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An Evaluation of Secondary School Thai Language Textbooks in Pattani, Thailand: An Islamic Perspectives

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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the evaluation of Thai language textbooks used in secondary schools in Pattani, Thailand, with a specific emphasis on the opinions of Islamic teachers. Due to the cultural and religious diversity in the area, this study aims to assess whether these textbooks align with Islamic principles and perspectives. It provides an in-depth analysis of the educational materials used in the region. Through qualitative methods such as content analysis and in-depth interviews, the study aims to understand the perceptions, experiences, and challenges of Islamic teachers in integrating Islamic content into Thai language instruction. It also explores the extent to which these textbooks incorporate linguistic skills, cultural representation, and Islamic values, and sheds light on the role of teachers in promoting culturally sensitive and religiously inclusive education. Additionally, the study investigates the particular challenges faced by Islamic teachers in Pattani when implementing the integration of Islamic perspectives. It examines their teaching strategies, the adaptation of materials, and any unique considerations that arise in comparison to teachers in non-Islamic contexts. The findings of this study will offer practical recommendations for curriculum development and teacher training programs, aiming to improve the quality of language education and promote a more culturally responsive and inclusive learning environment in secondary schools in the region.

Keywords:

Secondary school; Thai language;
textbooks; teacher perspectives

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1. Introduction

Thailand is a multilingual country with a complex linguistic landscape. While Thai is the national language, other languages like Malay and various regional dialects are widely spoken [4]. Thai is the only official/national language of the country but only about 50% of the population use it proficiently as their first language or mother tongue. It is used as a medium of instruction at all levels of education all over the country. This has led to language shift and language decline which is evident in all indigenous languages, especially among the small languages [11]. At the same time, underachievement in education is also a characteristic of those students whose mother tongue is different from the school language, and this is most obvious among those living in border regions in the Deep South, in the highlands of the far North, and on distant islands. For large language groups living along the border with neighboring countries, [10] not only is their mother language declining but the majority have little access to government services, education in particular; they experience

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exclusion in and by education. On the southern border of Thailand for example Pattani Malay is the language spoken by the majority. Others are Thai (Standard Thai), southern Thai, Thai Je-he or Thai Takbai, Satun Malay, Bahasa Malaysia, Chinese, and Arabic which is the language of the Qur'an [2]. The southernmost provinces, including Pattani, have large populations of ethnic Malay Muslims who primarily speak Malay [12]. This presents educational challenges in striking a balance between teaching the national language while respecting linguistic and cultural diversity.

Thailand's Deep South is characterized by a long-standing ethnoreligious conflict [7]. Efforts to enforce Thai language education in this region have been met with resistance, sometimes contributing to tensions [3]. Understanding how Thai textbooks are perceived and utilized by Islamic teachers in Pattani is crucial if policymakers wish to develop culturally sensitive and effective language education programs.

1.2. Literature Review

Historically, in Southeast Asia there is only one country that is known as "Land of the Free or Prathet Thai". The significant name was given due to the complete freedom from any occupation by any European or other foreign powers, except during a war. It is one of the countries in southern Asia that still applies the system of kingdom which officially known as the Kingdom of Thailand [15].

In the beginning, Thailand was fully controlled by a Monarchy system which started from 1782 until 1932. After this long period, Thai rebels organized themselves and finally seized power in a coup which resulted in the replacement of the Monarchy system into a Constitutional Monarchy. Since then, Thailand has been under the rule of many governments, both civil and military. In addition, the historical name of Thailand was Siam since 1592, which refers to people in Chao Phraya Valley, and the new name of Thailand was officially adopted in 1949 [15].

Thailand is a huge country that is dominated by Buddhists which makes scholars argue over the origins of the Thai people. Consequently, the country consists of many ethnic groups. Therefore, researchers suggested that they migrated from a region stretching from southern China to Northern Vietnam. Others argue that the Western Pacific (History of Thailand, 2003). Nevertheless, the Thai government easily assimilated all these various ethnic groups such as Chinese, Cambodian, Indian, Indonesian, Laotian, Burmese and Vietnamese into Thai groups due to the similarities of their religion except for Muslims in the southern part of Thailand who are considered a minority group [8].

Geographically, the strategic location of the kingdom of Thailand in the centre of the Southeast Asia peninsular brings significant benefit to the country. It covers an area of 514,000 square kilometers, bordering different nations in the region which creates disputes amongst each other. Burma is to the west, Lao People's Democratic Republic to the north and east, Cambodia to the southeast and finally the Malaysia territory to the south. In addition, the long coastline islands in the Andaman Sea and the Gulf which is around 2,420 kilometers opens a wide range of connections to the outside world [14]. Besides that, Thailand has 1,650 kilometers distance from north to south, and 780 kilometers range from east [15].

Economically, Thailand has plenty of resources scattered throughout the country. The central region is mostly fertile plains due to the Chief River which runs from the north and it is often called the "rice bowl of Thailand". Due to the fertile plains, most of the tributary resources come from plantation activities such as rice and other crops (Encarta encyclopedia of Thailand, 2008).

According to the latest census conducted in July 2011, there are about 67,091,089 people in Thailand and is considered as the nineteenth most populous country in the globe. The official language of the country is Thai which constitutes 94% while the estimated population of Bangkok and its vicinities is approximately 9.3 million. In the southern borders of Thailand, where majority of

the population are Malay-Muslim speaking communities [6], they represent (4-6 %) for the covering population while a number of people live in the mountains of the northern region which consists of 525,000 highlanders using distinct languages (Country profile of Thailand, 2011). Thailand has a respected number of immigrants especially from China starting from 1850 until the Second World War. Thus, the Chinese population in Thailand nowadays represents 10-15 percent of the total population and they have a significant economic influence to this day because they could establish their own commerce as artisans in the country when they encouraged Thai Government to assimilate them to become Thai citizens and speak Thai [1].

1.3 Conceptual Framework

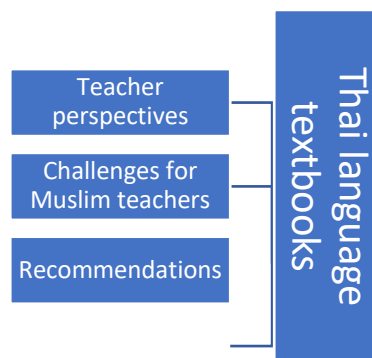


Fig. 1. Conceptual framework of the study

2. Methodology

In this study, the researcher will use the qualitative research method. The qualitative research method is chosen because it is considered could explore lived experiences, behavior, emotions, and feelings [9]. For this research, the researcher wanted to explore the quality of secondary schools Thai language textbooks in Pattani teachers. and it is appropriate for the language teaching and learning context. In addition, Creswell [5] stated that by using a qualitative method the researcher can get a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. The participants of this study are secondary teachers who teach in Thai language subjects in Pattani, Thailand. Statistically, all the teachers are amount approximately 1800 teachers in 147 schools [13]. In 2021, there is no updated data released by these teachers. However, it is estimated that the number of teachers will continue to grow along with the increasing interest of the people of Pattani in this alternative education system.

The participants of this study are derived from the teachers who teach in secondary schools Thai language textbooks in Pattani, Thailand. This is chosen because they stated that they opted for this alternative type of education based on religious reasons. Moreover, the teachers has a huge number of all in Pattani about 1400 teachers in 2014 [13]. In addition, the researcher can get access to these teachers. The purposive sampling is selected to choose the sample for this study. The researcher chooses this kind of sampling because it will give the researcher knowledgeable informants to give rich information about the phenomenon. The researcher contacted the founder of the principal of each secondary school and ask them to recommend the teacher to be the informant for this study. It is hoped that the informants could give rich information about their teaching Thai language experiences to their students.

3. Result

3.1 Research Question 1: Assessment of 12th grade Thai language textbooks

This research question is designed to assess the quality of 12th grade Thai language textbooks in Pattani from an Islamic perspective. The data gathered to answer the question were dependent upon detailed interviews with secondary school Thai language teachers. 16 codes were developed from informants' answers. The researcher formerly regarded the codes into six themes consequently the results are more relevant and inclusive to the research. Table 1 mentions the emerging themes of the informant's responses with the 11 interviewees on assessing the quality of 12th grade Thai language textbooks in Pattani from an Islamic perspective.

3.2.1 Promoting values

An analysis of the notion of "quality" in Thai language textbooks from an Islamic standpoint demonstrates a special relationship between the development of moral principles and successful language acquisition. This viewpoint underscores the significance of promoting character development that is consistent with Islamic values in addition to language proficiency. In this context, "quality" refers to more than just language proficiency. It includes information delivered and its content in an approach that upholds moral principles. The question asked by the researcher was answered by a secondary school teacher teaching Thai language subject in grade 12th with experience of more than two years. Teacher 1 stated that:

In my opinion, "quality" in Thai language textbooks incorporates a variety of factors when viewed through the lens of Islam. It is more than simply understanding and using language correctly.

Moreover, added that:

It involves the choice of material that supports morality and ethical behavior and is consistent with Islamic beliefs. Furthermore, it promotes tolerance and understanding by guaranteeing an impartial and balanced portrayal of Islamic customs and beliefs alongside those of other civilizations and faiths.

In conformity with Teacher 1's response is the answer of Teacher 3. Once the researcher simplified whether there is any particular concept of "quality in the context of Thai language textbooks from an Islamic perspective, Teacher 3 highlighted that:

I use an integrated approach to examine the quality of Thai language textbooks from an Islamic perception. It includes the language sessions' academic rigor, which guarantees that students acquire good language abilities. It also involves the syllabus's integration of Islamic beliefs, which promote moral and responsible behavior in students.

3.2.2 Accuracy and absence of stereotypes

In textbooks, the authenticity of the information and the lack of damaging stereotypes are important criteria. Sincerity is highly valued in Islam, and it is forbidden to disseminate false information or visualizations, especially those that could support derogatory stereotypes regarding specific religious or cultural communities. Teacher 2 mentions that:

I make use of a multilayered method to evaluate 12th grade Thai language textbooks from an Islamic perspective. To begin with, I make sure the information supports Islamic principles such as social justice, tolerance, and respect. Teacher 11's statement backs the above declaration which is:

I've been refining my method of analyzing Thai language textbooks for 12th grade from an Islamic angle for the past three years. The method has many different stages. I thoroughly check that the information complies with Islamic principles of compassion, honesty, and respect.

In light of this, it is important to meticulously examine textual resources employed for language training to make sure they accurately depict Islamic ideas, history, and heritage. To prevent misrepresenting Islamic ideas and practices, it is necessary to refrain from making assumptions, predictions, and biased interpretations. Teacher 5 alleged that:

The representation of Muslim personalities and Islam is examined in my second analysis to make sure it is truthful and free of unfavorable preconceptions in my approach to quality assessment of textbooks.

3.2.3 Nurturing critical thinking

An Islamic viewpoint states that a good textbook either of the Thai language or any other should develop critical thinking abilities in addition to language fluency. This is consistent with the importance Islam places on learning and comprehending. There is no particular textbook for it. Hence, the teachers felt that the context which promotes respect and critical thinking not only for Islam but also for other religions makes it a quality textbook. In response to the researcher's question. Teacher 8 proclaimed that:

I take into account whether the literature or context of the textbook promotes critical thinking and respect for various cultures and ideas or not, which is in line with Islam's devotion to mutual understanding and equitable cohabitation.

Interpreting the text critically becomes imperative. Textbooks are supposed to motivate students to do more than merely conduct grammar and vocabulary guidelines to memory. Rather, students ought to be asked to evaluate the information critically, spot underlying presumptions, and take into account other viewpoints. Teacher 11 emphasized that:

The textbook is required to encourage autonomous thought and critical thinking so that students can make well-informed choices based on their morality and Islamic beliefs.

3.2.4 Culturally sensitive and avoids contradicting Islamic principles

When evaluating Thai language textbooks from an Islamic standpoint, it is important to take into account the distinct religious and cultural elements of Pattani's culture. To ensure harmony with wider Islamic values, it is necessary to take an in-depth and subtle approach that honors the region's distinct cultural background. Teacher 9 said that:

I closely monitor any content that can be interpreted as being disrespectful of Islamic customs or practices. This includes making certain that the terminology and illustrations are courteous and suitable for the target culture.

Recognizing Pattani's rich cultural legacy and how it influenced Thai language usage is crucial. Nevertheless, to make sure that all textbooks support a comprehensive view of Islam that can be rooted in global Islamic principles while being considerate of regional traditions, this effect should be evaluated within the context of Islamic values. According to Teacher 1:

My opinion is influenced by my experience as a teacher in Pattani, which holds a strong Islamic background. When assessing the language employed and the selected subject material, I take the local context and cultural sensitivity into account. This guarantees that the textbooks relate to the experiences and histories of the students, encouraging a feeling of participation and identification with the educational resources.

3.2.5 Contextual relevance and cultural identity

Giving due consideration to the distinct religious and cultural dimensions of Pattani's influence is of the utmost importance when evaluating Thai language textbooks taken from an Islamic standpoint. The Thai language is shaped by this impact, leading to the need for a strategy that achieves a balance between contextual appropriateness and cultural identity preservation, as explained by Teacher 10:

Pattani's distinctive fusion of Islamic and Thai cultures definitely shapes my strategy. I'm conscious of the surrounding environment and how important it is to acknowledge the rich cultural legacy of the area. This entails searching for material that incorporates Islamic principles into a Thai cultural context so that students may relate to and understand it.

My evaluation of Thai language textbooks has undoubtedly been influenced by my time spent working as a teacher in Pattani, a region with an intense Islamic identity. My sensitivity to the need the textbooks to recognize and honor the current values of religion and culture is heightened by my inclusion in this cultural setting.

3.2.6. Importance of sensitivity

Being sensitive is vital for preventing the spread of any misconceptions or prejudices regarding the religious customs and cultural practices of the region. Textbooks must fairly depict the variety of Islamic practices and beliefs found in Pattani's, acknowledging how regional cultural influences can mold customs and way of life without going against fundamental Islamic tenets. Teacher 4 revealed that:

I search for any portrayals of Islamic doctrine, customs, or personalities that could be interpreted as offensive or untrue. Feedback from local Muslim community members and religious scholars is requested in this regard.

Sensitivity is not only about representation. Between learners from various backgrounds, it seeks to promote understanding and respect for one another. By respectfully and accurately depicting Pattani's unique expressions of culture, the textbooks have the potential to develop understanding among Thailand's varied groups. Teacher 9 emphasized that:

When evaluating, I focus primarily on how Islamic beliefs are portrayed in the textbook. Do any tales or illustrations that demonstrate the application of Islamic principles? Does the material in question refrain from portraying Islam or its adherents in an ignorant or hurtful way?

Table 1
 Assessment of 12th grade Thai language textbooks

I CODES	III SUB-THEMES	II THEMES	IV RQ-1
Respect, social justice, tolerance Honesty, respect, compassion Respect, compassion, honesty	Content alignment with Islamic values	Promoting values	Assessment of 12 th grade Thai language textbooks
Accurate, avoids stereotypes Sensitive, avoid stereotypes, accurate	Portrayal of Islamic and Muslim characters	Accuracy and absence of stereotypes	

Avoids stereotypes, accurate		
Reassures critical thinking, peaceful coexistence Encourages critical thinking, forming informed opinions	Encouraging critical thinking and rising diversity	Nurturing critical thinking
No culturally insensitive or Islamically contradictory content Language usage aligns with Islamic principles (for example, avoiding profanity)	Language usage and cultural sensitivity	Culturally sensitive and avoids contradicting Islamic principles
Resonates with students' backgrounds, promotes cultural identity Celebrate Pattani's heritage, align with the Thai language education and Islamic values Acknowledges and holds local Islamic culture, showcases contributions to Thai society	Integration of local Islamic values and traditions	Contextual relevance and cultural identity
Consider the cultural sensitivity and local context Understanding the importance of cultural sensitivity commma seeks culturally appropriate materials Profound appreciation for Pattani's heritage avoids culturally insensitive content	Influence of Pattani's context	Importance of sensitivity

3.2. Research Question 2: Expected Challenges for Muslim Teachers in Secondary Schools

3.2.1 Expected challenges for muslim teachers

"The educating of a multicultural environment which brings different levels of complexity and challenges. Muslim teachers find it difficult to make a curriculum that suits Islamic doctrine and to satisfy their students' multicultural backgrounds simultaneously."

This quote projects some difficulties for Muslim teaching staff which generally include ensuring cultural sensitivity and meeting the students' diversity. It indicates the possible contradiction between the internal rules of Islamic principles and the need for a neutral culture within a diverse educational environment.

3.2.2 Potential conflicts

"Playing with gender portrayal, use of references to religious holidays, and past narrative may come across as conflicting with Islamic values. Muslim teachers may experience difficulties in harmonizing such impasse."

This phrase mentions specific fields of conflicts like the one on the portrayal of gender roles, the other on religious subjects and finally the one on historical narratives. It exemplifies that these aspects are fancy but through which difficulties Muslims teachers may face in their dealing with Islamic teachings.

3.2.3 Personal experiences

Sharing a tale with practices that don't recognize Islam as a religion could be a difficult thing. Teachers, who are Muslims, may often find themselves in a neutral position between their private experiences and the content of class.

These quotations go back to the individual experiences of the Muslim teachers; they infer that feelings of discomfort arise when they meet contradictions with Islamic practices. It mentions the fact that this means specialists must demonstrate sensitivity when addressing personal matters in class that are not the same as those in the curriculum.

"Finding oneself in a passage after a historical event in which Muslims or Muslims' history is not mentioned is upsetting. This is one of the personal experiences that brings to the fore the idea of inclusiveness in educational materials.

Table 2
 Expected challenges for Muslim teachers

I CODES	III SUB-THEMES	II THEMES	IV RQ-1
	Challenges	Cultural sensitivity Cultural neutrality Lack of resources	Expected challenges for Muslim teachers in secondary schools
	Potential Conflicts	Gender role portrayal Religious holidays & observances Historical narratives	
	Personal Experiences	Story with practices incompatible with Islam Historical passage lacking Muslim representation	

3.3 Research question 3: What recommendations do Muslim teachers provide to teach Thai language textbooks in Pattani from an Islamic perspective?

The themes obtained from this research question are:

3.3.1 Integration of Islamic values

Islamic educators frequently offer the input of Islamic values in learning the Thai Language through the curriculum textbooks. Through the choice of materials and the development of Islamic content in the lesson, these are the main focuses. The unique approach involves creation of a period that exhibits the essentials of good behavior, morality and core principles in Islam.

In this connection, the topic of "Islamic Value Integration" into Thai education books appears as a result of the comments by Muslim teachers in Pattani. The following quotations from the interviewees provide insights into their perspectives and emphasize the significance of incorporating Islamic values into the educational context:

The following quotations from the interviewees provide insights into their perspectives and emphasize the significance of incorporating Islamic values into the educational context:

"Quality of Thai language textbooks in the Islamic perspective is not limited to a mastery of the grammar and usage of the language but also has the factors that express and support the moral and ethical behavior man should practice in line with Islamic beliefs".

To sum up, the Islamic values integration into Thai language textbooks is the constant theme that Teaching Muslims in Pattani use. The advice in this regard involves the development of a range of materials and lessons that reflect Islamic principles so as to contribute to more ethics and morals, as well as a greater comprehension of belief within the educational set-up. This implies that the teachers put the principles of holistic approach into action while they try to enable their students with many different forms of a knowledge and culturally sensitive form of learning.

3.3.2 Incorporation of local context

Content is enriched by the very fact of integrating the context of native Pattani into the teaching process. For instance, the teachers provide the explanation of how language learning can be carried out using the pupils' experiences, languages, histories, and cultures. Thus, this strive aims at boosting students' perception of being the owner of the instructional material.

"I took into account my experience as a teacher in Pattani where culture dominated by Islam lives." My approach is always considering the setting where I deliver as well as the cultural elements. I observe the prevailing language, and I adjust the tone accordingly. Thus, the textbooks reflect the experiences and backgrounds of all learners, including those from different cultural groups, leading to a sense of belonging as the students connect and identify with the educational materials.

On the other hand, I will treat the uniqueness of the Space as a significant component of the design by being attentive to the region's distinct religious and cultural setting. I constantly search teachings of Pattani kingdom and its respected cultural heritage and luckily, I always maintain Islamic principles and traditional Thai language patterns. One of the critical outcomes that these balance create is that students discover a part of their cultural identity and develop a sense of dignity in this discovered identity.

Furthermore, attitudes towards regional Islamic mores and beliefs are emphasized by adopting a comprehensive framework that is encompassing and incorporating.

3.3.3 Promotion of critical thinking

Preparing Muslim teachers is equally important because they realize that teaching methods should allow students to think critically. The recommendations are based on the idea that books and education models should guide students to doubt the facts, use their own minds to consider the possible solutions, and take in view points of different sides. Therefore, it responds the mentioned Islamic norms that cultivate understanding and learning.

It is explicitly solidified by the recommendations listed by the Muslim teachers who focused on critical thinking in students. Quotations from the interviewees emphasize the importance of teaching methods that encourage students to engage in critical thinking, question assumptions, and consider diverse perspectives:

Quotations from the interviewees emphasize the importance of teaching methods that encourage students to engage in critical thinking, question assumptions, and consider diverse perspectives:

"The implementation of these above five-part criteria will help me to assess if the chosen context and textbook encourage deep thinking and acceptance of cultures, which is in line with Islam that advocates for mutual respect and coexistence."

3.3.4 Avoidance of stereotypes and misrepresentations

This review reveals common advice as regards stereotypes in language textbooks of Thai. The instructors emphasize the point about which the information should be exact and true without any distortions or negative stereotypes. This has got to do with being truthful and transparent, and at the same time is consistent with the Islamic principle which prohibits false information.

A strong glare of the aversion to stereotyping and the accuracy of the Thai language texts lies in the recommendations for Islamic teachers. Quotations from the interviewees emphasize the significance of truthful and non-stereotypical content:

Quotations from the interviewees emphasize the significance of truthful and non-stereotypical content:

"My method is analysis using a multi-layer approach to interpret the 12th grade Thai language book from the Islamic perspective. First, I ensure that the information supports social justice issues, tolerance, and mutual respect; which are Islamic principles."

"I have been adjusting my approach of segregating Thai language textbooks for the 10th grade by an Islamic viewpoint for the past three years. The method is in many steps and I commit to check that the information hurts no Islamic values of loyalty, respect, and honesty."

4. Conclusion

Through their own stories and lessons, it has been ingrained to me that besides the regions, there are also values, ideas from the Islamic perspectives about the teaching of the Thai Language textbooks where they are originated from in Pattani. This research summary is the last part of the paper and it sums up the core insights presented here, therefore, a reader gets a full sense of how a complex reality influenced by a lot of different factors looks for such educators. It puts the accents on the very core of their experiences, with the focal point on cultural diversity, the learning problems, and the complex ideal of the fusion of Islamic values with the teaching procedures.

Alternatively, a close look into the viewpoint of Muslim teachers in Pattani about the adoption of Thai language textbooks through an Islamic perspective has been a complex story to tell. Ultimately, it has been this research that has measured, selected, and disclosed issues as well as norms and principles that have permeated their life on campus. These teachers steer through a complex landscape, however, this is evidence of a fluid and fragile system requiring the maintenance of cultural sensitivity, addressing educational challenges, and the incorporation of Islamic values. In their narrations, a wide myriad of narrative lineaments is illustrated, presenting a lively painting full of nuances that add to the complex educational textures.

Overall, the study of the issues and the conclusions exemplify the role of resilience, grit and determination to ensure that our students in Pattani access education that is linguistic, cultural and religious enriching and vital. What we learn from the explored themes and the closing is a story that goes beyond the common borders of classic education, a story that stresses the necessity of requiring and accepting cultural differences as the key to positive and truly wise teaching.

The future research should be centered on using the insights gathered from current study to design it further. The importance of conducting in-depth research and presenting students' and parents' perspectives cannot be overstated, as the education system is largely founded on their

perspectives, experiences, and expectations. Furthermore, national and cultural cross-sectional studies can provide invaluable insights into the general or specific parts of the findings and guidance obtained from this research.

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