Authorial Strategies in An Usul Al-Fiqh Textbook: Towards Developing a Specialised Learner's Dictionary

Razimi Zakaria[1] , Mohd Sollah Mohamed[2] , Nazatul Shahreen Zainal Abidin[3]

Academy of Language Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Kelantan Branch, Malaysia

DOI: https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2026.101000336

Received: 11 October 2026; Accepted: 16 October 2026; Published: 02 November 2026

ABSTRACT

Learning the principles of Islamic jurisprudence (uṣūl al-fiqh) in English presents linguistic and conceptual challenges for second-language (L2) learners English-Medium Instruction programmes at tertiary level. This study examines the authorial language and presentation strategies employed in Mohammad Hashim Kamali's comprehensive textbook, Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence (1998), on the subject to inform the development of a specialised learner's dictionary (SLD) of uṣūl al-fiqh. Employing a qualitative single-case study framework, a textual dataset was developed through cover-to-cover manual extraction across three pillars of uṣūl al-fiqh, namely, sources of law, rules of interpretation, and legal taxonomy. Textual analysis has identified three main patterns for defining concepts, which are Aristotelian Genus-Differentia formulations, parenthetical-appositive glossing, and contrastive framing. While these strategies provide comprehensive definitions of uṣūl al-fiqh terms, they pose challenges for L2 students due to complex structures, agentless passives, and unfamiliar transliteration style. To mediate these issues, the paper proposes developing a specialised learner's dictionary of uṣūl al-fiqh that with a systematic macro- and microstructural distribution of information to scaffold the learning of uṣūl al-fiqh in general while specifically assisting in reading complex texts on the subject.

Keywords: uṣūl al-Fiqh, Specialised Learner Dictionary, lexicography

INTRODUCTION

Learning an Islamic discipline such as the principles of Islamic jurisprudence, or uṣūl al-fiqh, requires an understanding of specific terms in the subject field. Textbooks on this subject utilise specialised terms to discuss concepts related to legal rulings in Islam. Resource texts on the subject present information regarding the fundamentals of legal rulings in Islam through specific foundational terms to bring about topical discussions related to aḥkām (rulings) and methods of deriving rulings in Islam. In other words, uṣūl al-Fiqh, can be defined as the science of Islamic legal theory that deals with the interpretation of evidences from primary sources, such as the Qur'ān and Hadith, and evaluates the validity of legal proofs on practical legal rulings. For a beginner, or an individual unfamiliar with the subject, grasping accurate concept in uṣūl al-fiqh can be difficult because of several reasons such as information density, language demands to comprehend the concepts embedded in the terms, and frictions related to style of genre. It is reasonable to infer that reading uṣūl al-fiqh resources can be a cognitively and linguistically demanding tasks for learners of the subject.

In this perspective, understanding specific terms in uṣūl fiqh is essential in understanding the concepts presented in uṣūl al-fiqh discussions. It is important to note that terms in uṣūl fiqh can differ significantly in meaning when used in other fields of Islamic knowledge, such as Sharīʿah. Inaccurate delineation of scope and limitations of definitions can render inapplicability of the basis for arguments in discussing rulings of Fiqh or devotional matters and practices among Muslims, such as inaccurately differentiating between a command (amr), condition (sharṭ), or an essential pillar (rukn). The amr indicates the actions to perform, while the sharṭ and rukn serve a guides on performing the actions accurately. A disconnected interpretation of amr, sharṭ, and rukn can cause severe mistakes on practical applications (Fiqh) of the textual rulings, and resulting in invalidation of devotional practices (ʿibādāt). While both render an ʿibādāt invalid when not fulfilled, the interpretation of the terms are specific to timing and position. In terms of timing, sharṭ are prerequisite conditions that must be fulfilled before

performing the ʿibādāt and must be preserved throughout performing the devotional practices, whilst rukn denotes orderly sequence and correct alternation in doing them. Technically, both sharṭ and rukn are granted concessions (rukhaṣ) due to incapacity or absolute necessity such as replacing wuḍūʾ (ablution using water) with tayammum (purification using clean earth) in the case of unavailability of water. However, in terms of technical application, if a sharṭ is missing or broken midway in performing an ʿibādāt, such as passing gas, the entire devotional practice is considered null and void (bāṭil) and must be redone from the beginning. On the other, if a rukn is faulty, the part where the rukn is not fulfilled can be redone. For example, wuḍūʾ (ablution) is prerequisite (sharṭ) before doing prayer (ṣalāh) and must be preserved during ṣalāh, if a person forgets to take ablution or cannot preserve his or her wuḍūʾ during the ṣalāh, he or she must retake wuḍūʾ and repeat the ṣalāh. In contrast, if a rukn is omitted or incomplete in an ʿibādāt , such as forgetting to bow (rukūʿ) before prostration (sujūd), the person must immediately stand up, perform the missing rukūʿ , and before the final salām, he or she must perform two extra prostrations (sujūd al-sahw) because of unintentional movements due to forgetfulness. The discussion stresses the importance of understanding the accurate definition of religious terms because specific terms have specific meanings and specific technical applications that implicates devotional practices among Muslims. Ambiguities in defining uṣūl al-fiqh terms directly affects the practical reasoning on rulings of devotional matters (Fiqh al-ʿibādāt) and ritual validity.

Authorial Presentation Strategies In An Uṣūl Al-Fiqh Authoritative Textbook

Defining the boundaries of terms is pertinent in uṣūl al-fiqh discussion as it sets the parameters of their applications in Islamic rulings. Inaccuracies in defining concepts according to their legal framework can collapse the distinction between different levels of obligation and duties. In presenting discussions pertinent to uṣūl al-Fiqh, one of the most authoritative textbooks on principles of Islamic jurisprudence is by Kamali (1998). His book, titled Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence, is an exceptional resource for learners of Islamic jurisprudence in English. He designed his book matching the strategies used by classical legal scholars (uṣuliyyūn), explaining methods employed by classical legal theorists in deducing rulings from sacred texts. Thus, the textbook reflects the definition of uṣūl al-fiqh as the science of legal sources, methodology in interpretation, and deduction of rulings in Islam.

Kamali (1998) begins with discussing the roles of two primary sources of Islamic law which are the Qur'ān and Sunnah, whereby he thoroughly examines the criteria for evaluating textual authenticity and strength of evidence, before proceeding to discussions on secondary tools of deducing legal rulings without indication of explicit textual evidence (naṣṣ), which are the consensus of the ulama (ijmā) and analogical deduction (qiyās). Relying on evidence for rulings is the core methodology of uṣūl al-fiqh and serves as the foundational principle of Islamic jurisprudence.

Kamali's (1998) book delivers the workings of Islamic law effectively, its adaptability and relevancy in today's context. He treats Islamic jurisprudence as an operational legal system, discussing the rules and interpretation methods utilise by jurists to derive laws, not merely as abstract theology. He provides critiques as he dismisses the notion of "closure of the gate of ijtihād" (p. 384 – 387) by the 10th century as inaccurate through his arguments that there is no official council or consensus that sanctions its closure and includes citations of prominent scholars across centuries who had rejected the closure. Islamic law is not strict and outdated. Contemporary legal scholars are still able to resolve new issues and shifting situations while maintaining the core principles of Shariʿah. In this case, he argues that the real barrier of ijtihād in today's world is not theological because traditional scholars still possess valid expertise but are not trained in modern law, economics, or constitutional governance, hence, polarising civil and Islamic laws. Among others, he recommends that universities and professional bodies develop a comprehensive curriculum that combines traditional Shariʿah disciplines such as uṣūl al-Fiqh, Qur'ānic exegesis, and Hadith with modern law, economics, and finance, to systematically educate new generations of mujtahid who can operate in both realms.

The success of Kamali's (1998) Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence is also its comparison of different legal schools of thoughts (madhab) in terms of their agreements and debates. For example, he demonstrates the differences in defining qiyās (analogical reasoning) between the school of Shāfiʿī and Hanafi. This helps readers to understand the different legal conclusions achieved by jurists. In addition, he clearly structured complex

classic legal text which helps understanding of classical Islamic legal methods. By interpreting traditional debates in the modern context, he connects classic Islamic jurisprudence with the contemporary modern law, making his book a comprehensive reference for learners of uṣūl al-fiqh in English language.

Pedagogical Perspectives Of The English Textbook For L2 Learners Of Uṣūl Al-Fiqh

Despite the substantial contribution of the textbook, its readability is particularly demanding for second-language (L2) English learners. The language requires a higher level of proficiency in English due to formal English syntax, complex sentence structure, extensive specialised vocabulary, transliterated Arabic legal terms, and abstract legal explanations. For L2 learners lacking proficiency in the target language and foundational knowledge in Islamic jurisprudence, the syntactical features and conceptual density can pose a great challenge for them to independently comprehend the textbook.

Certain public universities in Malaysia have adopted English as the language of instruction for selected professional courses for the purpose of educational advancement and graduates' employability. In 1993, the Prime Minister, Mahathir Mohamed, announced that English would be allowed to be used at the tertiary level as the medium of instruction in courses related to science and technology, consequently promoting the use of English in university courses (Pillay, 1998). Higher education institutions in Malaysia have also adopted this policy for Islamic professional courses in banking, finance, and management. As a result, core subjects in Islamic disciplines such as uṣūl al-Fiqh, Fiqh al-muʿāmalāt (rulings governing transactions), and Qawāid Fiqhiyyah (Islamic legal maxims) are taught in English. This move resonates with the recommendation proposed by Kamali (1998) that universities and professional bodies develop a comprehensive curriculum that combines traditional Shariᶜah disciplines such as uṣūl al-fiqh with other academic disciplines. However, in reality, college and university programmes focus on either language, including foreign languages, or a specific subject field, and no programme combines the two so that graduates become experts in both (a foreign) language and a subject field. Learners are expected to have limited knowledge of the linguistic structures and genre conventions used in subject fields in their native language and the instructional language (Nielsen, 2010).

In the learning of uṣūl al-Fiqh, Kamali's Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence is one of the standard primary references for the subject taught in English. Learning a specialised field in a second language, such as the Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence (uṣūl al-Fiqh), poses two significant challenges for learner, which are, the complexity of the subject matter and authorial language complexities. Cummins (1997, 2000) pointed out that ESL students' success in complex subject fields depends heavily on their ability to navigate their Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). CALP involves context-reduced, abstract language required to process high-level disciplinary concepts. For learners in English Medium Instruction (EMI) environments, a lack of general proficiency in the language creates a double cognitive burden (Macaro, 2018; Sweller, 1998) because human learning has a limited capacity for processing new information. Beginner learners of Usul al-Fiqh and learners lacking proficiency in English need to break down complex syntactic structures, translate technical terminology, grasp abstract legal concepts, evaluate juristic arguments, and apply legal methodologies.

The source language of uṣūl al-fiqh terms is Arabic, and for learners taking specific courses in Islamic studies in Malaysian universities, the subject is normally taught in a mix of Bahasa Melayu (Malay language) and Arabic Language (Abdul Rahman et al., 2008). Their study that investigated how uṣūl al-fiqh is taught at the undergraduate level across five Malaysian universities found that lecturers spent a lot of time translating and explaining Arabic terms into the Malay language than engaging in higher-level discussions on the subject matter. This is due to students weak proficiency in source language of uṣūl al-fiqh which is Arabic. Their study also found that lecturers mostly rely on their individual styles, methods, and selection of texts which signalled lack of a common textbook. However, students from other study programmes, such as Islamic finance, also learn the subject but using English due to institutional policy on the language of instruction.

Insights on the understanding specific terms in uṣūl fiqh is important in comprehending the concepts presented in uṣūl al-fiqh discussions. Abdul Rahman et al. (2008) emphasised that learning uṣūl al-fiqh naturally involves a large amount of specific legal jargons and technical terminologies. Kamali (2017) stressed that defining terms is the foundational step in studying uṣūl al-Fiqh. He argued that understanding and defining the terms accurately

is pertinent for conceptual clarity, structural understanding, and distinguishing uṣūl al-fiqh from other disciplines of Islamic studies. Hence, without a clear understanding of the terms used, it will lead to misunderstanding, if not hinder the intended meaning underlying the basis of discussion presented in a particular topic of uṣūl al-fiqh.

Purpose Of The Study

The purpose of the study is to examine the authorial language in Kamali's (1998) Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence, strictly focusing on definitional patterns and explanatory features accompanying uṣūl al-fiqh terms, for pedagogical efficacy and to inform the development of a specialised learner dictionary of uṣūl al-fiqh for students learning the subject in English.

METHODOLOGY

The study employed a qualitative, textual analysis framework grounded in a single case study of an authoritative textbook. A textual dataset of Kamali's (1998) Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence was developed to extract uṣūl al-fiqh terms along with their corresponding definitions and explanations. A single-case study approach was adopted as Kamali's (1998) textbook is recognised as a comprehensive reference for uṣūl al-fiqh and serves as a standard resource material for students studying the subject in English at the tertiary level in Malaysia.

The entire textbook was analysed cover-to-cover. Conducting a manual extraction from a single, authoritative reference is an established practice in qualitative and descriptive lexicography. It allows identification of definitional moves that automated search filters often overlook. Close reading enables evaluation of semantic intention of the author where automated keyword scanning cannot capture. In this case, manual extraction enables an in-depth qualitative case study aiming at understanding the authorial explanation structures for pedagogical efficacy and to inform the design of a specialised learner dictionary of uṣūl al-fiqh.

Sampling Criteria

In order to ensure comprehensive coverage of the data, representative definitions were selected across the three main pillars of uṣūl al-Fiqh, which are sources of law (pillar 1), rules of interpretation (pillar 2), and legal taxonomy (pillar 3). The excerpts were recorded verbatim to demonstrate Kamali's (1998) definitional formulations of the terms. In addition, the selection prioritised passages that exhibit evident pedagogical frictions, such as syntactic compression, heavy nominalisation, and common-law borrowing.

Data Analysis and Analytical Framework

The selected definitions were analysed using a qualitative and lexicographical framework structured around a three-tier protocol to ensure analytical transparency and consistency across the findings. The first tier presents the raw texts of the extracted definitions from Kamali's (1998) Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence. Each passage is recorded verbatim and reproduced without omission, paraphrase, or editorial alteration. It also includes transliteration, parenthetical glosses, and contiguous explanatory co-text. The second tier involves deconstruction of the definitions to examine the authorial strategies, thus enabling classification of the author's definitional formulations (e.g., Genus-Differentia, parenthetic-appositive glosses, contrastive framing). Additionally, it examines nominalisation density, clausal embedding, and common-law borrowing, which causes pedagogical difficulties for L2 tertiary learners. The third tier operationalises the insights from discussions on definition techniques employed by Kamali (1998) and pedagogical implications on L2 learners into a model for a specialised learner dictionary of uṣūl al-Fiqh.

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

In order to investigate the pedagogical efficacy and to inform the design of a specialised learner dictionary of uṣūl al-Fiqh, nine technical terms were selected and analysed across the three foundational pillars namely,

sources of law, rules of interpretation, and legal taxonomy. The selection of three items per pillar ensures thematic balance and establishes a comparison that demonstrates a pattern rather than an isolated occurrence.

The findings are organised three sections: the first section focuses on textual data and authorial strategies (verbatim extraction) and (textual deconstruction). The second section presents discussions on pedagogical difficulties for L2 learners, and the third section proposes a macro- and microstructural design for a Specialised Learner Dictionary of Uṣūl al-fiqh based on the insights for the prior sections.

Textual Analysis and Definitional Formulations

The data in the table presents nine definitions representing three core pillars in uṣūl al-fiqh namely sources of law, rules of interpretation , and legal taxonomy:

Sample Definition Excerpts Across Three Pillars of Uṣūl al-fiqh from Kamali (1998)

Pillars	Arabic Term	Transliteration	Translation/Gloss in Kamali (1998)	Source Citation
Pillar 1 (Sources of Law)	قِيَاسٌ	qiyās	analogical deduction	p. 197
	استحسان	istiḥsān	juristic preference	p. 1, 368 379
	استصحاب	istiṣḥāb	presumption of continuity	p. 298
Pillar 2 (Rules of Interpretation)	نَسخ	naskh	abrogation	p.18, 149
	حقيقة / مجاز	ḥaqiqah/majāzī	literal/metaphorical meaning	p.27, 118,149
	عام	ᶜĀmm	general	p. 18
Pillar 3 (Legal Taxonomy)	حكم تكليفي	hukm taklīfi	defining law	p. 323
	حُكم وَضْعي	hukm waḍᶜī	declaratory law	p. 323
	عَظِيمَةُ/خْصَةٌ	rukhṣah (vs. ᶜazīmah)	concession (vs. strict law)	p. 323, 339

Authorial Strategies and Types of Definitions

The sample presented in the prior section demonstrates three definitional strategies employed by Kamali (1998) of terms in uṣūl al-Fiqh, namely, Aristotelian Genus-Differentia, Parenthetic-Appositive Glossing, and Contrastive Framing.

Definitional Strategy: Aristotelian Genus-Differentia

The Aristotelian formula requires two items in its definitional method, namely the broad category of the term (genus), and the specific conditions that separates the term from everything else (differentia). The Aristotelian definition style is the traditional variation in dictionary definition method (Sager, 1990). The style prescribes definition using this formula:

T (term) = Genus (category) + Differentiae (delimiting characteristics)

The genus is the general class a word belongs to and differentiae is the specific attributes or the distinguishing properties that separate the word from others of that same genus. It was found that the Aristotelian Genus-Differentia is the main definitional strategy employed by Kamali (1998) in defining terms across his textbook. The term is designated to a broad operational genus and delimited with restricted qualifications:

Qiyās (p.197)

Technically, qiyas is the extension of a value from an original case to a new case, because the latter has the same effective cause as the former. The original case is regulated by a given text, and qiyas seeks to extend the same textual ruling to the new case. It is by virtue of the commonality of the effective cause, or ʿIllah, between the original case and the new case that the application of qiyas is justified (p. 197)

In this definition, the copula 'is' signals an equivalence to the headword (qiyās) indicating a definition of the term. In addition, the nominalised head (the extension) immediately after the copula 'is' indicates the genus which qiyās in an extension, not a declaration or obligation, of a ruling. The differentia adds specifics to the definition of qiyās by distinguishing qiyās from other types of extension. In this definition, it can observed the fine restrictions composed by Kamali (1998) as he employed a source delimiter (from an original case), a target delimiter (to a new case), a causal condition (by reason of an effective cause), and a shared qualifier (common to both).

It can also be observed Kamali's (1998) definitional strategy for qiyās exhibits syntactic compression where he combined multi parts of legal rules in a single definition instead of explaining in step-by-step which is deemed more manageable for L2 learners.

Naskh (p. 149)

Naskh may be defined as the suspension or replacement of one Shari'ah ruling by another, provided that the latter is of a subsequent origin, and that the two rulings are enacted separately from one another (p.149)

In this excerpt, Kamali (1998) also employed the Aristotelian Genus-Differentia formula by first placing the headword before the genus (broad family of the term) and then setting the boundaries to distinguish it from other elements. The genus is "the suspension or replacement of one Shari'ah ruling by another" establishes the general category of the legal change. The definition later applies specific differentiae or distinguishing traits to refine the definition of naskh which are "the latter is of a subsequent origin," and "the two rulings are enacted separately from one another". By pairing the broad category with specific exclusions, the definition is refined to ensure only true abrogation fits within the term and no other concepts that merely look similar to it.

The Aristotelian Genus-Differentia formula can also be seen in defining Ḥukm taklīfi:

Ḥukm taklīfi (p. 323)

Hukm shar'iᶜ is divided into the two main varieties of al-hukm al-taklīfi (defining law) and al-ḥukm ad-waḍʿī (declaratory law). The former consists of a demand or an option, whereas the latter consists of an enactment only. 'Defining Law' is a fitting description of al-ḥukm al-taklīfi, as it mainly defines the extent of man's liberty of action. Al-ḥukm is rendered 'declaratory law', as this type of ḥukm mainly declares the legal relationship between the cause (sabab) and its effect (musabbab) or between the condition (share) and its object (mashruṭ) (p.323).

Similarly, for ḥukm taklīfi, the Aristotelian Genus-Differentia demonstrates the genus as hukm shar'iᶜ and the differentia is the former consists of a demand or an option, whereas the latter consists of an enactment only where the criterion that differentiates two ḥukm shar'iᶜ is clearly stated in the differentia, distinguishing defining law and declaratory law.

Definitional Strategy: Parenthetic-Appositive Glossing

This definitional strategy is one of the most common formula employed by Kamali (1998) to provide equivalences in the English language to the original Arabic uṣūl al-fiqh terms. Parenthetic-Appositive glossing is method of giving meaning to terms in a seamless way without halting the sentence to define them such as in footnotes or side explanations. An appositive is a noun or noun phrase positioned beside another noun to rename, identify, or explain it. The appositives are placed in parentheses for glosses to indicate equivalents of the original terms within the running sentences.

Istiḥsān and Istiṣḥāb (p. 1)

The methodology of usul al-fiqh really refers to methods of reasoning such as analogy (qiyās), juristic preference (istiḥsān), presumption of continuity (istiṣḥāb) and the rules of interpretation and deduction. These are designed to serve as an aid to the correct understanding of the sources and ijtihād (p. 1).

Many other terms were defined across the textbook sharing this formula such as explicit meaning (ibārah al-naṣṣ, p.124), taṣrīḥi (explicit, p. 402), ibtidā'i' (normative, p. 402), unlawful (ḥarām, p. 315), juristic disagreement (ikhtilāf, p. 53), and et. cetera.

Definitional Strategy: Contrastive Framing

In simple words, this strategy employs a definition technique of 'what it is' and 'what it is not'. The inclusion boundary establishes the attributes essential to the term, while the exclusion boundary identifies the concepts outside the term.

Under the subchapter Classification IV: The Literal (Haqiqi) and the Metaphorical (Majāzī), Kamali (1998) wrote:

A word may be used in its literal sense, that is, for its original or primary meaning, or it may be used in a secondary and metaphorical sense. When a word is applied literally, it keeps its original meaning, but when it is used in a metaphorical sense, it is transferred from its original to a secondary meaning on grounds of a relationship between the two meanings.' (p.116)

In this excerpt, Kamali (1998) defined the literal meaning (ḥaqiqī) and metaphorical meaning (majāzī) co-dependently in two parallel sentences. The use 'or' ('or it may be used in a secondary or metaphorical sense') and 'but' ('but when used in a metaphorical sense'), the author established a binary structure that defines ḥaqiqī and majāzī through a direct contrastive framing. In addition, rather than using 'not' to signal exclusion or departure, he used 'keeps' (When a word is applied literally, it keeps its original meaning) and 'is transferred from' (it is transferred from its original to a secondary meaning) reflected the operation of 'what is' and 'what is not' in the definition of ḥaqiqī (literal) and majāzī (metaphorical). Another example of contrastive framing can be seen in the definition rukhṣah:

rukhṣah (p. 339)

ᶜAzīmah is a command of the Lawgiver which binds the mukallaf, while rukhṣah embodies a concession in respect of that command (p.339).

In this excerpt, 'while' is used to contrast rukhṣah with ᶜazīmah in a single sentence. This technique establishes a relational dependency , requiring the reader to understand the concept of rukhṣah, which is, a concession in respect of the command of the Lawgiver.

Authorial Strategies and Pedagogical Implications for L2 Learners

Kamali (1998) explanations of terms in uṣūl al-fiqh are undoubtedly comprehensive. However, situating the language demands required to capture the discussions with his linguistic nuance, it creates clear learning challenges for L2 learners.

Firstly, information about terms in uṣūl al-fiqh are dense and crammed in long sentences. Kamali (1998) often included multiple explanations in a single complex sentence instead of dividing them into several parts. For example, in the definition of qiyās, learners have to process several other uṣūl al-fiqh variables, namely, new case, old case, underlying cause (ᶜillah), and the final ruling in a 44-word sentence to capture the concept embedded in the term. Similarly, in describing Ḥukm taklīfi:

Hukm shar'iᶜ is divided into the two main varieties of al-hukm al-taklīfi (defining law) and al-ḥukm ad-waḍ'ī (declaratory law). The former consists of a demand or an option, whereas the latter consists of an enactment only. 'Defining Law' is a fitting description of al-ḥukm al-taklīfi, as it mainly defines the extent of man's liberty of action (p. 323).

The use of formal academic register (the former, the latter) cause a mental juggle between the concepts before understanding the definitions. This condition is commonly found in definitions provided utilising the Aristotelian Genus-Differentia technique.

Secondly, the Kamali (1998) definition strategies contain a heavy use of the passive format, for example, in the definition of qiyās (p. 197), "The original case is regulated by..." and "...the application of qiyas is justified," pose a challenge for L2 learners because they reverse the natural order of information and hid the agent or 'doer' in the sentences.

It is by virtue of the commonality of the effective cause, or ᶜIllah, between the original case and the new case that the application of qiyas is justified (p. 197)

In the excerpt above, the agent to justify the application of qiyās is missing, and by dropping the agent, the 'doer' is opened to several possibilities, whether it is the jurists, the sacred text, the Lawgiver, or the legal framework. This creates ambiguities among learners in general, and in the context of the definition of qiyās, it leaves them unable to accurately identify the authority sanctioning the legal reasoning.

Learners must be cautioned that parenthetical glosses and appositives presented immediately after the uṣūl al-fiqh terms are not accurate synonyms. These equivalents are functional adaptations borrowed from common law discourse. For example, translating ᶜillah as merely 'effective cause' does not capture the concept of ᶜillah. The term ᶜillah is the underlying reason for a ruling as established in divine revelation and is not man-made legal rationales.

It is also observed in the textbook that Kamali (1998) the use of Latinate terms in the definitions and explanations of terms such as:

Istiṣḥāb also presumes the continuation of the negative. For example, A purchase hunting dog from B with the proviso that has been trained to hunt, but then A claims that the dog is untrained (p.298)

Since istiṣḥāb consists of a probability, namely the presumed continuity of the status quo ante, it is not a strong ground for the deduction of the rules of Shariᶜah (p. 298)

Other Latin words that can be found in the textbook are prima facie (pp.. 95-97), ab initio (p. 110), a fortiori (p. 147), ratio decidendi (pp. 202 – 206, 299), and ultra vires (pp. 370 -374). The use of these terms, rather than serving as a bridge to concepts embedded in the terms, forces L2 students to navigate three layers of languages. They are presented with the technical terms of usul al-Fiqh in Arabic, high-level academic English, and common law terminology (Latin legal maxims). As a result, L2 students experience difficulties in mastering concepts in uṣūl al-fiqh as they have to navigate unfamiliar Latin words alongside complex definitions of the subject matter. This resonates with Abdul Rahman et al.'s (2008) study that revealed lecturers spent a lot of time explaining terms of uṣūl al-fiqh than engaging in higher-level discussions on the subject matter.

Another issue worth considering the is transliteration method utilised in the textbook. Transliteration is a way of changing a text's writing system or script while keeping its phonetic representation the same or similar. It involves substituting characters from one script for those from another to represent the characters of the first script. Transliteration is typically used when a term or name needs to be translated from one language to another, especially when the languages have different scripts.

The transliteration method used by Kamali (1998) is that of the Encyclopedia of Islam (New Edition) and conformed to the publishing house style of the Islamic Texts Society, as stated by the author in his preface. Transliteration is required to assist in the correct pronunciation of target language words. In Malaysia, Islamic

terms in religious books or Arabic translated words written in Bahasa Melayu commonly use the following transliteration system of the Arabic consonants as listed by Ab Hamid (2014): ء (ʿ), ا (a), ب (b), ت (t), ث (th), ج (j), ح (h), خ (kh), د (d), ذ (dh), ر (r), ز (z), س (s), ش (sy),ص (s), ض (d), ط (t), ظ (z), ع (‘), غ (gh), ف (f), ق (q), ك (k), ل (l), م (m), ن (n), و (w), ه (h), ي (y), and ة (tt). In addition, the Arabic letters contain three vowels which can be divided into short (ا، و،ي or a, i, u), long vowel sounds transliterated as ā, ī, ū, and two types of diphthongs ىْ and وْ (ay and aw). On the other hand, the transliteration utilised by Kamali (1998) was also different from the IJMES (2023) style, such as in IJMES, the ‘h’ (the sound of tā’ marbūtah commonly found at the end of Arabic words) is dropped in words such as Shari^{c}ah or Sunnah to become Shari’a and Sunna. IJMES drops diacritics of English-assimilated word such as hadith and ulama. Kamali uses accents on all the words with full transliteration marks, replicating the original Arabic sound of the words, such as Qur'ān instead of Quran.

When learners are unfamiliar with the transliteration methods used by authors, or encounter a system that differs from what they are used to, it can cause pedagogical friction as they have to decipher the variations. Furthermore, resolving the variant spellings consumes learners’ time and attention because they have to figure out the intended pronunciation of the terms rather than learning the concepts embedded in them.

In conclusion, while Kamali’s (1998) work is a significant contribution to learning uṣūl al-fiqh in English, the linguistic presentation poses certain pedagogical challenges for L2 learners. The combination of dense information distribution in complex structures, agentless passive constructions, Latinate common law borrowings, and unfamiliar transliteration methods requires students to dedicate more effort to comprehending the text. Consequently, it shifts the focus from learning the core principles of Islamic jurisprudence to deciphering terminology and language mechanics. In order to improve comprehension, intentional scaffolding and contextualised glossaries are deemed useful to bridge these linguistic barriers.

Recommendation for A Specialised Learner Dictionaries of Uṣūl al-Fiqh

As the discussions above highlight problems related to the learning of uṣūl a-Fiqh, a specialised learner’s dictionary is viewed as a solution to these problem. A specialised dictionary is a type of dictionary that focuses on a specific subject, field, or discipline. It provides definitions, explanations, synonyms, antonyms, examples, and other information on the terms and concepts in that area of knowledge. A specialised dictionary can also be referred to as a technical dictionary (Bergenholtz & Tarp, 2003). In special subjects, terms can be structurally classified according to the concepts in the fields. For example, in medicine, medical terms are organised according to medical domains; anatomy, pathology, physiology, psychology, et cetera. Pavel and Nolet (2001) noted that the systematic arrangement of terms enables accurate knowledge transfer in terminology database by language professionals through the adaptation and adoption of the classification of the specialised field. A specialised dictionary can assist people who study or work in a particular field to understand and communicate more effectively. It is useful for those who want to learn more about a specific topic or area. However, a specialised dictionary may not be suitable for general use, as it may contain words and expressions that are unfamiliar or too technical for the average reader (Tarp, 2010).

A compilation of specialised terms aiming to convey their actual meanings to individuals who are unfamiliar with or new to the subject is essential. A fundamental aspect of specialised lexicography is that most users of specialised dictionaries are laypersons or, at best, semi-experts at best. This means that users of specialised dictionaries are likely to be learners when a foreign LSP is involved. Users may be beginners, or intermediate learners, or advanced learners of a foreign language (Nielsen, 2010). A specialised dictionary that provides accurate definitions of terms, addresses issues of inconsistency and suits the level of learners’ language ability is needed. Zhang and Guo, (2010) stated that SLDs should be dedicated to the service of specialised bilingual education in middle schools, colleges and universities, where the foreign language skills and speciality knowledge of students are rather limited and they hope to find the solution to certain language and comprehension problems related to their speciality learning in a single dictionary.

The discussions above highlight issues pertaining to the learning of uṣūl al-Fiqh, particularly regarding pedagogical usefulness of an authoritative text by Kamali (1998). A specialised learner’s dictionary is viewed as a solution to challenges encountered by L2 students. A specialised dictionary that is dedicated to a specific

subject, field, or discipline, provides definitions, explanations, and contextual information on domain-specific concepts (Bergenholtz & Tarp, 2003; Tarp, 2010). Pavel and Nolet (2001) stated that a systematic classification within a terminology database ensures accurate knowledge transfer by language professionals.

The target users varied in terms of proficiency in the language and level of expertise in the discipline. Zakaria (2025) argued that existing Islamic dictionaries lack structural consistencies and suggested improvements on the macro, micro, and access structures in developing a specialised dictionary of uṣūl al-Fiqh. Among others, he recommended for tashkeel (diacritics) to be added in the Arabic spellings of terms, and connecting conceptual relationship between related uṣūl al-fiqh terms.

The proposed recommendation for a specialised dictionary of uṣūl al-fiqh adopts an Aristotelian Genus-Differentia model grounded in the theories of lexicography. Aligning with the structural framework of Zhang and Guo (2010), and Zakaria's (2025) recommendations for a systematic structure, this model directly mediates information density. The Aristotelian Genus-Differentia model is a transparent model that enables filtration and distribution of information efficiently adhering to the categorising of overarching category (genus), followed by operational criteria and boundaries (differentia). A practical operation of this terminological approach is demonstrated in defining naskh:

Aristotelian Genus-Differentia Model for Naskh

Naskh may be defined as the suspension or replacement of one Shari'ah ruling by another, provided that the latter is of a subsequent origin, and that the two rulings are enacted separately from one another (Kamali, 1998, p.149)				
Term	**Transliteration (IJMES style)**	**Translation**	**Genus -**	**Differentia**
Naskh	Naskh	abrogation (Kamali, 1998, p. 18)	Rules of Interpretation – Pillar 2	earlier rulings are replaced by a subsequent divine ruling
Arabic spelling	نَسخ			

A structural model definition for naskh in the SLD of uṣūl al-fiqh is proposed as below:

Naskh: نَسخ	(abrogation)	A rule of interpretation whereby an earlier ruling is suspended or replaced by a subsequent divine ruling.

The proposed entry incorporates the headword, its Arabic spelling with diacritics, an English translation, and an Aristotelian Genus-Differentia definition, which effectively bridges lexicographical distribution requirements with the term's encyclopedic information in a single, coherent framework.

CONCLUSION

Learning the Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence (uṣūl al-Fiqh) in English textbooks presents linguistic and cognitive challenges for second-language (L2) learners. This study analyses the authorial strategies of Mohamed Hashim Kamali's (1998) in his textbook, reveals several issues for L2 students in grasping the concepts of uṣūl al-fiqh presented in it, specifically, the interplay of high subject-content density, complex syntactic structures, triple-translation burden posed by Latin legal maxims, and differences in the Arabic transliteration method used by the author.

In order to mediate these friction points, this paper highlights the need to develop a dedicated Specialised Learner Dictionary (SLD) for uṣūl al-Fiqh. Applying Zhang and Guo's (2010) framework for specialised lexicography, such an SLD must systematically integrate both physical structures and underlying functional principles:

- Microstructure & Distribution Structure: By providing a balanced conceptual definitions tailored to L2 learners' language skills, the dictionary can avoid excessive information density while maintaining precise jurisprudential accuracy.

- Macrostructure & Access Structure: Establishing a systematic arrangement of entries that promotes user-friendly access structure will facilitate quick and punctual information retrieval, bypassing the extensive browsing required when navigating dense textbooks.

- Outside Matter & Standardisation: Including standardised transliteration tables and pronunciation guides in the front matter will eliminate orthographic confusion and assist non-Arabic speakers in accurate phonetic interpretation.

As Zakaria (2025) emphasises, developing a Specialised Learner's Dictionary (SLD) dedicated to uṣūl al-fiqh with a systematic structure can directly scaffold the learning of concepts in the discipline. By providing contextualised, field-specific definitions, clarifying linguistic nuances, and standardising transliteration, such a lexicographical tool can reduce language and information gaps, fostering academic competency in contemporary tertiary Islamic legal education.

REFERENCES

1. Abdul Rahman, N. N., Ali, A. K., Ramli, R., & Ismail, M. S. (2008). The teaching and learning of Uṣūl al-fiqh in public universities in Malaysia: Reality and challenges. Jurnal Syariah, 16 (Special Edition), 523–536.
2. Bergenholtz, H., & Tarp, S. (2003). Two opposing theories: On dictionary making and dictionary research. International Journal of Lexicography, 16(2), 171-198
3. Cummins, J. (1997). L2 education for academic achievement. English Quarterly, 29(3-4), 7-21.
4. Cummins, J. (2000). Language, power and pedagogy: Bilingual children in the crossfire. Multilingual Matters.
5. International Journal of Middle East Studies. (2023). IJMES translation and transliteration guide. Cambridge University Press. https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/international-journal-of-middle-east-studies/information/author-resources/ijmes-translation-and-transliteration-guide
6. Kamali, M.H. (1998). Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence (2nd. ed.). The Islamic Texts Society.
7. Kamali, M.H. (2017, February 15). Principles of Islamic jurisprudence lecture 1 [Video]. YouTube; IAIS Malaysia. https://www. youtube.com/watch?v=zB9-1bVHBFw
8. Nielsen, S. (2010). Specialised translation from a lexicographical perspective. In R.S.V.F. Specialised dictionaries for learners (pp. 69-85). Walter de Gruyter.
9. Macaro, E., Curle, S.. Pun, J. An, J. & Dearden, J. (2018). A systematic review of English medium instruction in higher education. Language Teaching, 51(1), 36-76.
10. Pavel, S.& Nolet, D. (2001). Handbook of terminology. Translation Bureau, Public Works and Government of Canada.
11. Pillay, H. (1998). Issues in the teaching of English in Malaysia. The Language Teacher. Issue 22.11. 9-14.
12. Sager, J.C. (1990). A practical course in terminology processing. John Benjamins Publishing.
13. Sweller, J. (1998). Cognitive load during problem solving: Effects on learning. Cognitive Science, 12(2), 257-285.
14. Tarp, S. (2010). Functions of lexicography and specialised dictionaries. In H. Bergenholtz, S. Tarp, & A. L. N. S. Lexicography in the 21st century (pp. 223-238). John Benjamins.
15. Zakaria, R. (2025). Structural analysis of specialised dictionary of Islamic terms: Implications for future design. International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science, 9(8), 6264-6279.

16. Zhang, Y. & Guo, Q. (2010). An ideal specialised lexicography for learners in China based on English-Chinese specialised dictionaries. In P.A. Fuertes-Olivera (Ed.), Specialised Dictionaries for Learners (pp. 193-206). Walter de Gruyter.