

Issues in TESL

Ratnawati Mohd Asraf

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. The Implementation of the First Communicative Syllabus in Malaysia
Ratnawati Mohd Asraf 1
2. The Theoretical Bases for Language Teaching and Syllabus Design
Ratnawati Mohd Asraf 11
3. English as a Global Language and the Teaching of Mathematics and Science in English
Wan Aimran Wan Ahmad Kamil 23
4. Learning Science in English: The Plight of Rural Students in Malaysia
Tengku Badariah, Mohd Sahari Nordin, and Abdul Shakour Preece 29
5. ELT and Islam: Recent Developments
Abdul Shakour Preece 51
6. The Need to Develop ELT Materials for Muslim Learners
Abdul Shakour Preece 69
7. The Teaching of Writing: From Theory to Practice
Noor Lide Abu Kassim & Kamal J. Badrasawi 83
8. Responding to Students' Writing: A Critique of Peer Review
Ratnawati Mohd Asraf 97
9. Students' Attitudes Towards Reading and Parental Involvement in their Children's Reading: A case study of three schools
Ratnawati Mohd Asraf 119

ELT AND ISLAM: RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Abdul Shakour Preece

When considering the status of English and ELT in the Muslim world, we notice that there are two main groups or opinions: those in favour of Muslims learning English and those against. The group who argue against Muslims learning English claim that ELT materials and practices may be unsuitable or even harmful for Muslim learners because they are Anglo-centric in nature and promote 'linguistic imperialism' (Qiang and Wolff, 2005; Adamo, 2005; Pennycook, 1994; and Argungu, 1996).

The opposing group support the idea of Muslims learning English, contending that English is a useful and essential part of life in the 21st Century. The latter group hold that inappropriate ELT content and practices can be adapted to suit the needs and culture of Muslim learners (Ratnawati, 2005).

After an elaboration of the views of these two viewpoints, we will consider some important developments in Muslim education, as a result of the World Conferences on Islamic Education, and in particular, the intellectual movement known as 'Islamization of knowledge' (IOK). This will be followed by examples of the problems inherent in existing ELT materials. Lastly, an analysis of some recent attempts to develop ELT materials for Muslim learners will be conducted to identify their strengths and weaknesses.