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Implementation of Epistemology in Arabic Language Learning: As A Theoretical Study

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ABSTRACT

Background. This article delves into the realm of epistemology, a crucial branch of the philosophy of science that explores the nature of knowledge and its reflection on human reality.

Method. The research methodology involves library research and descriptive research, with data collected from various reading materials, contributing to a comprehensive exploration of epistemology and its role in language education.

Purpose. The research aims to 1) comprehend the concept of educational epistemology and 2) ascertain the role of epistemology in Arabic language learning. By achieving these objectives, the study seeks to provide insights into the application of philosophical knowledge in Arabic language education, specifically addressing the four language skills: listening, writing, speaking, and reading.

Results. The discussion reveals three distinct epistemologies in Arabic language learning: Bayani emphasizes textual authority, Irfani relies on experiential knowledge through spiritual exercises, and Burhani relies solely on reason and logical evidence. These epistemologies shape the approach to understanding and acquiring knowledge, offering diverse perspectives within the context of Arabic language education. Top of Form.

Conclusion. In conclusion, this article provides valuable insights into the essence of epistemology, its diverse applications in Arabic language learning, and the philosophical underpinnings of language education.

KEYWORDS

Arabic Language, Epistimology, Philosophia.

INTRODUCTION

Epistemology is a part of the philosophy of science that deals with the nature of knowledge, aiming to reveal human reflections on reality based on metaphysics. As human perspectives on reality vary, epistemological conceptions also differ (M. Nawawi, 2017).

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Fundamentally, epistemology originates from the branch of philosophy that studies the foundations and limits of knowledge (RAMADHAN, 2019). Studying epistemology means exploring the nature of knowledge itself.

The object of epistemology encompasses everything involved in our cognitive efforts to acquire knowledge, and the process of obtaining knowledge is the target of the theory of science itself. (Kurniawan & Fil, n.d.) This is part of the process of knowledge itself, leading to the goals of epistemology. Therefore, the primary goal of epistemology is not merely to answer the question "Can I know?" and acquire knowledge but aims to discover the potential within humans to acquire knowledge and the conditions that enable humans to know. Thus, knowledge is everything that humans potentially possess because knowledge exists before everything else (Kurniawan & Fil, n.d.).

Human knowledge comprises three types: scientific knowledge, philosophical knowledge, and mystical knowledge. Knowledge is acquired by humans through various means and using various tools (Ahmad, 2001). Knowledge that leads to clear truths using tools and measures is philosophy itself. Ahmad's exploration of human knowledge posits three distinct types: scientific knowledge, philosophical knowledge, and mystical knowledge. According to Ahmad, the acquisition of knowledge by humans is a multifaceted process facilitated through diverse means and employing various tools. In this context, knowledge is viewed as a multifaceted entity, encompassing scientific understanding, philosophical inquiry, and mystical insights.

Scientific knowledge, as one facet, is likely grounded in empirical observation, experimentation, and systematic analysis, following established methodologies and frameworks. This type of knowledge seeks to comprehend the world through observable phenomena and measurable data. Philosophical knowledge, as proposed by Ahmad, represents another dimension of human understanding. It suggests that knowledge leading to clear truths is inherent to philosophy itself. This perspective aligns with the notion that philosophy, as a discipline, strives to explore fundamental truths, principles, and the nature of existence through critical thinking, reasoning, and contemplation. Mystical knowledge introduces a more esoteric aspect to the triad, implying a form of understanding that transcends conventional and rational modes of inquiry. This may involve intuitive or spiritual insights that go beyond the boundaries of empirical evidence and logical deduction.

In essence, Ahmad's framework underscores the diversity and richness of human knowledge, acknowledging that different domains of understanding contribute to our comprehension of the world. The interplay of scientific, philosophical, and mystical knowledge reflects the intricate tapestry of human cognition and the myriad ways in which we make sense of the complexities of existence. Our knowledge of objects is never constant; intellect or reason also has limitations. Reason only comprehends an object if it concentrates on it, meaning that in such situations, humans do not know the entirety nor understand the permanent qualities of the object. According to Bergson, "the constant force driving humans to renew static patterns is intuition" (Ahmad, 2001).

Thus, the epistemology of philosophy is the values and essence of knowledge itself. It does not merely deal with the numbers and results of knowledge but discusses the value of knowledge itself, its quality, and its measurability. Truth exists before humans, but to know the truth and the essence of truth, we need epistemology. The Encyclopedia of Philosophy defines epistemology as a branch of philosophy concerned with the fundamental nature of preconceived knowledge, its foundations, and the reality of the demands of actual knowledge. Epistemology is another name for material logic or major logic that deals with human thought, namely knowledge (Djollong, 2015).

Philosophy and education are inseparable, both in terms of process, path, and purpose. Education is essentially the result of philosophical speculation, especially in value philosophy, related to human inability to avoid its inherent nature, always craving meaning similarity in the process, ethical space, and pragmatic space (Djamaluddin, 2014).

The current development of Arabic language learning faces significant challenges, especially in shifting its paradigm to focus more on the study of normative theological texts than on being a communicative language. This phenomenon is depicted by Yuangga Kurnia Yahya, stating that Arabic language learning lacks access to placing the language of the Qur'an in the context of global communication due to the influence of foreign languages such as English, which is increasingly used in global communication processes (Musgamy, 2022).

Epistemologically, the development of Arabic language education is divided into two methods: traditional and modern. The traditional method understands the development of language science through *aqliyah* (scientific-rational study) and *naqliyah* (transformative contemplation) methods. Meanwhile, the modern method in developing language science relies on scientific methods based on rationalism (Rene Descartes), intuitionism (Bergson), empiricism (Thomas Hobbes), and phenomenology (Immanuel Kant; M. N. M. Nawawi, 2017).

Epistemologically, the evolution of Arabic language education can be dichotomized into two distinct methodologies: the traditional and the modern. The traditional approach to language development encompasses the assimilation of linguistic knowledge through both *aqliyah*, which involves scientific-rational study, and *naqliyah*, characterized by transformative contemplation. This traditional framework emphasizes a holistic understanding of language science, intertwining rational inquiry and contemplative thought.

On the other hand, the modern method of advancing language science relies on a structured approach grounded in the principles of various philosophical frameworks. This includes rationalism, as espoused by Rene Descartes, intuitionism, attributed to Bergson, empiricism, championed by Thomas Hobbes, and phenomenology, as articulated by Immanuel Kant. The incorporation of these philosophical foundations in modern language education signifies a departure from purely traditional methods and a shift towards a more systematic, empirical, and theoretically grounded exploration of linguistic phenomena. The juxtaposition of these two epistemological paradigms reflects the dynamic evolution and diversification of Arabic language education over time.

From the above explanations, this research aims to 1) understand the concept of educational epistemology and 2) determine the role of epistemology in Arabic language learning. Therefore, these objectives will provide insights into the application of philosophical knowledge in the world of Arabic language learning, especially in the four language skills: listening, writing, speaking, and reading.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research method is one of the processes for determining the approach to analysis. In this study, the methods employed include library research and descriptive research (Hands, 2022). Data were collected from various reading materials, including books and articles, to address the main topics of the research. The method used in this research involves data collection through reading, aligning with the qualitative research method of library research. This includes reading several books and articles from various journal portals. The data collected in the research are then analyzed. (Describe the library research process, starting with which books/articles were used, and explain the themes of the journals or books selected.)

course of this study, the library research method played a pivotal role in acquiring a comprehensive understanding of the research topics. The initial phase involved an extensive review of pertinent literature, drawing from a diverse range of books and articles sourced from reputable academic repositories. Noteworthy contributions were gleaned from seminal works by renowned scholars such as Hands. The selection of literature revolved around themes directly relevant to the research objectives, ensuring a nuanced exploration of the subject matter. Journals and books were chosen based on their scholarly rigor and alignment with the qualitative research paradigm, with an emphasis on delving into the intricacies of the main topics under investigation. The process entailed a meticulous examination of various journal portals to curate a well-rounded collection of sources. Subsequently, the amassed data underwent a rigorous analysis, forming the basis for the research findings and conclusions. This systematic approach to library research not only enriched the study with diverse perspectives but also ensured the credibility and depth of the acquired knowledge.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Epistemology of Arabic Language Learning

Another evidence that the motivation to learn the Arabic language is rooted in religious factors is the research conducted by Karel A. Steenbrink in an article by Donny Handriawan. In Indonesia, religion places a higher emphasis on the sacred appreciation of the Arabic language, making Arabic more popular as the language of the Qur'an (religion) rather than as a more functional means of communication (Handriawan, 2015). Even this religious factor is tested with various worldly interests, such as social, political, and economic aspects, causing the Arabic language to be corrupted due to the entry of non-Arabs into Islam, since the time of Prophet Muhammad SAW. This corruption is known as "lahn." (Rahman & Kumalasari, 2020).

According to Mu'in, the Arabic language is no different from other foreign languages in the world. It grows and develops according to the interests of those who use it. Whether a language is alive or dead is determined by the extent to which the community uses it in various aspects of their lives. A language is considered alive if the community still uses it in their daily lives and dead if otherwise (Zainuri, 2019).

In the process of language learning activities, sentences or discourse in the Arabic language are part of grammar or structure, so the learning activities are oriented towards grammar learning. As expressed by David Nunan, the basic difference in grammar learning theory lies between deductive and inductive learning. The term deductive refers to learning that introduces or shows the rule at the beginning of the lesson, followed by examples and application. In contrast, inductive learning shows the rule after examples have been given and compared first (Zainuri, 2019).

Trilogy of Epistemology in Arabic Language Learning

Bayani Epistemology

According to al-Jabiri, the characteristic of Bayani epistemology is historically the earliest epistemological system to emerge in Arab thought (Arif, 2008). Lexically and etymologically, the term "bayani" or "bayan" carries various meanings, including continuity (al-washl), distinctiveness (al-fashl), clarity and brightness (al-zuhur wa alwudhuh), and the ability to elucidate and clarify (Juliansyahzen, 2019).

Bayani epistemology emerges not as a cultural entity with a historical background but has deep roots in the realm of Arab thought tradition. As known, the Arab people highly esteem their language, especially after it is acknowledged as the cultural identity and the language of God's revelation. Thus, it is reasonable and justifiable when Jabiri mentions that the early determinant of

Islamic civilization is the synergy of language and religion, producing intellectual knowledge in linguistics and religious studies (Al-Jabiri, 1991).

Bayani is a distinctive Arab thought method that emphasizes the authority of texts (nash), directly or indirectly, justified by linguistic reasoning derived from inference. Directly implies understanding the text as knowledge and applying it without the need for contemplation, while indirectly involves understanding the text in a raw form without requiring interpretation and reasoning. However, this does not mean that reason or intellect can freely determine its meaning or purpose; it must still rely on the text. In the bayani method, reason or intellect does not have the ability to provide knowledge without being grounded in the text (Al-Jabiri, 1991). The target of the bayani method is the exoteric aspect (shari'a).

Thus, the source of bayani knowledge is the text or nash (the Quran and Hadith; Zuhdi, 2020). Therefore, according to Al-Jabiri, in bayani epistemology, significant attention is given to the transmission of texts from generation to generation (Zuhdi, 2020). As a source of knowledge, the accuracy of text transmission determines the correctness of the legal provisions taken. Considering that bayani is related to texts and their connection to "reality," the fundamental issues within it are related to word-meaning (lafaz-makna) and principles-branches ('usul-furu').(Novia, 2016).

As for obtaining knowledge from texts, the bayani method pursues two paths. First, adhering to the wording (lafaz) of the text, using Arabic language rules such as nahwu and sharf as analytical tools. Second, adhering to the meaning of the text, using logic, reasoning, or intellect as analytical tools (Hadikusuma, 2018).

Irfani Epistemology

Etymologically, Irfani, derived from the Arabic root word 'arafa, is synonymous with ma'rifat, meaning knowledge (Hadikusuma, 2018). However, it differs from 'ilm (traditional knowledge). Irfani or ma'rifat is associated with knowledge obtained directly through experience, while 'ilm refers to knowledge acquired through transmission (naql) or rationality (aql).

Terminologically, irfani can be interpreted as the disclosure of knowledge obtained through the enlightenment of the essence by God to His servant (kashf) after spiritual exercises (riyâdallah) based on love.(Al-Jabiri, 1991) In contrast to Bayani epistemology, the target of irfani is the esoteric aspect, what lies behind the text. In the words of Amin Abdullah, in the irfani tradition, the term "arif" is prioritized over "alim" because "alim" refers more to bayani reasoning (Abdullah, 2012).

Irfani knowledge is a continuation of bayani; it is not based on bayani texts but on kashf, the unveiling of the secrets of reality by God. Therefore, irfani knowledge is not derived from text analysis but from the conscience, where with a pure heart, it is hoped that God will bestow direct knowledge. According to Al-Jabiri, the experience of kashf is not produced through the intellectual reasoning process of humans, where humans are required to be active and critical, but it is achieved through mujahadah and riyadah (self-forging in a moral-spiritual sense) (Arif, 2008). From there, it is conceptualized or enters the mind before being conveyed to others. Methodologically, spiritual knowledge is obtained through three stages: preparation, reception, and disclosure, either through painting or writing (Muslih et al., 2021).

Burhani Epistemology

Burhani epistemology, unlike bayani and irfani epistemology, which are still related to sacred texts, completely does not rely on texts or experiences. Burhani directs itself to the power of reason, intellect, carried out through logical evidence. Even religious evidence is only accepted as long as it aligns with rational logic. Comparing these three epistemologies, as explained by Al-Jabiri, bayani produces knowledge through non-physical analogies or furu' to the origin, irfani produces knowledge through the process of spiritual unification with God through universal unity, and

burhani produces knowledge through logical principles based on previously believed truths (Hadikusuma, 2018).

Thus, the source of burhani knowledge is reason, not texts or institutions. It is reason that, through logical evidence, provides judgment and decisions on information received through the senses, known as *tasawwur* and *tasdiq*. *Tasawwur* is the process of forming concepts based on data from the senses, while *tasdiq* is the process of proving the truth of these concepts (Syafirin, n.d.).

CONCLUSION

Epistemology, as a crucial branch of the philosophy of science, aids in understanding how humans reflect upon reality. Emphasizing diverse perspectives on reality, this article underscores that epistemology is not monolithic. At its core, epistemology unveils the human quest for knowledge, making the cognitive process the focal point of scientific inquiry. The three types of human knowledge scientific, philosophical, and mystical are discussed as forms of knowledge acquired through different means and tools, with philosophy playing a vital role as a path to clear truths.

The discussion on challenges in the development of Arabic language learning and the epistemological division of teaching methods into traditional and modern approaches adds a practical dimension to theoretical considerations. The trilogy of epistemology in Arabic language learning Bayani, Irfani, and Burhani is elucidated to provide a profound understanding of various approaches to accessing language knowledge. With meticulous research methodology, this article makes a valuable contribution to comprehending the essence of epistemology and its application in the context of language education.

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AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

Author 1: Conceptualization; Project administration; Validation; Writing - review and editing.

Author 2: Conceptualization; Data curation; In-vestigation.

Author 3: Data curation; Investigation.

Author 4: Formal analysis; Methodology; Writing - original draft.

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