also derived from religious factors and intentions. There are four religious-related concerns that contribute to participants' motivation to learn Arabic. These concerns include Arabic being the language of Islamic rites and traditions, the language of religious authority, the language of the Qur'an, and the language that reinforces the Minangkabauness, which means a strong sense of having of Minangkabau identity. One fundamental factor that develop all concerns are Islamic collective religious and cultural memory.

Regarding the first aspect, which concerns Arabic as the language of Islamic rites and traditions, the theory of collective religious memory suggests that religious rites and traditions serve as a site for preserving and transferring religious memory from one generation to another. In other words, through participating in religious rites and engaging in religious traditions, people develop and maintain their internal sense of belonging to their religion. In this case, participants' motivation to learn Arabic stems from their desire to understand the meaning behind the Arabic recitations of Islamic rites and traditions, such as the recitation of the five daily prayers and other forms of Islamic prayers.

Regarding Arabic recitations, all participants understand that it is irreplaceable and compulsory in Islam. At the same time, all participants know that it is not compulsory to know the meaning of recitations, which create a phenomenon called the practice of Islamic glossolalia. The term refers reciting Arabic recitations with the same experience of the practice of reciting the unknown (glossolalia) that is commonly practiced, for instance, in animistic ritual. Although they understand that learning the language is not a necessity while reciting it is, making the effort to learn can be perceived as participants' effort for a deeper engagement to the Islamic rites and traditions.

Relating to the second aspect, it is found that some participants are highly motivated to learn Arabic to claim a religious authority. Islamic scholarly tradition has

emphasized the urgency of Arabic as a tool in understanding Islamic value and law. Muslim umma, including Minangkabau, know that mastering Arabic is one of the fundamental requirements of becoming *ulama* (muslim scholars). The knowledge is part of Muslim collective memory that passed from generation to generations through many means, such as community conversation and educational practice in Islamic educational institutions. Participants' motivation to learn Arabic, in this context, come from the shared collective religious memory.

Regarding the second aspect, it is evident that some participants are highly motivated to learn Arabic in order to establish their religious authority. Within the Islamic scholarly tradition, the significance of Arabic as a means of comprehending Islamic values and laws has been emphasized. The Muslim umma, including the Minangkabau community, recognizes that mastery of Arabic is a fundamental requirement for attaining the status of an *ulama* (Muslim scholar). This knowledge is part of the collective religious memory of Muslims, transmitted across generations through various means such as community conversations and educational practices in Islamic institutions. Thus, participants' motivation to learn Arabic in this context is deeply rooted in the shared collective religious memory.

Before delving into the final finding, which focuses on learning Arabic to strengthen the sense of being Minangkabau, it is important to note that the current findings align with previous studies and research. Many Muslims learn Arabic for religious reasons, such as understanding Islamic recitations, claiming religious authority, and comprehending the Qur'an. While previous research has primarily focused on identifying and highlighting these motivations, this study aims to provide an explanation for the emergence of religious-driven motivation. It is the collective religious memory of the Muslim umma that instills a strong belief in the importance of Arabic, and some individuals translate this attitude into their motivation to learn the language. Hypothetically speaking, such motivation would not exist without the existence of collective religious memory in its present form. The Minangkabau participants' motivations for learning Arabic further confirm the shared attitudes and motivations among the universal Muslim believers, known as the Muslim umma.

The collective religious memory that fosters positive attitudes toward Arabic among all participants (36 participants) and their motivation to learn the language (26 participants) is deeply ingrained within the social fabric of Minangkabau society. I discovered that this social context serves as a rich reservoir for preserving and

transferring religious memory. The cities where I encountered the participants are characterized by the ubiquitous presence of mosques, which serve as centers of Islamic religious memory. The resonant calls to prayer (azan) permeate the public sphere, leaving virtually no place untouched by their sound when prayer times arrive. The practice of Islamic rites and traditions is pervasive in Minangkabau cities, as evidenced by the frequent attendance of individuals at mosques, the widespread presence of Islamic educational institutions, and active engagement with local traditions influenced by Islam.

I referred to the Minangkabau circumstance as the macro sphere of Arabic learning. It is a sphere characterized by a rich cultural memory that fosters an ideal environment for individuals to learn Arabic. In other words, by acknowledging its existence, I discovered that the expectation of Arabic learning is deeply ingrained. Furthermore, I introduce the micro sphere of Arabic learning, which encompasses specific conditions that greatly support the learning of Arabic, such as mosques. Most Arabic learning activities are typically conducted in mosques or locations associated with them. Considering the mosque's role as a center for preserving Islamic memory, it is unsurprising that Arabic learning predominantly occurs within this setting.

The final finding highlights the uniqueness of Minangkabau Muslims. It reveals that the purpose of learning Arabic is to reinforce the Minangkabauness (the sense of having Minangkabau identity). This connection stems from how the Minangkabau people perceive and embrace Islam, not solely as a religion but also as an inherent part of their cultural heritage. Unlike many other regions in Indonesia, Islam was introduced to the Minangkabau by native Minangkabau individuals who returned from outside the region where they acquired knowledge of Islam and embraced it. As natives with a comprehensive understanding of the Minangkabau social structure, they employed a cultural approach to introducing Islam. Historians argue that this approach played a vital role in successfully transforming Minangkabau from an animistic society to one where Islam became an integral part of their ethnic identity without having to abandon their matrilineal system. Throughout this transformative process, the Minangkabau community has produced numerous esteemed local scholars, who continue to be a source of pride in Minangkabau history and are ingrained in the collective memory of the community.

In the view of participants, Minangkabau local ulama is perceived as the most ideal Minangkabau figures: being Islamic devotees and respecting the Minangkabau

matrilineal culture. Regarding this, learning Arabic is viewed as replicating the actions and the accomplishments of the scholars. Since the scholars are perceived as the most ideal figures of Minangkabau, learning Arabic is viewed as strengthening the Minangkabauness.

Based on an examination of historical patterns and an understanding of the current circumstances, it is evident that an increasing number of Minangkabau individuals will pursue Arabic language learning in the future. Reflecting on my early career as a lecturer at Universitas Muhammadiyah of West Sumatra, approximately ten years ago, it was exceptionally rare to encounter non-traditional Arabic learners' groups. However, in recent years, particularly within the last five years, there has been a significant call to strengthen the concept of developing Minangkabau society based on its indigenous wisdom, which has become a prominent topic of public discussion. Moreover, this idea has transitioned into a local political commodity, gaining traction as a pivotal issue during political campaigns, particularly during elections. Public attention towards this notion intensified following the legalization of Act No. 17 in 2022 by the Indonesian House of Representatives, which specifically addresses the West Sumatra province. This act highlights the significance of Minangkabau local wisdom as a fundamental consideration underlying all policies in West Sumatra. The situation indicates the reinforced sense of Minangkabau identity, and learning Arabic may be regarded as one of its practical implementations.

Supporting the prediction, I have discovered that the majority of the courses I visited to meet participants are still ongoing as of the writing of this conclusion. For instance, the Arabic course at Taqwa Mosque of Muhammadiyah recently inaugurated a new class that convenes every weekend. In line with the findings of my research, it is noteworthy that a significant proportion of students enrolled in these courses are non-traditional learners. It is worth mentioning that one of the courses had to be discontinued due to the owner, who also served as a teacher, relocating from Payakumbuh to Padang. However, I have also been informed that several non-formal Islamic educational institutions have opened new Arabic learning classes, scheduled for weekends or evenings, to cater to the needs of non-traditional learners.

In terms of the contribution made by this research, the literature review has revealed that it fills a significant gap in the field. Consequently, this study has the potential to initiate future discussions on how religious and ethnic identity may influence attitudes and motivations toward learning Arabic. Based on my findings, I

highly recommend conducting comparative research in this area, specifically comparing the Minangkabau ethnic group with other Indonesian ethnicities that maintain a close relationship with Islam. Such a comparative study would provide valuable insights.

Furthermore, this research can serve as a reference for the development of an Arabic learning curriculum that aligns with the goals of Minangkabau Arabic learners. In my interviews, some participants mentioned that they had previously discontinued their Arabic learning journey due to the perception that the curriculum did not cater to their learning intentions. Individuals driven by religious motivation primarily view Arabic as a tool for comprehending the religion rather than for communication purposes. Consequently, the Arabic learning curriculum should prioritize reading and writing comprehension.

I have found that ethnographic research is a suitable tool for addressing and understanding the role of identity in language learning, particularly in relation to Arabic learning. This is especially relevant given that Arabic is a mandatory subject in formal Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia, from elementary to higher degree levels. It is crucial to investigate learners' feelings and thoughts regarding their identity in relation to Arabic learning. I predict that conducting this kind of research, particularly led by a native researcher, can enhance our understanding of Arabic learning activities. Consequently, it can serve as a fundamental consideration in formulating policies for the development of Arabic learning curricula in Indonesia and West Sumatra.

Limitation

Nonetheless, these results must be interpreted with caution, and several limitations should be taken into account. I am personally aware of three limitations that may, to some extent, affect the quality of the interpretations presented in this writing. These limitations include the impact of Covid-19, a lack of local literature, and my status as a non-native English speaker.

Regarding the first constraint, fieldwork for this research began at the end of 2020, amidst the Covid-19 outbreak. When the fieldwork commenced, West Sumatra had already experienced the first wave of the outbreak, leading to the relaxation of restrictions in response to societal demands for economic activities and social interaction. I seized this opportunity to conduct my actual field research. However,

restrictions were still in place, and they undoubtedly presented complex challenges for an ideal ethnographic fieldwork. To some extent, these restrictions may have limited the depth of the research, potentially causing certain details to be overlooked or not thoroughly explored. Nevertheless, I am committed to mitigating these effects by leveraging my status as a native Minangkabau researcher. I will draw upon my knowledge and experiences to effectively collect and analyze the data using established theories of collective religious memory.

The second constraint is the lack of local and related literatures that portray the related theme, which is learners' motivation and attitude in learning Arabic. Considering that Arabic learning activities in West Sumatra have been implemented for 3-4 centuries and the first Islamic universities were established in the sixties, one might expect relevant literatures to exist. However, my efforts to search for related literatures led to minimal results. This situation has resulted in a lack of preliminary understanding of learners' attitudes and motivation in the context of West Sumatra. An insight from such literatures, if available, could have opened opportunities for different, broader, and deeper interpretations of the data. Furthermore, I remain open to the potential existence of pertinent literature that may lie beyond the scope of my current awareness and knowledge.

The last constraint is my status as a non-native English speaker. It is widely acknowledged that language is a fundamental tool for expressing thoughts. It is not a simple task for someone from a different language background to convey their thoughts in another language, as each language maintains unique and distinct linguistic features. To put this into perspective, what may be humorous in one language might not translate the same way in another.

Given this, even though I, as the author, have made every effort to enhance my ability to express my thoughts in English while prioritizing ethical considerations, there may still be instances where my written interpretations fall short or are expressed inappropriately from a linguistic standpoint.

Future Directions

Future research may build upon the limitations of this study and address unexplored areas within the research theme. In summary, as long as future researchers thoroughly examine these limitations, it will likely lead them to make significant

contributions to the field. Therefore, I believe it is fair to encourage and welcome such research.

Regarding unexplored areas, these can be defined from at least two different standpoints. The first could be from the perspective of research participants. Since this research is intentionally designed to include non-traditional learners (those who learn Arabic outside formal institutions), future research may consider including school and university students in West Sumatra. This is highly possible since Arabic is compulsory in Islamic educational institutions. In terms of attitudes toward Arabic as a sacred language, future research may also extend its scope to involve participants from broader and diverse backgrounds, such as laypeople and non-Islamic university students in West Sumatra. Given that West Sumatra holds rich collective religious memory, certain attitudes toward Arabic may exist, awaiting further explanation.

The other aspect of the unexplored areas involves following up on this research. Future research into how existing attitudes and motivation toward Arabic may impact various aspects of learning, such as curriculum, learning methods, and learning management, are possible based on the foundation laid by this research. I suggest exploring fundamental questions, such as, 'Does the attitude toward Arabic and motivation for learning it, as explained in this research, necessitate a different learning approach?' If the answer is affirmative, a second question arises: 'How can a learning model be developed to better cater to the learners' needs?' or 'To what extent does the current approach fulfill the learners' needs?'

Another future research opportunity lies in comparative work. Indonesia is a diverse nation comprising various cultures, each with unique historical backgrounds. Some ethnic groups in Indonesia, such as the Malay ethnic group, share similarities with the Minangkabau in their attitude toward Islam. The Malay ethnic group, for instance, also regards Islam as a part of their cultural identity. In light of this, it is worthwhile to investigate their attitudes toward Arabic and their motivation to learn it. From my perspective, such research promises to yield valuable insights into the topic. Additionally, since the Malay ethnic group is also present in Malaysia, a neighboring country, it is intriguing to explore how different state policies and social circumstances may influence participants' attitudes toward Arabic and their motivation to learn it.

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