

Qur'anic Scholarships in Post-Colonial Lagos: A Study of Contributions of Shaykh Adam 'Abdullah al-Ilory (1917-1992)

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ABSTRACT

Islam, perhaps hardly been found in any area without existing of Islamic education and Lagos was no exception. Therefore, the advent of Islam in Lagos has resulted to the spread of Arabic-Islamic education everywhere. The Qur'anic education, which is the essential part of Islam started immediately by an informal method. Later, during the Post-Colonial era, the Qur'anic education witnessed tremendous development and growth by of one the often-acclaimed greatest Islamic scholars called Shaykh Adam Abdullah al-Ilory, who situated his Arabic school; Arabic and Islamic Training in Agege area of Lagos, as Quranic Center. So, it is the interest of this paper to assess his contributions to the Qur'anic scholarship, highlights some challenges and provides useful suggestions for the improvement. The research adopted descriptive and historical methods, which assist in presenting a comprehensive x-ray of his contributions to the Qur'anic education in Islam and Lagos society in particular.

1. INTRODUCTION

Qur'an has been the subject of scholarship from time immemorial among Muslims and non-Muslims as well. Its study started with the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and his Companions, since the time of its revelation in 7th Century. In spite of the fact that the *Qur'an* was revealed in the highest level of the classical Arabic, which is the language of the Prophet and his *Sahābah*, there are number of words and phrases that are seemed unfamiliar or not understandable to some Companions, due to the dialectical variations of the Arabs. Consequently, whenever Companions stumbled on any difficult words or phrases, they quickly rushed to the Prophet for explanation. At various occasions, he provided explanation to many words that were looked difficult. Ibn Mas'ūd related that when *Sūrah* 6 verse 82 "*al-adhīna 'āmanū walam yalbisū Imānihim biẓulimin*" (Those who believe and do not cover their faith with transgression) was revealed. The Companions were disturbed over the word "*ẓulm*". It was later explained by the Prophet thus; "it is not as you think, do you not recall that Luqmān said to his son; "*Inna al-shirka laẓulmun 'aẓīmun (... Verily "shirk"*

associating partner with Allah is the greatest form of *shirk* (transgression)." The interest of the Prophet in teaching the *Qur'an* to the Companions was not only giving exoteric and esoteric meaning only, it rather encompassed reading, memorization, application and implication of the *Qur'an* into daily life.

After the demise of the Prophet, the Qur'anic studies was remained and later developed by the Companions; who understood the nature of Arabic language, witnessed the revelation of the *Qur'an* and knew the reasons behind the revelations. Abdullah (2006) also relates that those who involved in such were those who conversant with the nature of Arabic language, knew the overall social context of the revelation, the Prophet's ways of thinking, the norms, values and customs of the Arabs. The first set of these people were group of ten men, among whom were the first four Caliphs; (*al-Khulafā' al Rāshidūn*); Ali ibn Abi Tālib (d.40/661) stood in the foreground because of his outstanding and creativity in interpreting the *Qur'an*. Jalālu al-Dīn al-Sayūti (2007) asserts that the remaining six were Ubay bn Ka'b (d. 21/643), 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ūd (d. 30/652), Abū Mūsā al-Ashā'r (d. 48/670), 'Abdullh ibn 'Abbās (d. 64/686), Zayd ibn Thābit (d. 43/665), and 'Abdullāh ibn Zubayr (d. 94/712).

Next to the Companions in this exercise, were the *Tabi'ūn*, (the followers of the Companions) and

Tabi'ūn al- Tabi'īn. (followers of the followers). It was with the efforts of these people that led to the spread of the Qur'anic scholarship all over the Islamic territories, such as *Makkah*, *Madīnah* and *Iraq*. In this regard, Abdullah ibn Abbās was regarded as the founder of the Qur'anic study at *Makkah*. Among his pupils were Sa'īd bn Jubayr (d. 95/713), 'Ikrima (d. 105/723), al-Ḍahhāk bn Muzim (d. 105/723) and Atā' bn Abī Rabbāh (d. 114/732), Sa'īd Jābir (H/94), Majāhid bn Jabār 'Ukrimah (d.105/725) Mawolā bn Abbās. Also Ubay bn Kab, who was considered by most of Companions as the greater reciter of the *Qur'ān*. He was the champion of Qur'anic education at *Madīnah* together with some of his followers like Zayd bn Aslam, Abū al-Alaqah, Muḥammad bn Ka'ab al-Qurai. In Iraq was Ibn Mas'ūd and his students; 'Ulaqah bn Qays, al-Ḥasan al-Basar, Qatadah bn Da'amah.

However, what was considered as the Qur'anic studies during the Prophet and Companions era was the only interpretation of unusual words by narrations-(*tafsīr al-Qur'ān bil-ma'thūr*); interpretation of unusual words with another Qur'anic passages, or with Prophetic saying. Whenever there was no solution into any ambiguity words in the *Qur'ān* and tradition, the Companions felt back to the use of the knowledge of the contexts of the verses and intricacies of the Arabic language in which the *Qur'ān* was revealed to solve the problem.

Between the second and the third century of *Hijrah*, the Qur'anic interpretation was intellectually and religiously developed by the Muslim scholars of different background, by applying personal opinions (*ra'y*) as a result of heterogeneous, emergence of political and theologies among the Muslims and upsurge of new disciplines. Consequently, commentaries developed from various field of learnings such as history, philology, theology, linguistics stylistics semantics, rhetoric, *et cetera*.

Setiawan (2007) avers that the work of Mujāhid bn Jubbār (104/722), who was one of the students of Ibn Abbās, was regarded as the beginning of the metaphorical interpretation of anthropomorphist expression that was later developed by *Mu'tazilites*. At this period, the full work on interpretation of *Qur'ān* (*tafsīr al- Qur'ān*) appeared for the first time by Abū Ja'far bn Jarīr al-Tabarī (310/923) under the name "*Jāmi' al-Bayān 'An Ta'wīl Ay al-Qur'ān*". Later followed by Ibn Jurayj (d. 150/767), Muqātil bn Sulaymān (d.150/767), al-Kisā'ī (d. 189/805), Abū Ziyād al-Farrā' (d. 210/825), Ibn Qutaybah (d. 276/889).

In the twentieth century, the Qur'anic studies went through remarkable expansion by the Muslims scholars with the aim of reviving Muslim society. Hoping that the Qur'an must be in conformity with ideology of the Western worlds, particularly how a Muslim of the twenty-first century should relate to the Qur'an. Saeed (2006) notes that amongst the foremost scholars in this regard are; Amū al-Khūli (d.1966) who was an Egyptian Qur'anic scholar that approached the *Qur'ān* from modern linguistic perspective. Following his approach were some of his students, like Nasr Abū Zayd (d.2010), Muḥammad Aḥmad Khalafallah (d.1991) and 'A'ishah Abdur-Raḥmān Bintu Shāti (d.1998). Also, from India were Shāh Waliyyullāh (d 1762) and Sayyid Aḥmad Khān (1898). They emphasized that *Taqīd* (blind imitation of early scholars) must be rejected, while adoption of *Ijtihād* (independent judgment) to accommodate fresh ideas in interpretation of the *Qur'ān* must be encouraged.

In recent time, the reformist thinkers among the Muslims had attempted to demonstrate the relevance of the *Qur'ān* to contemporary life. Amongst such scholars are Muḥammad Abduh (d. 1905), Muḥammad Iqbal (d. 1938), Ḥasan al-Banna (d. 1949), Sayyid Qutb (1966), Abu'l 'Ala Mawdūdī (d. 1979), Murtaza Mutahhari (d. 1979), Fazlur Raḥmān (d. 1988) and Ayatollah Khomeini (d. 1989).

Added to this effort was the contributions of the Orientalists to the field of Qur'anic studies. Over the centuries, western scholars have been making significant contributions into the Qur'anic studies from different perspectives; language, style, Rhetoric, thematic e.t.c. Their interest began with the study of the Arabic-Islamic cultural heritage generally for number of reasons. Later much attention was on the *Qur'ān* and its sciences, for reasons being the primary source of Arabic and Islamic culture.

Mohar (2002) claims that between 18th -19th century, attention was shifted from age long approach of Qur'anic studies into its "historical context" by applying new Western literary theories such as, biblical, historical and linguistics theories. In the forefront of these approaches were; Aloy Spernger, William Muir, Theodore Noldeke, Ignaz Golddzhier, W. Wellhausen, Leon Caeteni, David Samuel Margoliouth, Ritchard Bell William Montgomery.

Mohar, further explains that recently, the focus of the western scholarship in the field of Qur'anic studies has led to the emergence of the revisionist movement. This movement calls for the critical reviewing of all classical works, by either Muslim scholars or

orientalist on Islam generally and the *Qur'ān* specifically due to some misinterpretations and errors. Therefore, the Revisionist movement proposed the applying new theoretical frame like historical-critical analysis, textual study, structuralism and anthropology criticism, which has been applied to the sacred books of other faith. Amongst the Western representative scholars of this movement are; James Bellamy, John Wansbrough, Michael Cook, Patricia Crone Günter Lüling, Christoph Luxenberg, Tehuda Nevo, Andrew Rippin, Kenneth Cragg, Toby Lester and James Bellamy among others.

2. POST-COLONIAL LAGOS AND THE QUR'ANIC SCHOLARSHIP

Lagos is part of Southwest of the geo-political part of Nigeria, dominated by Yoruba speaking people that consist towns like *Oyo, Osogbo, Ekiti, Akure, Osun, Lagos* and most part of *Kwara* state. According to Lawal (2002), Lagos is popularly called “*Eko*” before the independence. It was later changed to Lagos, which was derived from the Portuguese “lagoons”. Lagos was happened to be the capital of Republic of Nigeria during the Colony and Protectorate until 1991, when the capital was relocated to Abuja. The city experienced rapid growth throughout the 1960s and 1970s because of Nigeria’s economic boom prior to the Biafra war. It always maintains large diverse and fast-growing population, due to the heavy and on-going migration to the city from all parts of the country and as well neighboring countries. Lagos is now under five divisions; Ikeja, Badagry, Ikorodu, Lagos and Epe. The divisions had further been divided into 20 Local Government and later 53 Local Development Council Areas in order to enhance easy administration

Qur’anic scholarship in Yorubaland in general and in Lagos in particular is an age-long tradition as the history of Islam. Wherever Islam goes, Islamic and Qur’anic education find their way there. Adetona (2017) notes that before the advent of British colony in Lagos in 1861, some of its habitants had taken Islam as a way of life, using it as the standard of life and thus, they did not hide even under the colonial rule, their flair for Islamic tenets. On this note, Islamic teaching spread in all over the places through *Alufas*. While the learning started from local setting called *Ile-Kewu* (Arabic School) and spread all over the place. At this period, there was no standard structure for the learning, but the only available place was the front of the house (veranda) or mosque, either private or public mosque. It was latter transformed into standard school under leadership of great scholars, which spread at all nooks and crannies

of Lagos State today. There was no syllabus that detailed what and how to teach, rather the pupils were mandated to identify Arabic alphabets that were always written on slate called “*wala*” that is “*lawhu*” in Arabic. After the proper identification of letters, students progressed to the next level, which is reading of those letters with various signs (*Harakat*)-such as (*Fatḥhah, Kasrah Dammah Fathatan, Kasratan, Dammatani, Alif al-Madi, Wa’ al-Madi, Ya’ al-Madi, Sukun and Shadah*). These signs placed on top or below letters. After mastering the signs, students started reading the *Qur’ān* starting from *Surah al-fātiḥah*, as starting point, then moved back to *surah al-Nās*- which is the smallest *surah* till the completion of the whole *Qur’ān* at *surah al-Baqarah*. According to Jimoh (2014), at different stages of recitation, pupils were encouraged to bringing food or anything eatable to the *madrasah* to mark their achievement. For instance, at completion of the *surah al-fil*, cooked beans would be brought to the *madrasah* as a feast, at *Sūrah al-‘A ‘lā* slaughter hen with rice would be brought to the *madrasah*, at *Surah Yasin* slaughter goat. Finally, on the compilation of the whole *Qur’ān*, ram would be slaughtered as *walīmatul-Qur’ān* (feast). These are motivation and encouragement for celebrants and others pupils in the *madrasah*. Adetona (2017: 11) “The majority of the Muslims in Lagos educated or not, had a taste of Qur’anic education right from their childhood. And most of the Muslim in Lagos recognized the need for Islamic education through the Qur’anic school as a prerequisite to ensure their spiritual wellbeing”

The research has shown that there are number of outstanding scholars in every part of Lagos, promoting *Da’wah activities* and Qur’anic scholarship, amongst those scholars are, Shaykh Ahamad Tijani Awelenje, Shaykh Adam Abdullah Al-Ilory, Shaykh Mustapha Zughlul al-Sanusi, shaykh Musa Agboola, Shaykh Mashood Jubril Ramdan, shaykh Abdul-Wahab Zubayr al-Ghamawi and others.

Jimoh (2014), notices that recently, Qur’anic education has taken new dimension in Lagos state, when many Qur’anic centers have scattered all over the places focusing on the recitation and memorization of the *Qur’ān* with the art of *Tajwīd*. Among such school are “Abdul-Lateef Center for Qur’anic Memorization” and *Madrasah Junud Dimnil Islamiyah* in area of *Mushin* in Lagos. All these schools had promoted Qur’anic competitions, at different level, local and national.

3. A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF SHAYKH ADAM ABDULLAH AL-ILORY

Shaykh Adam was an international acclaimed scholar. He was a Yoruba by origin hailed from Ilorin Kwara State. He was born in 1917 by Abdul-Baqi bn Ḥabībullah bn ‘Abdullah, in a town called *Waza* in the *Dendi* Local Government of the Republic of Benin, the hometown of his mother ‘A’ishah who was a princess of the reigning King of the town. His father hailed from Ilorin, the capital city of Kwara State, Nigeria. Ilorin is a city that is well known in the history of Islam for its scholarship grandeur, academic achievement, religious devotion and other glorious peculiarities.

Abdusallam (2012), states that Shaykh Adam started Arabic-Islamic education at early from his father. Because, nearly every home of Muslim scholars is regarded as preparatory stage of learning, where their children start to acquire elementary knowledge of Islam. After this stage, Shaykh Adam proceeded to Ibadan in 1934 for the intermediate level with Shaykh Salihu (*Esin-ni-yoo-biwa*) (d.1984). Later, he moved to Shaykh ‘Umar Agbaji (1909-1974) in 1939 while he was in Lagos, under whom he read a number of various books on different fields of knowledge. Thereafter, he met Shaykh Adam Namaji of *Kano* (d.1944). He acquired from him branches of Arabic language, which included; Rhetoric, Literature, Composition, Poetry and Logic. He also learnt from Sayed Musaal-Amin who was a trader from Syria that settled down in Lagos.

According to Abdulkadir (2010), in 1946, Shaykh Adam visited *al-Azhar* University in Cairo, where he submitted himself for examinations in different subjects like, *Tafsīr*, *Fiqh*, *‘Usul*, *Tajwīd*, *Akhlāq*, *Naḥu*, *Sarf*, *Balāghah* and *al-‘Arūd* and *Qāāfiyah*. He passed well in all these subjects. He was thereafter awarded a certificate of teaching of Arabic and Islamic studies that equivalent to *al-Azhar* Old Secondary School Level. While he was in Cairo, he developed interest in teaching methodologies and school administration. He later proceeded to Makkah to perform that year's *Ḥajj*. At Makkah, he interacted with some great scholars. Apart from Egypt and Saudi Arabia, he also visited Sudan, Senegal and Somalia where he attended many conferences and searched for Islamic materials and exposure.

He returned to Nigeria-1947. He then worked briefly with *Ansar-ud-Deen* Society of Nigeria as Arabic and Islamic teacher in its school at Abeokuta. However, not quite long, he left the job, for the establishment of his own private Arabic and Islamic school, which offered him a great opportunity to display his talent. He founded his school on 16th April 1952 at Abeokuta, Ogun State with the name

“*Markaz al-Ta‘alīm al-‘Arabī al-Islāmī*” (Arabic Training Centre). He later moved the school to Lagos after three years of its establishment for the easy contact of the well-to-do people in the capital and the Arab-world embassies. The school was the first organized Arabic School in Yorubaland of South West of Nigeria in all ramifications with distinct physical structures of classrooms, hostels, mosques, clinic and building for teachers and other administrative staff. On this note, Opeloye and Makinde (2012) report;

Prior to 1952, Yoruba land including the area today known as southwester Nigeria never had modern standard Arabic school. What was common were the traditional Qur’anic school that operated in mosques or known as *Ile-kewu*. The first modern standard Arabic school surfaced in 1952. This was *Markaz-* institute of Arabic and Islamic Training Center established by our illustrious scholar, shaykh Adam Abdullah al-Ilory in April of that year. (p.73)

The emergence of *Markaz* in Yorubaland had changed the history of Arabic and Islamic education in Nigeria and some neighboring countries by bringing in different innovations, such as introducing syllabus, duration of the study, classroom arrangement, uniform, instructional materials and others. The school as at today had produced numbers of scholars occupying different positions in human endeavors; workers in the field of Arabic and Islamic at various establishments in Nigeria and abroad. Some are University lectures, administrative officers at different levels as well as in the Judiciary. Shaykh Adam had to his credit publications over 100 books, which include books, monographs and instructional materials. He participated in several national and international conferences at home and abroad. In recognition and appreciation of his efforts and achievements, the President Muhsin Mubarak of Egypt, awarded him the Highest Egyptian Literary Award on Monday, 9th October 1989. He died in London on Sunday 3rd of May 1992.

4. HIS QUR’ANIC SCHOLARSHIP

Since the volume of works of Shaykh Adam had established his encyclopedic scholarship in all Arabic and Islamic Sciences, his effort in the Qur’anic scholarship was worthy of notice among other areas being the primary source of Islam. He started and ended his journey on Arabic and Islamic knowledge with the Qur’anic studies. His last *Da‘wah* activity was *Tafsīr*, which he delivered in *Ramaḍān* 1412/ February 1992, before he his death some month after.

Abdukadir (2010) asserts that Shaykh Adam started reading the *Qur'ān* at the early age under his father and completed it at the age of seven. He also committed part of its chapter into memory. He also learnt from his father, Arabic grammar (*Naḥu*) and Islamic Theology (*al-Kālam*), which served as basis and foundation for understanding of the *Qur'ān*. He thereafter, moved to other great Islamic scholars of his time for the advanced level in Arabic and Islamic studies that offered him proper understanding of the *Qur'ān*. After he became an acclaimed scholar, he established his school and taught various aspect of Quranic studies. Based on the account of the Hadith of the Prophet that says; “*The best among you is he who leant the art of the Qur'ān and also teaches it*”. The following are areas of his contributions;

(a) Teaching the Art of Qur'anic Recitation

Qur'ān, being a foundation and source of Islam, its knowledge is compulsory for every Muslims, both male and female. Therefore, in the curriculum of every Arabic school, there is greater portion for Qur'anic studies. It is on this note that Shaykh Adam placed Qur'anic recitation at the preparatory stage called (*Taḥadīr*) to serve as a starting point, which other studies would be built upon. At this state, students started with learning of Arabic alphabets from its place and point of articulations. Then reading letters with various signs at always place above or bello letters, like; (*Faḥah, Kasrah, Dammah, Faḥatān, Kasratān, Dammātān, Alif al-Mad, Wā' al-Mad, Yā' al-Mad, Sukun, al-Shaddah*). These efforts enable students to read and write simple Arabic. Then, the art of Qur'anic reading was introduced as a subject, which was always handled by well-trained teachers. The recitation started from the last volume of the *Qur'ān*, which popularly called *Juz'u 'Ammā*. The volume contains 37 chapters (78-114). However, students read the *Sūrah al-Fātiha* first, which is chapter one of the *Qur'ān*, then recitation continues with the last chapter, which is *Sūrah al-Nās*-chapter 114 till the end of the volume. Because the volume contains short chapters, which would be easier for the beginner to read. The teacher recited it with the application of *Tajwīd*, while the pupils repeated it after him as many time as possible till it reached the apex of perfection before moving to other *Sūrah*. After the preparatory level, the recitation continued at *al-'Idādi* (primary) level by the student with less supervision of teachers, because of the acquired skill at the previous level. Then meaning of Qur'an was introduced to student, started from last volume, known as *Juz' 'Ammā*. The translation covers the introduction to revelation of the *sūrah*, its content and moral teachings.

(b) Teaching of 'Ilm al-Tajwīd

'Ilm al-Tajwīd is subject that teacher the rules that guide proper recitation of the *Qur'ān* and prevents the reader from committing *lahn* (solecism). The Qur'anic recitation and *Tajwīd* are inseparable, and since in such way it was transmitted from the Prophet Muḥammad (SAW) to his Companions. Therefore, in order to perfect the recitation of the *Qur'ān*, Shaykh Adam introduced *'Ilm al-Tajwīd* as a compulsory subject at *Taḥadīr* (preparatory level), which was handled by an experienced teacher. An instructional material used for this subject was a small leaflet written by himself titled “*Dalīl Qir'at al-Mashaf*” (Guide to the Qur'anic Recitation). The pamphlet introduces students to the ways and manners of articulate Qur'anic letters (Arabic alphabet) correctly. The pamphlet starts with the identification of Arabic alphabets, then reading the letters with different signs called *al-Ḥarakāt*. It later describes the letters from manners and points of articulation by grouping the alphabets into five groups of which each group has various point of articulation. They are *Hurūf al-Jawf* (Cavity Letters), *Hurūf al-Khaq* (Pharynx Letters) *Hurūf al-Lisān* (Tongue Letters) *Hurūf al-Shafatān* (Two Lips Letters) and *Hurūf al-Khayshūm* (Nostril Letters). It also details letters that appeared in usual forms but reads in different forms, such as *wā'* that reads as *alif*. *Yā'* that sounds as *alif*. Also, *wā'* that is always silent (not pronounced). It further explains some marks that serve as punctuation marks whenever they appeared in the *Qur'ān*. Examples are;

<i>Mīm</i>	Compulsory stopping
<i>Lām</i>	No stopping
<i>Jīm</i>	Two options either to Stop or not
<i>Salā</i> ,	Continuation more is preferable
(One can stop)	
<i>Qalā</i>	Stopping is however preferable.
(One can continue)	
<i>Qif</i>	Stopping is optional. (al-Ilory n.d)

Additional book that furthers the knowledge of *Tajwīd* is titled “*Idāyatul al-Mufīd fī 'Aḥkām al-Tajwīd*” by al-Shaykh Muhammad Mahmūd). The book contains introduction and sixteen lessons. Each lesson teaches different aspects of *'Ilm al-Tajwīd*, such as rules of reciting of new *Sūrah* with *bi-smi llāhi r-rahmāni r-rahim and A'ūdḥ billah minash-shaytān Rajīm, Nūn al-Sakinah and Tanwin, Mim al-Sakinah, Nīm al-Mushadadah, al-Idghām, al-Mamdūd, Makharaj al-Ḥurūf* e.t.c. (Mahamud n.d) After all these rudimentary works, students are able to read *Qur'ān* perfectly with rules of *Tajwīd*.

(c) Teaching of 'Ulūm al-Tafsīr

At the secondary level (*al-Thanaawī*), *Qur'anic* studies continued with additional subject called '*Ulūm al-Tafsīr*' (Exegetical studies/science). The subject teaches all aspects of the *Qur'ān*, which includes its revelation, collection, compilation, arrangement in orderly manner, documentation, information reasons and occasions of the revelation, *Makkah* and *Madīna Sūrah*, abrogate and abrogated verses, cleared and unclear verses. It also highlights types of *Tafsīr*, different between compilation of Khalīfah Abūbakr and Khalīfah 'Uthmān, the reciters, seven dialects used in the *Qur'ān*, the first and the last revelation. The material used for this subject was called "*Mubadi' al-Tafsīr*" written by Ustadh Mashūd Abubakr, who was one of his students that graduated from the University of Qarawiyyin in Morocco with first degree in Sharī'h. The material is just an introduction to '*Ulūm al-Qur'ān*', but not in details. (Abubakr 1984)

(d) Teaching other Subjects that Aid Proper Understanding of the *Qur'ān*

Qur'ān, being a book of Allah revealed in Arabic language for all humankind, its proper misunderstanding depends on various branches of knowledge, such as *al-Nahw* (Arabic syntax), *al-Sarfu* (Arabic Morphology), *al-Balāghah* (Arabic Rhetoric) *al-Tarīkh al-Islamī* (Islamic History) *al-Rasm* (Calligraphy). (www.adjmaoui.overblog.com/article-60997). In this regard, Shaykh Adam included some of these subjects into school curriculum at both primary and secondary level (*al-Idādī* and *al-Tawjī*). They included; *Nahw* (Arabic syntax), *Ẓarfū* (Arabic Morphology), *Balāghah* (Arabic Rhetoric) *al-Tarīkh al-Islamī* (Islamic History). *Al-Adab*, (Arabic Literature; poetry and prose), Geography, logic. These subjects, by one way or the others, had been a great advantage for students to get the proper understanding of the *Qur'ān* and to further research in the field of the *Qur'anic* studies.

(e) Practical *Tafsīr* (Exegesis) of *Qur'ān* Session

According to the assertion of Gafoordeen (2007), that *tafsīr* of the *Qur'ān* is one of the great significant aspects of *Qur'anic* studies, which many scholars involved in order to provide deep understanding of the word of Allah. Therefore, Shaykh Adam, as other '*Ulamā'*' in Yorubaland involved in oral *Tafsīr* of the *Qur'ān* most especially during the month of *Ramaḍān*. It is important to emphasize according to Ariyibi (2012), in the sixties, Shaykh Adam created time out of his tight scheduled for *Tafsīr* in the month of *Ramaḍān* at his school premises (*Markaz*) purposely as an extra-curricular for students, just to

demonstrate the practical aspect of *Tafsīr*. His *Tafsīr* was unequalled, unparalleled and unrivalled amongst others. However, prior to creating time for *Tafsīr*, he has been involved in series of lectures of different themes, by which portions of the *Qur'ān* and *Hadith* are onus of those lectures. His *Tafsīr* was scheduled for every day in the month of *Ramaḍān*, by 10. 00 clock to 2.00 pm except on Fridays due to other commitments. At the initial stage, Shaykh Adam committed himself to interpretation of the whole *Qur'ān* in every month *Ramaḍān*. He started from *Sūrah al-Fātihah*- to *Sūrah al-Nās*. He made use of one of the most popular books of *Tafsīr* called *Jalālayn* of both great scholars- Jalālud-Dīn al Mahalli and Jalālud-Dīn as-Sayūti.

Despite the fact that *Tafsīr* of Shaykh Adam was unique in nature, yet he upheld the widespread tradition style among the '*Ulamā'*' in Yorubaland, by the use of *Ajanasi* (one who repeats the recitation of the *Qur'ān*) and *Arowasi* (one who acts as a megaphone to amplify the speech). Some of his students had acted in those positions, like Late al - Shakh Yahaya Murtada Agodi, the Proprietor of *Markaz al-Talim al-Arabi Ilorin, Agodi* and Late Isa Bello. Until his death, Shaykh Mashūd Ramaḍān Jubrīl, who was the head of teachers, remained as his Chief *Ajanasi*. He was always at right hand side of *Shaykh* and next to him were other two *Ajanasi*; Ustadh Sulayman Abdul-Wahāb Al-Ghuniyawī and late Ustadh Murtadah Mustapha (popularly called *Muqr'i al- Markaz* (*Markaz's* reciter). Ustadh Daud Abdul-Majeed Alufa-nla was *Arowasi*. They were all teachers in *Markaz*. Immediately after recitation of a portion of the *Qur'ān* by Shaykh Adam, the Chief *Ajanasi* and other two *Ajanasi* repeated it one after the others with their musical tone called *al-Sawtu al-Markaz* (*Markaz* tone). This tone is very unique among others in Yorubaland, which is very peculiar to all *Markaz* students alone. It is out of desires of Shaykh Adam to complete the whole *Qur'ān* in the month of *Ramaḍān*, he confined himself to a surface meaning, without much digression. The method adopted by Shaykh Adam was an ample opportunity to his students to have the full meaning of *Qur'ān* more than once before their graduation in *Markaz*. But, due to circumstances, the *Tafsīr* developed into public lecture, where topical issues on religion, politics and social were been discussed. Consequently, the *Tafsīr*, took several years to be completed.

This new development led to the increase in number of peoples that attended the *Tafsīr* from different phases of life; lecturers, student politicians, government officials, artisans and businessmen, both males and females, particularly on weekends-

Saturdays and Sundays. Despite the *Tafsir* has metamorphosed into public lectures, it remained a religious activity where issues relating to Islam and Muslims in Nigeria and world at large were given priority over others. For instance, the issue of unity and peaceful co-existence among the people of scriptures was extensively discussed. For instance, he quoted as followed “

O People of the Scripture! Come to an agreement between us and you' that we shall worship none but Allah, and that we shall ascribe no partner unto Him, and that none of us shall take others for lords beside Allah. And if they turn away, then say: Bear witness that we are they who have surrendered (unto Him). Q. 3:64

Likewise, in 1985, during the Military reign of General Muḥammad Buhari and Tunde Idi-Agbon, “War Against Indiscipline” (WAI) was introduced as a mechanism to checkmate the indiscipline in the society. Shaykh Adam supported the administration and its ideology. He devoted his *Tafsir* session for public enlightenment and awareness on the rationale behind the concept WAI from Islamic perspective. As a social critic, he prayed, encouraged and advised the government, at all levels local; local, state and federal, whenever he noticed anything right or wrong. He referred to the following Qur'an verse;

“Surely Allah enjoins justice, kindness and the doing of good to kith and kin, and forbids all that is shameful, evil and oppressive. He exhorts you so that you may be mindful” Q.16:90

Sanni (2017), quotes John Hunwick (1936-2015), referred to Shaykh Adam as one of the legends and authorities on the intellectual heritage of Sudanic Africa and indeed of Nigeria.” So, an ample testimony to this assertion was his *Tafsir*. Due to the quality and educative nature of his *Tafsir*, it became public appeared in electronic media, like Radio and Television for public consumption. At the early stage, Shaykh Adam frowned at all mass media to record his *Tafsir*, but, later in the eighties, permission was granted to Alhaji Yahya Salam-who was a Radio Lagos staff-to record the *Tafsir*. It is from Yahya Salam, the *Tafsir* became public hearing by using it during the Islamic programmes, particularly on *Friday, Mawḥud Nabīyyi* and festivals like *'Id al-Fiṭr and Adhā*. After a while, the programme stopped and needed sponsorship. In this vain, Alhaji Abdul Ghaniyy Mogaji (d.2006) took the responsibility for a while. Later, Alhaji Abdul Wahabi Iyanda Folawuyo (d.2008) continued with the sponsorship when he was alive and sustain till today by his families. The *Tafsir*

comes-up on air every Friday by 8.30pm-9.00pm. All the recorded *Tafsir* are still available in Alhaji Yahya Salam's archive. (Yayah Salam, Personal Communication, 3rd May 2019).

In addition, Chief Moshood Kashimawo Olawale Abiola (MKO) (d. 1998), who was a Muslim philanthropist in Yorubaland started sponsorship of the *Tafsir* on Television particularly in Nigeria Television Authority (NTA) during the Ramadan till his death. Later, his son, Lateef Abiola took up the sponsorship for a while. The *Markaz*, under the current Rector, Muhammad Habeebullah Adam Abdullah al-Ilory took the challenge, with assistance from well-meaning Muslim of Nigeria. The *Tafsir* got back to the television particularly Muri International Television (MITV). (Abubakr Abdul-Ghaniyy Apatira, Personal Communication, 2nd Feb. 2019)

There are many students of school of *Tafsir* of Shaykh Adam scattered all over the places, holding sway in virtually all fields of human endeavors in Nigeria and outside Nigeria. Among them are University lecturers, Imams of various mosques, Islamic associations, proprietors of Arabic and Islamic schools. Some of these peoples have established their own *Tafsir* sessions very similar in nature and style to that of their teacher and mentor. Typical example of them in Lagos include, Shaykh Mutapha Zughlul as-Sanusi, Shaykh Yahya Agboola, Shaykh Mashood Jubril Ramaḍān, Shaykh Abdul-Wahab Zubair al-Ghamawi, Shaykh Saeed Olawunmi, Shaykh Misbahudeen Zubayr al-Saytunii, Shaykh Sulaimān Farūq Onikijipa, and host of others. Aside from students of *Markaz*, other students and Imams of various mosques or societies attended the *Tafsir* session. Likewise, other *'Ulamā'* of reputable mosques and associations who preferred shifting their own *Tafsir* to other time, in order to attend Shaykh Adam's *Tafsir* in the morning.

After the death of Shaykh Adam, the *Tafsir* continued in *Markaz*, but on rotational system between his two children; Muḥammad Ḥabībullah Adam Abdullah and Muhammad Thawbān Adam 'Abdullah and one of Shaykh Adam disciples, Shaykh Mashhūd Jubbrīl Ramdan-who was the head of teachers by then. However, after the crises among the Shaykh Adam's children and some staffs, which led to the exit of the two among the three that are in charge of *Tafsir*; they are Shaykh Mashhūd Jubbrīl, and Shaykh Muhammad Thowban Adam Abdullah. Therefore, the only person that keeping the flag fly is Shaykh Muhammad Ḥabībullah Adam Abdullah

since he mounted the leadership of the *Markaz* in 1998.

It is instructive to note that Shaykh Ḥabībullah Adam Abdullah retains Shaykh Adam's style of *Tafsīr*. He started his *Tafsīr* without much digression, but later diverted to the public enlightenment on some misconception and misunderstanding issues in Islam such as, *Hijāb* and fabricated *Hadīth* in اٰھٰھ al-Bukhārī.

(f) Translation of the Meaning of the *Qur'ān*.

The emergence of the translation of the *Qur'ān* into another language is not a new phenomenon in any given society, it started right from the time immemorial. Several efforts had been made by scholars to translate the *Qur'ān* into various languages of the world for people to understand the message of Allah, and Yoruba speaking people of Nigeria was no exception. According to Ogunbiyi (1988), the first noticeable attempt in this regard was credited to a Christian missionary, Reverend M.S Cole. The work was published by the Church Missionary Society in Lagos in 1924. Another attempt was from Reverend A.K. Akinlade under the titled of: "*Itumo al-Kuran Li Ede Yoruba*" (*Meaning of the Qur'ān in Yoruba Language*). It was printed by Caxton Press West Africa Ltd in Ibadan in 1965. However, the two Reverends had no knowledge of Arabic language, which is the original language of Qur'ān, but solidly depended on English translated version of Qur'ān. Ogunbiyi (1988) further observes during oral interview with Reverend Akinlade;

"His translation of the Qur'ān was motivated by what he described as a desire to fill the vacuum created by the absence of a complete Yoruba translation. He claimed that his translation was meant for every Yoruba reader interested in a knowledge of the content of the Qur'ān. He admitted that he knew no Arabic at all and that he relied mainly on English translation of the Qur'ān, especially the translation by Marmaduku Pickthall titled "The Meaning of the Glorious Koran" and translation of N.J. Dawood titled "*The Koran*" (p.95)

The next version was an effort of an individual Muslims, such as translation of Alhaji Usama Kuta titled "*Odidi Kurani ni Ede Yoruba*" (A Complete *Qur'ān* in Yoruba language). It was printed in Iwo town, Osun state. Also, the translation of *Ahamadiyyah* Muslim Mission started with only one Juz' (volume) by Basheer al-Dīn Mahmūd Khalīfah Ghulam Ahmad. Later, ten men committee under the leadership of Alhaji B.B Balogun was commissioned

to complete the remaining translation in 1967. The work was titled "*Al-Kurani Mimo Ni Ede Yoruba Ati Larubawa*" (Holy Qur'an in Yoruba and Arabic Languages. (Abdul-Azeez 2015)

Later, the Muslim Council of Nigeria spearheaded another translation at the instance of his eminence Sir Ahmadu Bello, with support from the World Muslim Leagues (WML) and the King Khālid bn Abdul-Azeez of Saudi-Arabia. The translation passed through three various stages.

- I. The first stage was a committee that started the work 1962, which included Imam Jamiu, Muhammad- Awwal Augusto, Ahmad Tijani. Akani, Hasani Yusau Dindey among others. The work completed with the supervision of Sir Ahmadu Bello and Ustaz Kamilu Sharif.
- II. The second stage was the committee that proof-read the work in 1972. It was a committee of four undergraduate Nigeria students of Arabic and Islamic studies at the Islamic University of Madina and Al-Azhar University, they were; Abdul Latīf Aḥmad from Al-Azhar University, while Abdul Wahāb Sanusi, Khidr Mustaphā and 'Isā Ade Bello were from Islamic University of Madina.³⁷
- III. In 1973, the work passed through the third committee of erudite Yoruba Muslim scholars, for final editing, correction and assessment. They included; Shaykh Kamaludīn al-Adabi, Shakh Burhanudin Sanusi Alaka, Shaykh Adam Abdullah al-Ilory, Alhaji Abdul Rahman Salahudin al-Adabi, Alhaji Muhammad Raji Sulaiman El-Imam and Alhaji Musa Ali Ajetunmobi al-Adabi. The work was titled "*Al-Quran Ti A Tumo si Ede Yoruba*". (Ogunbiyi, 1988, Olawale 2015, Bakah 2018)

The final edited copy was published by Dāar al-Arabia, Beirut with financial assistance of King Faysal bn Abdul-'Azīz of Saudi Arabia. The work was published in two volumes; volume one starts from chapter one to seventeen which contains 379 pages, while the second volume starts from chapter eighteen to one hundred and fourteen with 380 pages. The work has been printed more than three times. It was distributed during the reign of King Faysal bn 'Abdul-Azīz of Saudi Arabia freely for pilgrims.

A fact worth of admitting is that, under this committee, Shaykh Adam al-Ilory played remarkable roles. He was the secretary throughout the period,

between 1962-1973. He was also the custodian of all information regarding the task before the committee.

In 2004, the translation went through another review by the two Nigeria Students at the Islamic University in Madinah-Late Ibrahim Abdul-Baqi and Abdur-Razaq Abdul Majid Alaro. When there is need to reproduce the work by Saudi Arabia Kingdom. The title was amended as “*Al-Qur’ān Alaponle Pelu itumo Re ni Ede Yoruba*”

Another translations that is worth of mentioning in this category was translation of Professor Y.A Qadir called “*Al-Kur’an Alaponle Itumo si Ede Yoruba*”. Also the translation of an Indian Scholar, Basheer Ahmad Muhyidīn in 2003 called “*Al-Kur’an Oro Abemi Tooto Ododo Oro Ayeraye* . Other individual efforts that translated portion of the Qur’ān into Yoruba, include, “*Al-Qur’ān Totobi Esu Meta Pelu Itumo*” by Abdul-‘Azīz Lahol. “*Al-Kurani Alaponle Esu Kan Ti Atu Si Ede Yoruba*” by Solihu Bamidele *Alukuran Esu Marun ati Itumo* by K. Ade Bello. (Ali-Again 2017, Bakah 2018)

5. ANALYSIS OF THE APPROACH OF SHAYKH ADAM TO THE TEACHING OF THE QUR’AN

It is important to emphasize here that the methodology adopted by Shaykh Adam in teaching Qur’anic for beginners was quite different from others, particularly in Northern part of Nigeria. The method is very similar to the Andalusia (Spain) method. The Qur’anic recitation at the initial stage was combine with other subjects, such as Arabic grammar, morphology, Arabic reading, Arabic literature, Arabic Poetry, Islamic history, *Fiqh* e.t.c. Hoping that the style would assist students to have basic knowledge that enable them to understand the meaning of what they are reading to a certain extent. Al-Ilory (2013) made his position known while quoted Ibn Khalidūn;

“There are different methods of learning of the Qur’ān in Islamic world. Some of these methods were replicated in Africa at large and in Nigeria in particular. In Morocco and some part of West Africa, like Bornu, Senegal and Hausa, much concentration is on the recitation and memorization alone, without study any other subjects at the initial stage. However, the reverse is the case in Africa, West Africa and Andalusia, where focus is given to other subjects related to Arabic language and Islamic studies such Hadith, *Fiqh*, Arabic poetry when student are learning Qur’anic. (p.36-38)

al-Ilory elucidated the reason behind choosing his position.

“If Ibn al-‘Arabī could criticized this method among the Arab children who were assisted in comprehending the meaning of Qur’ān due to their native speaker’s knowledge of Arabic by demonstrating their inability to grasp the meaning of what they read. Dear reader, what do you thing who has not been brought up with Arabic (breast) milk. Why should we impose on them the reading of the Qur’ān in parotica-like manner without understanding a single word there” (p. 38)

6. CONCLUSION

In foregoing study, we have discussed the contributions of Shaykh Adam al-Ilory at different perspective to the Qur’anic scholarship in post-colonial era of Lagos of Southwest of Nigeria. The study shows that he was well versed in all aspects of the Qur’anic studies; *Tafsīr* of the Qur’ān, Arabic language, condition of revelation of the Qur’ān, rhetoric, alongside, he was a historian, couple with history of Islam in Africa in general and Nigeria in particular. He was also an orator with a great power of presentation. Through his *Tafsīr* he could be called a poet, a preacher, a social commentator and jurist of note. His work on Qur’anic *Tafsīr* at Markaz and pubic still enjoys continuous relevance and referrals to date. The study reveals that the instructional materials recommended and used to teach students gave solid foundation for the student of which they can independently continue on Qur’anic education.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is pertinent now, based on our findings, to make some suggestions and recommendations for improvement of the Quranic scholarship;

- I. Qur’an recitation at early state must be handled by an expert Ustadh who had special training on the Qur’ān.
- II. Using modern instructional materials like audio-visual to teach beginners on place and manner of articulation of the Arabic alphabet.
- III. Regular training or refreshing courses for teachers within and outside the country.
- IV. Reviewing all subjects relating to the Qur’ānic studies at all levels.
- V. Focus must be given to practical aspect of *Tafsīr* in the class, since *Tafsīr* in the *Ramaḍān* has turned to the public lecture.
- VI. Different aspects of *Tafsīr* must be taught in the class, such as moral social and political

themes in order to guide the student at the larger life after their school life.

- VII. Contribution of non-Muslims to the field of Qur'anic studies must be given consideration in the school curriculum to appreciate the non-Muslim scholars of Qur'ān.
- VIII. Proper documentation and preservation of *Tafsīr* for future purpose must be encouraged.

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