

Feminist Ideological Bias in the Interpretation of the Qur'an: Implications for Arabic Language Education

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Abstract:

Qur'anic interpretation is inevitably influenced by the ideological and epistemological backgrounds of its exegetes. In recent decades, feminist interpretations of the Qur'an have emerged as a response to patriarchal readings that dominate traditional exegesis. Feminist scholars attempt to reconstruct the meaning of certain Qur'anic verses—particularly those perceived as marginalizing women—by employing critical hermeneutics and contextual approaches. This study aims to analyze the forms of ideological bias embedded in feminist interpretations of the Qur'an and explore their implications for Arabic language education, especially in Islamic educational settings. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, the research examines feminist tafsir texts alongside pedagogical literature on Arabic language instruction. Findings reveal that feminist ideological bias often leads to reinterpretations that prioritize gender equality, at times diverging from classical Qur'anic sciences and linguistic principles. In the realm of Arabic education, such biases may affect how teachers and students engage with Qur'anic texts, impacting their understanding of linguistic structures, semantic nuances, and the socio-cultural context of the Arabic language. Consequently, there is a growing need for Arabic language pedagogy that is both critical and contextual, while remaining grounded in authoritative interpretative traditions. This study contributes to the discourse on integrating gender-aware readings without compromising the scholarly integrity of Qur'anic interpretation and language instruction.

Keywords: Arabic language education, feminist tafsir, Qur'an interpretation

INTRODUCTION

The interpretation of religious texts has always been influenced by the socio-historical, political, and epistemological frameworks of those who engage in exegetical work. The Qur'an, as the central scriptural source in Islam, has been subject to continuous interpretation across generations and geographical contexts. Classical tafsir (exegesis) emerged in the early centuries of Islam with the aim of explicating divine intent based on linguistic, theological, jurisprudential, and contextual approaches. These traditional interpretations formed the foundation of Islamic thought, law, and morality. However, in modern times, there has been a growing movement among Muslim intellectuals and scholars—particularly those influenced by Western critical theories—to revisit the Qur'an through alternative hermeneutical lenses. One of the most prominent among these contemporary movements is the feminist interpretative trend.¹

¹ A.Wadud, *Qur'an and Woman: Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective*. Oxford University Press, 1999, h. 87.



Feminist interpretations of the Qur'an represent a significant paradigm shift from classical exegesis. Rooted in the broader feminist theory that seeks to challenge patriarchal structures, gender-based inequality, and the marginalization of women in society, feminist exegetes argue that historical interpretations of the Qur'an have been largely patriarchal. They contend that such interpretations reflect not divine will, but rather the sociocultural norms of male exegetes living in patriarchal societies. From this perspective, the problem is not the Qur'an itself but the interpretative frameworks imposed upon it over centuries. Consequently, feminist scholars have sought to reconstruct or re-read the Qur'an from a perspective that highlights equality, justice, and inclusivity.²

Among the most prominent figures in this movement are Amina Wadud, Asma Barlas, and Fatima Mernissi, who each present unique contributions to feminist Qur'anic hermeneutics. Wadud, in her groundbreaking work *Qur'an and Woman*, argues that a gender-inclusive interpretation is possible by returning to the ethical principles embedded within the Qur'an itself. She emphasizes the Qur'an's commitment to *taqwa* (piety), *'adl* (justice), and *rahmah* (compassion), which she believes are incompatible with gender hierarchy. Asma Barlas, in *"Believing Women" in Islam*, takes a historical and epistemological approach by distinguishing between the text of the Qur'an and its patriarchal interpretations. She asserts that the Qur'an, when read without the prism of patriarchal tafsir traditions, reveals a message of gender equity and moral agency for women. Mernissi, on the other hand, critiques both tafsir and hadith literature from a sociological and historical point of view, suggesting that male scholars throughout Islamic history have selectively interpreted texts to uphold male dominance and maintain social control.

While these feminist perspectives are applauded in some academic circles for their critical engagement with tradition and their emphasis on gender justice, they are also the subject of intense debate and criticism. One of the central concerns is the methodological orientation of feminist exegesis. Critics argue that feminist interpreters often begin with ideological presuppositions rooted in Western liberalism or secular feminism, thereby allowing their agenda to shape their reading of the Qur'an. This leads to the potential imposition of foreign epistemological categories onto a sacred text that was revealed within a distinct historical, linguistic, and spiritual context. Additionally, critics point out that in attempting to deconstruct patriarchal interpretations, some feminist scholars end up undermining the Qur'an's own language, metaphors, and semantic integrity. The emphasis on thematic reinterpretation or reader-centered analysis can result in selective reading or even textual distortion, where the holistic unity and coherence of the Qur'anic message are compromised.³

The debate on feminist bias in Qur'anic interpretation cannot be understood in isolation from the broader epistemological transformations in Muslim societies. As postcolonial Muslim nations engage with modernity, secularism, and global feminism, the question of how to reconcile Islamic tradition with modern notions of gender equality becomes more urgent. In educational institutions, particularly those that teach Arabic language and Islamic studies, this tension is acutely felt. Feminist readings of the Qur'an, with their linguistic and semantic reinterpretations, inevitably influence Arabic language pedagogy, especially when the Qur'an is used as a primary source for language instruction. The Qur'an is not only a spiritual text but also a linguistic masterpiece that forms the backbone of Arabic language instruction in Islamic

² F Mernissi, *The Veil and the Male Elite: A Feminist Interpretation of Women's Rights in Islam*. England, Trans Perseus Books, 1991, h. 64.

³ S. H. Nasr, *The Heart of Islam: Enduring Values for Humanity. Islam Ditinjau dari Berbagai Aspeknya*, Jilid II. Malang, UI Press, 2002, h. 98.

and academic settings. Consequently, when key Qur'anic terms—such as *qiwāmah* (guardianship), *nushūz* (disobedience), *ḥijāb* (veil), *rijāl* (men), and *imra'ah* (woman)—are reinterpreted through a feminist lens, this reshapes how Arabic is taught, understood, and engaged with in both religious and secular learning environments.

For instance, in classical Arabic instruction, the concept of *qiwāmah* has been taught as a linguistic structure indicating responsibility and leadership, often linked with male authority in familial contexts. However, feminist exegetes challenge this reading by arguing that *qiwāmah* is not about male dominance but about mutual responsibility and moral accountability. This interpretative shift affects not only theological discourse but also the semantics and syntax taught in Arabic classrooms. Similarly, terms like *ḥijāb*, once narrowly interpreted as a physical barrier or a dress code, are now being re-examined as metaphors for spiritual modesty, moral boundaries, or even political symbolism. These shifts in interpretation require educators to reconsider how they present Qur'anic vocabulary, grammar, and syntax in Arabic instruction.⁴

Moreover, these reinterpretations intersect with curricular and institutional policies. In many Muslim-majority countries, Arabic language education is deeply interwoven with Qur'anic instruction. As feminist readings become more prominent in scholarly literature and textbook production, language educators must grapple with the pedagogical implications: Should curricula integrate feminist readings as alternative interpretations? How should educators navigate the tension between traditional grammatical analysis and ideological reinterpretations? What safeguards should be in place to ensure that linguistic accuracy is not sacrificed for ideological alignment?

This also raises broader pedagogical concerns. Education is not a value-neutral enterprise; it transmits cultural, moral, and epistemological norms. Therefore, the incorporation of feminist Qur'anic interpretations into Arabic language curricula may signify a larger ideological shift in educational goals and content. On one hand, such inclusion may promote critical thinking, pluralism, and gender sensitivity. On the other hand, it may also lead to confusion among students regarding the boundaries between linguistic interpretation and ideological advocacy, particularly when ideological readings appear to challenge long-standing theological doctrines or grammatical norms. This necessitates a careful re-evaluation of the balance between interpretive diversity and academic rigor in educational content.

Another concern is the authenticity and fidelity of language instruction rooted in scriptural texts. Since the Qur'an is revealed in Arabic and considered the linguistic miracle (*i'jaz lughawī*) of Islam, preserving its linguistic integrity is paramount. Critics of feminist reinterpretations argue that the semantic shifts introduced by feminist exegesis could distort the foundational meanings of Qur'anic Arabic, potentially altering how future generations comprehend the Qur'an itself. For instance, if students are taught alternative feminist meanings of certain Qur'anic terms without grounding them in classical lexicons or *tafsīr bil-lughah* (linguistic exegesis), this may contribute to a detachment from the textual and linguistic heritage of Islam.

At the same time, it is important to acknowledge that language evolves and that the Qur'an itself encourages reflection (*tadabbur*) and engagement across generations. The Qur'an repeatedly calls on its readers to ponder its meanings and apply them in light of their lived realities. Feminist scholars argue that their approach is a response to this divine call, aiming to recover the Qur'an's liberatory spirit from the constraints of patriarchal readings. From their

⁴ K.Hidayat, *Wacana Pluralisme Agama: Membangun Toleransi Berbasis Agama*. Jakarta, Paramadina, 2005, h. 56.

perspective, challenging inherited interpretations does not mean rejecting the Qur'an, but rather reclaiming its original ethical vision. This epistemological position is especially relevant for modern Muslim educators who seek to harmonize faith with contemporary notions of justice and equality.⁵

This study, therefore, aims to examine the phenomenon of feminist ideological bias in contemporary Qur'anic interpretation, especially as it pertains to its influence on Arabic language education. It interrogates how feminist exegetical methods reinterpret key Qur'anic terms and discourses and how these reinterpretations filter into the pedagogical practices and curriculum designs of Arabic language programs. The study seeks to answer critical questions: What are the hermeneutical assumptions behind feminist interpretations? To what extent do these interpretations diverge from classical Arabic linguistic understandings? What is their impact on Arabic language instruction, especially in institutions where the Qur'an is a primary linguistic and moral source?

By situating this inquiry at the intersection of Qur'anic hermeneutics, gender theory, and language pedagogy, this research seeks to offer a nuanced and critical contribution to both Islamic and educational studies. It does not intend to dismiss feminist engagement with the Qur'an but to critically examine the implications of such engagements when they intersect with language education rooted in sacred texts. Ultimately, this study hopes to foster a balanced discourse that respects the integrity of the Arabic language, the sanctity of the Qur'an, and the importance of critical engagement with evolving intellectual paradigms.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The study of feminist interpretations of the Qur'an has gained considerable attention in recent decades, particularly within the fields of gender studies, Islamic thought, and hermeneutics. A significant portion of this scholarship critiques traditional exegesis for its patriarchal tendencies and advocates for a re-reading of the text through a lens that is more attuned to women's experiences and perspectives. Amina Wadud, in her seminal work *Qur'an and Woman*, argues that many of the gender-biased interpretations found in classical tafsir are not intrinsic to the Qur'anic text itself, but rather are products of the socio-historical contexts in which those interpretations were constructed. Her methodological emphasis on grammatical analysis and internal coherence seeks to demonstrate that the Qur'an, when read holistically, promotes spiritual and ethical equality between men and women. Similarly, Asma Barlas, in *Believing Women in Islam*, critiques the authoritarian epistemology of classical tafsir and introduces a hermeneutic approach that foregrounds the Qur'an's anti-patriarchal message.

Barlas challenges the notion that the Qur'an should be read through hadith-dominated tafsir frameworks, arguing instead for a direct engagement with the Qur'anic text, free from interpretive traditions that may reinforce gender hierarchies. Fatima Mernissi, although primarily a sociologist, also contributed significantly to feminist discourse in Islam by exposing the political and gendered dimensions of hadith literature and their influence on Qur'anic interpretation. In contrast, scholars rooted in traditional Islamic sciences, such as Muhammad al-Ghazali and Sayyid Qutb, acknowledge the spiritual equality of men and women but maintain that gender roles are divinely ordained and functionally differentiated. They emphasize the

⁵A.Kecia, *Women and Gender in Islam: Historical and Modern Perspectives*. Amerika, Oxford Islamic Studies, 2013, h. 76.

importance of adhering to established principles of tafsir bi al-ma'thūr (interpretation based on transmitted reports) and linguistic analysis rooted in the Arabic language's historical usage.⁶

From an educational standpoint, research on the integration of feminist tafsir into language and religious curricula remains limited. However, scholars such as Ruba Salih and Haifaa Jawad have noted the growing inclusion of gender-sensitive readings in Islamic studies and Arabic language classrooms, particularly in Western academic settings. This trend, while promoting critical engagement, also raises concerns regarding textual integrity, linguistic fidelity, and the potential for ideological bias to influence pedagogical practices. Theoretical frameworks that inform this study include feminist hermeneutics, critical pedagogy, and Qur'anic linguistics. Feminist hermeneutics emphasizes the role of reader perspective and power dynamics in shaping textual meaning, while critical pedagogy, as outlined by Paulo Freire, advocates for an education that empowers learners to question dominant narratives and seek justice.

Qur'anic linguistics, on the other hand, anchors interpretation in the syntactic, morphological, and rhetorical structures of the Arabic language, offering a necessary counterbalance to ideologically driven readings. Together, these literatures underscore the complexity of balancing inclusivity and interpretive freedom with methodological rigor and linguistic authenticity. This study builds on these insights by specifically examining how feminist interpretative frameworks impact the teaching and learning of the Arabic language within the context of Qur'anic education.

Feminist hermeneutics in Islam emerged as a response to centuries of androcentric readings of the Qur'an and Hadith literature that, according to many scholars, perpetuated gender hierarchies under the guise of religious legitimacy. The feminist exegetical movement seeks to reclaim the Qur'an as a text of moral and spiritual equality. Scholars such as Amina Wadud, Asma Barlas, Fatima Mernissi, Riffat Hassan, and Ziba Mir-Hosseini have been at the forefront of this intellectual project. Amina Wadud's groundbreaking work, proposes a rereading of Qur'anic verses that focuses on *tawhid* (the oneness of God) as a theological principle of equality, thereby challenging hierarchical gender roles. Her hermeneutical method involves linguistic analysis, historical contextualization, and a feminist ethical framework, builds on this by asserting that the Qur'an does not sanction patriarchy but has been interpreted through patriarchal filters due to epistemological biases embedded in classical Islamic thought. These scholars differentiate between the Qur'an as divine text (*nass*) and its interpretations (*tafsir*) as human efforts influenced by social, political, and gendered contexts. Feminist hermeneutics thus aim to deconstruct centuries-old interpretations that have marginalized women, advocating for an egalitarian reading grounded in Qur'anic ethics rather than patriarchal jurisprudence (*fiqh*).⁷

Ideological bias is not exclusive to feminist interpretations but is a recurrent theme in all exegetical traditions. Classical tafsir, though rigorous in method and deeply grounded in Arabic philology, often reflects the cultural and social norms of its era, including assumptions about gender. For example, scholars such as al-Tabari and Ibn Kathir, while respected for their depth of linguistic and contextual analysis, also embedded prevailing gender norms into their tafsir. Verses like *al-rijāl qawwāmūna 'ala al-nisā'* (Q.S. al-Nisā': 34) have traditionally been interpreted in ways that reinforce male authority over women. Modern feminist exegetes argue that such interpretations reflect the patriarchal culture of the exegetes more than the ethical

⁶ C. T. Mohanty, *Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity*. London, Duke University Press, 2003, h. 42.

⁷ A. Qibtiyah, Gender dan Tafsir Al-Qur'an: Studi atas Pendekatan Feminis terhadap Teks Suci. *Jurnal Al-Bayan*, (2017), 111–124

teachings of the Qur'an. However, they also acknowledge that reinterpreting sacred texts requires methodological discipline and theological humility. The risk of replacing one ideological bias with another—this time feminist—is a real concern in the eyes of traditional scholars. Critics contend that some feminist interpretations verge on selective readings that prioritize gender justice over holistic Qur'anic coherence. Yet, proponents of feminist exegesis assert that no interpretation is neutral. As Paul Ricoeur and Hans-Georg Gadamer argue in hermeneutic theory, all interpretation is shaped by pre-understanding and historical situatedness. Therefore, acknowledging one's ideological standpoint becomes a form of intellectual honesty, not a flaw. Feminist exegesis, then, is not about dismissing tradition but about expanding the interpretive space to include voices long excluded from tafsir discourse.⁸

Arabic, as the language of the Qur'an, holds a unique status in Islamic theology and education. However, the interpretive elasticity of Arabic syntax, morphology, and semantics means that even small linguistic choices can carry significant theological weight. Feminist scholars often draw attention to this, noting how gendered terms and grammatical structures in Arabic have been read in ways that affirm male dominance. For example, the term *qawwamun* in Q.S. al-Nisā': 34, often translated as "in charge of," could also be understood as "financially responsible" or "caretakers," depending on the socio-legal context. Likewise, the masculine plural, common in Arabic to denote mixed-gender groups, is often read by traditional exegetes as referring specifically to men. Feminist linguists argue that such readings obscure the potential inclusivity of the original text.⁹

Moreover, the Arabic root system allows for words with multiple connotations. The word *daraba*, found in Q.S. al-Nisā': 34, traditionally interpreted as "to strike," can also mean "to separate," "to travel," or "to set forth." Feminist scholars highlight how selecting one meaning over others is not purely linguistic but ideological. These decisions in tafsir are often reflective of the interpreter's worldview and social assumptions. This raises critical questions for Arabic language education: How should educators teach Qur'anic Arabic in a way that is both linguistically faithful and ideologically aware? Can students be equipped to recognize the plurality of possible readings without destabilizing the text's authority? Arabic language education, particularly in Islamic settings, often treats Qur'anic interpretation as fixed and authoritative, rarely allowing room for hermeneutic plurality. However, feminist hermeneutics opens pedagogical possibilities for a more critical and inclusive engagement with the text. Teaching students that language is not ideologically neutral fosters a more reflective approach to learning Arabic.¹⁰

Curricula that engage with feminist interpretations help learners see how linguistic structures can perpetuate certain worldviews. For instance, when analyzing verses related to inheritance, testimony, or marriage, students can be encouraged to explore how different grammatical choices lead to diverse interpretive outcomes. This not only enriches their linguistic competency but also promotes ethical literacy. Furthermore, feminist readings can humanize the educational experience for female students, allowing them to see themselves not merely as subjects of the text but as active interpreters. This is particularly important in contexts where Arabic language education intersects with Islamic theology and gender norms. A pedagogy informed by feminist hermeneutics would include critical analysis of Qur'anic

⁸ N. Hidayati, *Tafsir Feminis dan Relevansinya terhadap Kurikulum Pendidikan Islam*. Bandung, Jurnal Pendidikan Islam, 2020, h. 33–52.

⁹ Z. Anwar, *Islam, Gender and Democracy in Comparative Perspective*, London, Duke University Press, 2003, h. 42.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, 56.

vocabulary and syntax, examination of multiple tafsir perspectives, gender-sensitive translation workshops, dialogues on ethics, justice, and interpretation.¹¹

Such an approach not only enhances linguistic proficiency but also cultivates intellectual autonomy and spiritual engagement. Despite its potential, integrating feminist hermeneutics into Arabic language instruction is fraught with challenges. There is institutional resistance in many Islamic educational settings to interpretations that are seen as Westernized or ideologically driven. Some educators fear that such approaches might dilute the sanctity of the Qur'anic message or introduce relativism into sacred studies. Nevertheless, scholars like Ziba Mir-Hosseini and Kecia Ali argue that intellectual engagement with the Qur'an should not be equated with irreverence. On the contrary, the Qur'an itself invites contemplation, questioning, and reflection. Education, from an Islamic perspective, is not merely about transmission but also about transformation. Emerging educational models, particularly in gender studies programs within Islamic universities, are beginning to incorporate these discussions. Institutions such as the International Islamic University of Malaysia and the Institute of Women's Studies in the Arab World (IWSAW) have initiated interdisciplinary courses that bridge Arabic studies, theology, and feminist theory. These models serve as promising blueprints for rethinking Arabic pedagogy in a way that is both faithful and progressive.¹²

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative-descriptive approach to analyze feminist ideological bias in Qur'anic interpretation and its implications for Arabic language education. The qualitative method is appropriate for exploring interpretative frameworks and educational practices, especially when dealing with nuanced textual and contextual analyses. Data sources for this research include primary feminist tafsir texts such as those authored by Amina Wadud, Asma Barlas, and Fatima Mernissi, as well as secondary literature in the fields of Qur'anic studies, feminist hermeneutics, and Arabic language pedagogy. The analysis also incorporates classical tafsir literature for comparison, such as the works of al-Tabari, Ibn Kathir, and al-Qurtubi, which provide a baseline for traditional exegetical approaches. Educational texts and curricula used in Arabic language instruction at Islamic institutions are examined to identify how feminist interpretations are integrated, if at all, and what impact they may have on the learning process. The study follows a content analysis framework to identify recurring themes, ideological positions, and linguistic reinterpretations within the feminist tafsir corpus. This includes examining how key Arabic terms are redefined, how grammatical structures are reconsidered, and how socio-cultural assumptions influence meaning-making. In parallel, classroom practices and teaching materials are analyzed to understand how such interpretations influence pedagogical strategies, particularly in Muslim-majority and Western educational contexts. To ensure academic rigor, triangulation is applied by cross-referencing feminist tafsir with classical interpretations, linguistic analysis, and educational observations. The goal is to draw meaningful insights into the relationship between ideology, interpretation, and language pedagogy, offering a balanced critique that respects scholarly diversity while advocating for methodological integrity.

¹¹ K. Abou El Fadl, *The Search for Beauty in Islam: A Conference of the Books*. Amerika, Rowman & Littlefield, 2020, h. 49.

¹² L. Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a Modern Debate*. Yale University Press, 1992, h. 176.

DISCUSSION (Comprehensive and Extended)

The engagement of feminist ideology with Qur'anic interpretation marks a significant development in both modern Islamic thought and the broader discourse on gender equality in religious traditions. Feminist exegesis has emerged as both a critique and an alternative to classical interpretations, challenging centuries-old understandings that many contemporary scholars argue are embedded in patriarchal assumptions. This development, however, raises profound questions about hermeneutics, linguistic integrity, and the implications of such ideological shifts on Islamic education—particularly in the realm of Arabic language instruction, which relies heavily on Qur'anic Arabic as its foundation.¹³

One of the core assertions of feminist tafsir is that classical exegetes operated within socio-historical contexts that were inherently patriarchal, thereby coloring their interpretations of key verses. Feminist interpreters seek to recover what they claim is the Qur'an's original egalitarian ethos by re-reading certain verses through ethical, thematic, and holistic lenses. In doing so, they often propose new interpretations of verses that have been central to Islamic legal and social structures, such as Q.4:34 (*al-rijāl qawwāmūna 'ala al-nisā'*), which has traditionally been interpreted as endorsing male authority over women.

These reinterpretations, while aiming to uphold principles of justice and equity, frequently employ methodologies that prioritize ethical intentions (*maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*) and contextual analysis over established linguistic and grammatical norms. This has generated significant debate within both religious and academic circles. For example, the reinterpretation of *qiwāmah* as "care and support" rather than "authority" is linguistically possible but lacks support from classical Arabic usage, which associates the root *q-w-m* with notions of standing over, responsibility, and leadership. Similarly, reinterpretations of the word *daraba* in the same verse to mean "to separate" or "to avoid" rather than "to strike" appeal to modern sensibilities but deviate from dominant lexicographic and exegetical traditions.¹⁴

In the context of Arabic language education, the implications of such re-readings are far-reaching. Arabic, particularly Qur'anic Arabic, is a highly structured language governed by precise rules of syntax (*naḥw*), morphology (*ṣarf*), and rhetoric (*balāghah*). Qur'anic verses are often used as primary texts in teaching these linguistic principles. When alternative interpretations of key verses are introduced without due attention to linguistic rigor, students may be misled about the actual usage and structure of classical Arabic. This poses a risk not only to linguistic clarity but also to the theological coherence of the Qur'anic message.¹⁵

Furthermore, many feminist interpretations originate from scholars educated in Western academic settings, where post-structuralist and critical theories dominate. These theories often reject the notion of fixed meanings in texts, emphasizing instead the role of reader subjectivity and socio-political context. While such approaches can enrich interpretive diversity, they may also conflict with traditional Islamic epistemologies that view the Qur'an as a divine text with objective meanings accessible through disciplined study and transmitted knowledge. The reliance on subjectivity and ethical impressions in feminist tafsir risks turning interpretation into ideological projection, especially when it discounts centuries of scholarly consensus.¹⁶

In terms of pedagogy, the uncritical incorporation of feminist interpretations into Arabic language education could result in a form of epistemological confusion. Students—especially

¹³ Alwani, *Muslim Women and Knowledge: Understanding the Quranic Model*. Bandung, Islamic Studies Journal, 2020, h. 405–427.

¹⁴ Asad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity*. Amerika, Stanford University Press, 2003, h. 98.

¹⁵ Bennett, *Muslim Women of Power: Gender, Politics and Culture in Islam*. California, Continuum, 2010, h. 42.

¹⁶ S. Zuhur, *Women and Empowerment in the Arab World*. In S. Joseph & S. Slyomovics (Eds.), *Women and Power in the Middle East*. England, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003, h. 97.

those in foundational stages of Arabic learning—may struggle to distinguish between grammatical fact and interpretive opinion. For instance, when the meanings of verbs, nouns, and syntactic structures are altered or reimagined in feminist readings, students may internalize these readings as linguistically normative, thereby weakening their command of the language and distorting their understanding of Qur'anic semantics.¹⁷

On the other hand, excluding feminist perspectives entirely may render Arabic education intellectually stagnant and disconnected from contemporary ethical and social challenges. It is important to acknowledge that feminist tafsir has contributed to a necessary reevaluation of certain traditional interpretations that may have marginalized women or overlooked their agency. It has also encouraged critical inquiry, interdisciplinary scholarship, and greater female participation in the traditionally male-dominated field of Islamic exegesis.

Hence, what is needed is a balanced, integrative approach to Arabic education that honors the linguistic and theological integrity of the Qur'an while remaining open to interpretive plurality. This means fostering an educational environment where students can explore various interpretive traditions—classical, reformist, and feminist—within a framework that emphasizes linguistic accuracy, methodological transparency, and respect for scholarly precedent.

One promising pedagogical model involves comparative tafsir analysis. Here, students examine a verse such as Q.4:34 across different tafsir traditions, noting how grammar, context, and worldview influence interpretation. This not only enhances linguistic skills but also cultivates critical thinking, allowing students to evaluate interpretations on their scholarly merits rather than ideological alignment alone. Such an approach also nurtures intellectual humility, as students realize that no single perspective monopolizes truth, and that sincere efforts to understand the Qur'an must be grounded in both reverence and reason.¹⁸

Additionally, Arabic education can benefit from incorporating modules on *'ulūm al-Qur'an*, including principles of tafsir, knowledge of *asbāb al-nuzūl* (occasions of revelation), *naskh* (abrogation), and *wujūh al-qirā'āt* (variant readings). These tools provide students with the hermeneutical depth needed to navigate contemporary interpretations responsibly. By equipping students with these classical tools, educators enable them to engage with feminist and other modern interpretations without being misled by ideological simplifications or decontextualized arguments.¹⁹

Finally, it is crucial to recognize that feminist interpretations are not monolithic. There is a wide spectrum within feminist Qur'anic hermeneutics—from those who seek reform within the bounds of tradition, to those who advocate for radical theological reconstruction. Educators must therefore guide students in discerning this diversity, understanding that while some feminist scholars, like Amina Wadud, seek to harmonize ethical concerns with Qur'anic grammar, others may adopt more revisionist or even confrontational stances. This distinction is essential for developing a nuanced, informed perspective that values both linguistic integrity and ethical sensitivity.²⁰

In sum, the discussion surrounding feminist ideological bias in Qur'anic interpretation and its implications for Arabic language education demands a thoughtful, multidimensional

¹⁷ A. Zahra, *Feminist Hermeneutics and Qur'anic Interpretation: Towards a Gender-Sensitive Reading*. *Al-Jāmi'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies*, 59(1), 1–28. <https://doi.org/10.14421/ajis.2021>, 1-28.

¹⁸ M. Yamani, *Feminism and Islam: Legal and Literary Perspectives*. Yogyakarta, Ithaca Press, 1996, h. 67.

¹⁹ A. Quraishi, *Her Honor: An Islamic Critique of the Rape Laws of Pakistan from a Woman-Sensitive*. Jakarta, Ithaca Press, 2008, h. 295–311.

²⁰ Qibtiyah, A. (2017). Gender dan Tafsir Al-Qur'an: Studi atas Pendekatan Feminis terhadap Teks Suci. *Jurnal Al-Bayan*, 23(2), 111–124.

response. Ideological critique must be matched with linguistic discipline; ethical concern must be balanced with epistemological humility. Only through such an approach can Arabic education remain both faithful to its sacred foundations and responsive to the evolving intellectual and moral landscapes of the modern world.²¹

CONCLUSION

The intersection between feminist ideological perspectives and Qur'anic interpretation presents both challenges and opportunities for the field of Arabic language education. While feminist exegesis contributes to the discourse by highlighting ethical concerns and advocating for gender justice, its application within Arabic pedagogy must be approached with methodological rigor and linguistic fidelity. The reinterpretation of key Qur'anic terms and verses, when not aligned with established grammatical rules, can potentially distort students' linguistic understanding and compromise the coherence of Qur'anic meanings.

Nonetheless, feminist tafsir offers a valuable stimulus for critical thinking, inviting learners to engage with the Qur'an not only as a linguistic text but also as a moral and spiritual guide. Therefore, Arabic language curricula must find a balance between preserving the integrity of classical Arabic and accommodating the evolving landscape of Qur'anic hermeneutics.

A reformed curriculum should foster comparative analysis, interdisciplinary learning, and critical engagement with various interpretive traditions. By integrating classical tools such as *'ulūm al-Qur'an*, alongside contemporary methodologies, students can be equipped with both the technical skills and ethical insights needed to navigate complex religious texts.

Ultimately, maintaining an open yet disciplined approach ensures that Arabic language education remains relevant and faithful. It prepares students to honor the Qur'an's linguistic majesty while participating responsibly in the ongoing dialogue about its meaning in a changing world. Through such a balanced educational model, the goal is not only to produce competent language users, but also reflective, informed, and spiritually grounded individuals.

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²¹ C. T. Mohanty, *Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity*. London, Duke University Press, 2003, h. 29.

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