

New Arabic Loanwords In Indonesian Dictionary

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Abstract

This paper explores the development of the new Arabic loanwords in the Indonesian language during the second half of the Reform Era. The study examines primary and secondary sources to identify recent Arabic loanwords, which conclude six relevant words: 'kalas', 'qurani', 'islah', 'kafah', 'ajib', and 'harem'. The analysis reveals that kafah and ajib have been added recently to the online dictionary edition, *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia* (KBBI). The KBBI identified kafah as an Arabic loanword, while ajib transformed its vocal articulation and is now recognized as a loanword. The research also sheds light on the influence of Arabic on the Indonesian language. This paper contributes to the understanding of the development of the Indonesian language and the role of loanwords in shaping the language. The study's findings also highlight the importance of language standardization and the role of dictionaries in shaping and reflecting the linguistic landscape of Indonesia.

Keywords: Arabic; Loanwords; Indonesia; Language; Dictionary; KBBI.

INTRODUCTION

Arabic has become one of the languages most frequently adopted into Indonesian. The amount of absorption goes around 3000 words (Jannah & Herdah, 2022). Russel Jones conducted some investigations confirming the absorbed of Arabic into Indonesian in 1978 and reevaluated it in 2007. According to Jones' research, there are at least 2,750 Arabic words in Indonesian (Jones, 1978). It is significant to note that these results do not include derived words from the word "doa" (prayer), such as "berdoa" (to pray), "mendoa" (praying), and "mendoakan" (to pray for) (KBBI, 2008: 306). If there are many Arabic-derived terms, it is possible that the number of Arabic loanwords in the Indonesian language far exceeds 3000 words.

Russel Jones's discovery of 2,750 loanwords does not imply that all of these words are used in daily conversation by Indonesians at all times. These loanwords may not necessarily include local words like "gisah" (Arabic: qisṣah, Indonesian: kisah) used by residents in West Kalimantan (van Dam, 2010: 218-243), "yukul" (Arabic: yākulu, Indonesian: makan) or "rejak" (Arabic: rajā', Indonesian: pulang) in Surabaya (van Dam, 2010). This means that in written form (as in dictionaries), Arabic loanwords in Indonesian will continue to evolve, and the number of loanwords cannot be predicted, both in terms of their usage in communication and as part of the everyday language of local communities such as Surabaya and Indonesians in general.

Previous research on Arabic loanwords in the Indonesian language focused primarily on changes and adaptations, whether semantically (Julul et. al., 2019), in terms of pronunciation variations (Suyuti, 2018), or phonologically (Hadi et. al., 2003; Fadli et. al, 2022; Sofa et. al, 2022). These earlier investigations focused primarily on micro linguistic issues associated with the phenomenon of Arabic loanwords in Indonesian.

Nikolaos van Dam conducted a study that focused on the macro phenomenon of Arabic loanword development in the Indonesian language (van Dam, 2007). However, this focus was restricted to loanwords that first appeared in the early Reform Era or the early 2000s. During the second decade of the Reform Era, the Indonesian language rapidly adapted loanwords from other languages. Based on the phenomenon of Arabic loanwords in other languages during the period of freedom, notably the Reform Era, this article seeks to investigate several instances of contemporary Arabic loanwords in Indonesian. The evolution of these loanwords is examined in light of the updated Indonesian words in the fourth, fifth, and online editions of the Indonesian Dictionary called Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia or KBBI. To examine the contribution of continuity and change in the field of Arabic loanword research, as well as to observe the dynamics of contemporary language, it is necessary to investigate loanwords from Arabic. Therefore, this study addresses the problem of which new Arabic loanwords emerged during the second part of the Reform Era.

METHOD

This paper focuses on textual data, particularly Indonesian words and lemmas that have been etymologically adopted from Arabic. This data has been recorded in the Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI) from the first to the fifth edition, both in print and online, and has become standardized Indonesian vocabulary. Therefore, the initial step of this research is the collection of primary sources, which are the dictionaries mentioned. In particular, the source format for the fourth, fifth, and online editions of KBBI is digital in the form of PDF and a web application accessible at <https://kbbi.kemdikbud.go.id/>. In addition, secondary sources are used to conduct additional research. These resources include <http://sealang.net/indonesia/lwim/> and <https://corpora.wortschatz-leipzig.de/>.

Using these two sources, this investigation employs three investigative processes as its method of analysis. First, the identification of Arabic loanwords present in the fourth, fifth, and online editions of the KBBI. This identification is performed manually by reading several assumed new words with attention. Then, a cross-check is conducted against the pre-Reform Era edition, the first, second, and third editions of the KBBI. In addition, the Arabic-Indonesian and Indonesian-Arabic dictionaries are checked using the Kamus Al-Munawwir (al-Munawwir, 2007). In addition, the Arabic-English dictionary by Hans Wehr (Wehr, 1976) is examined for further consideration.

Second, the contextual analysis of Arabic loanword usage. In addition to analyzing variations in the usage of Arabic loanwords, their usage in sentence contexts has also been analyzed. It is essential to comprehend how these Arabic loanwords are utilized in the Indonesian language, as well as their impact on language comprehension and utilization as a whole. Nonetheless, this stage is restricted to the sentence contexts contained in dictionaries.

The conclusion is the third stage. The research concludes, based on its analysis, that these terms have indeed become new words as a result of the loanwords of Arabic into Indonesian. The study concentrates on textual data, particularly Indonesian words and lemmas that have been etymologically absorbed from Arabic.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In a historical overview, the Arabic loanwords in Indonesian language are inseparable from the process of Islamization in the archipelago, which occurred over centuries. Regardless of the debate about who were the first people or parties to spread Islam in the archipelago and the theory of the arrival of Islam in the archipelago (Nusantara) or in the imagination of Sutan Takdir Alisyahbana as the land in between (Bumantara), the Arabic words absorbed into Indonesian language are closely related to religious terms (Islam) as found in the study of the Quran, hadith, tafsir, and explanations (sarh) of these texts. Also, the written literary tradition before independence, following Verstegh (2020), “the integration of Arabic loanwords is evident in a number of derivations, such as *disifatkan* ‘to be described’ (Bustān: 42.25) or *dikhabarkan* ‘to be predicated’”. It is clear that Arabic loanwords later in Indonesia has been influenced in such written texts. Due to the use of foreign words, there was a sense of "prestige" among most Indonesians, and gradually these foreign words became commonly used and standardized (Steenbrink, 2006).

Researchers note that the abundance of Arabic loanwords in Indonesian language has undergone a process of re-Arabization (rearabization). This Arabization process is not merely Islamization that aims to spread the religion and its values, but it brings Arabic symbols, especially the language, into the social and cultural life of Indonesian society (Campbell, 1996). Through this process, the Arabic language is widely used, especially in the writings of Indonesian Muslim figures. Linguistically, Arabic is also closely associated with Indonesian society because it is used in daily Islamic rituals. Moreover, sociologically, Arabic language is chosen to name Islamic symbols.

As time goes by and social-cultural development progresses, the use of the Indonesian language also undergoes changes, particularly in terms of loanwords. As one of the languages that borrow words, Arabic words used in Indonesian also undergo changes in meaning and usage. As explained earlier, the changes that occur in loanwords from Arabic are consistently borrowed from classical Arabic literature forms and a few modern standard Arabic forms. Jones' research has provided detailed explanations regarding semantic changes and homographs in Arabic loanwords (Jones, 1978). Some of the changes and additions of Arabic loanwords into contemporary Indonesian can be found in the Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (KBBI) fourth, fifth, and online open editions.

In the fourth, fifth, and online open editions of KBBI, several Arabic loanwords have additional entries, subentries, and meanings. If we trace the previous editions of KBBI, including the first edition (1988), second edition (1991), and third edition (2001), it is evident that in the editions of the first and second decade of the Reform Era, there have been updates to the entries of loanwords. For example, in the third edition, there were around 78,000 lemmas and sublemmas. However, in the fourth edition, the lemmas and sublemmas increased to 90,000. This means that there are approximately 12,000 lemmas and sublemmas in the latest edition. Therefore, it can be understood that among these 12,000 lemmas and sublemmas, there are loanwords from Arabic. At least, among the sublemmas, there are new meanings in Arabic loanwords as a development (revision) of the previous meanings.

Based on observations and investigations of Arabic loanwords in KBBI during the first and second decade of the Reform Era compared to the KBBI 1988 (Anton

Moeliono, 1988), dozens (almost a hundred) of new loanwords from Arabic have been found. These loanwords include words that were not previously included in dictionaries before the Reform Era. Two dictionaries that serve as references for the old dictionaries are the first edition of KBBI (1988) and the General Dictionary of Indonesian compiled by W.J.S. Poerwadarminta (1982). These two dictionaries represent the old Arabic loanwords in Indonesian. As for the fourth, fifth, and online open editions of KBBI, they represent the inclusion of new Arabic loanwords in Indonesian that are actively used.

New Loanwords

The recent Arabic loanwords are words that were not previously listed in dictionaries before the *Era Reformasi*. In this study, those words are understood as new loanwords because they appear and are included in the latest edition of the Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (KBBI). In the latest version, the addition of new words, most of which are loanwords from foreign languages, includes Arabic loanwords. Based on observations that compare old and latest editions of KBBI, there are several popular words that are still actively used by the community as markers through Arabic loanwords. After conducting observation, comparison, and examination, there are six loanwords that etymologically derive from Arabic that are often used either in written and oral communication. The six words are 'kalas,' 'qurani,' 'islah,' 'kafah,' 'ajib,' and 'harem.'

These six relatively new Arabic loanwords do not necessarily mean that they are widely used by the Indonesian community in daily life. According to Nikolaos van Dam (2007), the abundance of loanwords in the Indonesian language borrowed from Arabic is not always used in daily interactions and sometimes not even understood by Indonesians themselves (both educated and uneducated). However, if we consider the use of those words in public communication including a particular region, the use of the words is often happened. As explained by the team of authors of the fourth edition of KBBI, the addition of these words is based on considerations of their usage in dictionaries of specific fields of knowledge or dictionaries from certain regions in Indonesia. According to Sugiharto (2009), the addition of rich vocabulary in the latest KBBI is the result of borrowing words from foreign languages as well as local languages. Indonesian absorbs these foreign words because they carry a subtlety of language and specific nuances that are difficult to match and express in Indonesian. But these six new words do not mean they are never used. Again, these words are still easily found in written or spoken language, both formally and informally.

The words 'kalas,' 'qurani,' 'islah,' 'kafah,' 'ajib,' and 'harem' are six interesting new loanwords from Arabic to be noted. Among the various new loanwords from Arabic, all of them have open meanings that can be further interpreted. This means that the fourth and fifth editions of KBBI provide general explanations for these words. Furthermore, the online edition opens up opportunities for readers to add meanings and even entries¹. Currently, the online version team has processed 65,937 and rejected 18,644 out of a total of 107,213 proposals². Ideally, these six words should be fully elaborated to find

¹ The online version of the Indonesian Dictionary provides an opportunity for readers to propose new entries. On the homepage, specifically under the section titled "New List," readers are encouraged to register first in order to suggest new words. See <https://kbbi.kemdikbud.go.id/Beranda>

² See <https://kbbi.kemdikbud.go.id/Beranda/Statistik>

their appropriate meanings for Indonesians. In addition, the addition of the word 'qurani' further strengthens the dominance of Arabic loanwords in the 'q' alphabet of the Indonesian language. We can observe that all words in Indonesian starting with the letter 'q' are loanwords from Arabic. Unlike the letter 'q' the letter 'k' appears to be more adaptable to the context of Indonesian words.

'Kalas'

The word 'kalas' can be found in the fourth edition of KBBI, where it is not present in the first edition and the *Kamus Umum Bahasa Indonesia* compiled by W.J.S. Poerwadarminta and the pre-Reform edition. There are two meanings of 'kalas' in the fourth edition of KBBI, each with different definitions and explanations. The first meaning of 'kalas' is described as "*gelang-gelang atau tali dari rotan pada dayung atau pengayuh* [rings or ropes made of rattan on oars or paddles]." An example of this word in a sentence is "*kalas pada kapal itu sudah rapuh* [the rings on the boat's oar are already fragile]." The second meaning of "kalas" is explained as "tidak bersisa; sama sekali tidak ada yang tinggal [nothing left; completely gone]." An example of using this word in a sentence is "*karena terlalu lapar, semua makanan di meja itu habis kalas* [because of extreme hunger, all the food on the table is completely gone]." In contrast to the fourth edition, the online edition adds one more meaning, which is a circular rope tied between two legs to facilitate climbing coconut trees (Munawwir, 2007: 359).

The team of authors of the fourth edition of KBBI did not explain the origin of the two words that have been standardized in the Indonesian language. In the online edition, explanations about the origin of loanwords are provided with the term "etymology." However, based on the explanations regarding the meanings of the word "kalas," it is the second meaning of 'kalas' borrowed from Arabic that is interpreted as "nothing left; completely gone." In the Arabic-Indonesian dictionary, the word 'kalas' can be matched with the meaning of the Arabic word "خلص" which translates to "murni, lepas, bebas, selesai, dan habis [pure, detached, free, finished, and gone]". In the Arabic-English dictionary, "خلص" is translated as "to be pure, unmixed; become free; to be finished, be done, be over..." (Wehr, 1976: 254) which, when translated into Indonesian, roughly corresponds to becoming pure, unmixed; being pure; finished, passed.

As explained by the team of authors of the fourth edition of KBBI, one of the considerations for standardizing loanwords is the usage of words commonly used by specific experts, especially in dictionaries of certain fields of knowledge. Based on this information, it can be assumed that the standardized word 'kalas' in Indonesian refers to dictionaries of theology (Islam), Arabic linguistics, and discussions related to Arab-Islam. One word that can be easily traced is 'khalas' (خلص) as translated in Indonesian, as found in the al-Munawwir dictionary. It has been mentioned above that the word 'khalas' has counterparts or meanings of "pure, detached, free, finished, and gone." Based on this dictionary, it means that there are two domains of meaning in the word 'khalas'. The first is the meaning of being pure, free, and detached, which refers to something different, distinct. Meanwhile, the meaning of being finished and gone forms its own domain, referring to something that has ended without leaving anything behind.

The word 'khalas' in the Arabic-English dictionary also has different domains of meaning. In the Hans Wehr Arabic-English dictionary, 'khalas' is translated as "to be pure, unmixed; become free; to be finished, be done, be over..." If we observe, the words

"to be pure, unmixed, and become free" form one domain, referring to the meaning of something different, distinct. Meanwhile, the words "to be finished, be done, and be over" form their own domain, referring to the meaning of something that has ended without leaving anything behind.

Meanwhile, in the fourth edition of KBBI, there is the word 'kalas' which is borrowed from the Arabic word 'khalas' (van Dam, 2010: 223). As it has become a loanword that is later standardized as an Indonesian word, the meaning of the word has undergone changes and shifts. In the Arabic-Indonesian and Arabic-English dictionaries, the word 'khalas' has two domains of meaning. However, when the word is standardized in Indonesian as 'kalas', the meaning of 'kalas' only represents one domain, which is the meaning of "nothing left; completely gone".

Qur'ani

The second case of adding new loanwords from Arabic is the word 'qurani'. The word 'qurani' can be found in the fourth edition of KBBI, where it is not present in the first edition and the *Kamus Umum Bahasa Indonesia* compiled by W.J.S. Poerwadarminta. Qurani is defined as "bersifat atau bersangkutan paut dengan alquran [related to or associated with the Quran]". Unlike the new loanword kalas, the word qurani is not accompanied by examples of usage in sentences. This is also evident in the online edition, which does not include example sentences.

The fourth edition of KBBI does not explain the origin of the word qurani that has been standardized in Indonesian. In contrast, the online version provides the etymology and states that the word is derived from Arabic. However, there is a difference in the spelling, as the fourth edition does not include quotation marks ('), while the online version includes them (qur'ani). Nevertheless, based on the explanation of the meaning of the word "qurani", it is borrowed from Arabic, specifically *qur'ānī* (قرآني). In the Arabic-English dictionary, qur'ānī is defined as "pertaining to the Koran", which roughly translates to "related to the Quran" in Indonesian.

What is notable about the addition of the word *qurani* is that it further strengthens the dominance of Arabic loanwords in words starting with the letter "q" in the Indonesian language. It can be observed that all words in Indonesian starting with the letter "q" are loanwords from Arabic, except for one which is a non-Arabic word, namely the letter "q" as the seventeenth letter in the Indonesian alphabet. Unfortunately, KBBI does not include the letter "qaf" (ق) as a standardized letter in the Indonesian language. However, in the case of other letters, the letter "dāl" (د) has become a standardized word in Indonesian.

Islah

The word "islah" is also of interest here. This word is relatively new and seems to have been developed in KBBI. In the fourth edition, it is defined as reconciliation or peace (regarding conflict resolution). In subsequent editions, particularly the online version, it is defined in more detail as improvement with the explanation of peace (regarding conflict resolution, and so on). Unfortunately, the word is not accompanied by example sentences. However, it appears that many news texts have already used this word, especially in specific conflict cases. In the national media, this word is frequently

used to describe particular news events. For example, the popular newspaper of *Kompas* once used this word as a headline in the following manner:

Muhaimin, Yenny Wahid, dan Islah yang Belum Tuntas

...
Meski sulit, jika islah tak gigih untuk diupayakan, bara yang ada masih berpotensi kembali tersulut di kemudian hari. Sebaliknya, jika islah terjadi, gabungan kedua kubu itu bisa berefek positif bagi PKB. Elektabilitas PKB di 2024, misalnya, bisa lebih tinggi. (Kompas, 29 March 2023)

[Muhaimin, Yenny Wahid, and the Unfinished Islah

...
Although difficult, if islah is not vigorously pursued, the embers that exist may potentially ignite again in the future. Conversely, if islah occurs, the combination of the two factions can have a positive effect on PKB. For example, the electability of PKB in 2024 could be higher.]

The example news article emphasizes the meaning of islah as intended by the dictionary, which is peace for conflict resolution. Upon further investigation, it is indeed related to the Arabic word **إِصْلَاحٌ** or *islāḥ*. This explanation is provided in the online version of the dictionary but is not present in the fourth edition. Therefore, this word remains active as it is continuously used by people to describe, report, or convey efforts for improvement and peace. The meaning of this word also does not deviate much from its original Arabic counterpart, which is also about improvement or peace.

Kafah

The next word is 'kafah'. This word is actually brand new because it is not included in the fourth edition of KBBI. The word *kafah* only appears in the latest editions, especially the online version. It is defined as "completeness" or "wholeness." There are two meanings of this word: 1) perfect: the longing to position oneself as a complete Muslim, and 2) wholeness. Unfortunately, like the previous word, this word is not accompanied by example sentences. So far, the community also appears to actively use this word in everyday contexts, both in written and spoken form. The easiest way to verify this is by looking at the use of this word in news articles, such as the example below:

Islam Kafah: Maknanya dalam Dua Tafsir Alquran

Istilah Islam kafah atau berislam secara kafah berasal dari Surat Al-Baqarah ayat 208. Sebab turunnya ayat ini berkaitan dengan kisah Abdullah bin Salam

The term Islam kafah or being a complete Muslim originates from Surah Al-Baqarah verse 208. The revelation of this verse is related to the story of Abdullah bin Salam.]

The above quote serves as an example of the use of the word 'kafah' in a sentence. The context of the word aligns with its meaning in the dictionary, which is *completeness* or *wholeness*. The online dictionary provides an etymological explanation that this word originates from Arabic, specifically **كَافَّةً** or *kāffah*. The online version of KBBI also mentions references to the book by Russel Jones and the Lisan al-'Arab dictionary by Ibn Manzur. After comparing the meanings in the dictionary with the context of its usage

in sentences, it can be concluded that there is not much difference in meaning from the original word that was borrowed from Arabic.

Ajib

The next word is 'ajib'. This word has been added in the latest version of KBBI, particularly the online version. The fourth edition of KBBI does not include this new word. Upon further investigation, it is also not listed in the first to third editions of KBBI. This word is indeed a new borrowed word in contemporary Indonesian. The online version of the dictionary provides the following meanings for this word: 1) delicious; tasty; savory, 2) good; excellent, and 3) amazing. Unlike the words 'kafah' and 'islah', examples of the word's usage in sentence contexts are already provided in the dictionary.

1. Enak; sedap; lezat: Risoles ini rasanya *ajib* sekali [Delicious; tasty; savory: These risoles taste incredibly *ajib*]
2. Baik; bagus: Penjual itu memberikan pelayanan yang *ajib* [Good; excellent: The seller provided excellent service]

As for the third meaning, amazing, no examples of its usage in sentences are provided yet. However, we can find examples of this meaning in the list of lemmas for 'ajaib'. The next question is whether this word is native to the national language or borrowed from a foreign language. Although KBBI does not explain the origin of this word, some researchers believe that *ajib* comes from Arabic. A plausible analysis suggests a vowel change from the original Arabic word عَجِيب or 'Ajīb to 'ajaib'. This word underwent an articulatory change, resulting in a vowel change from 'ajib' to 'ajaib'. It should be noted that 'ajaib' is a borrowed word from 'ajib' (Sa'adie, 1998). With the addition of this new word 'ajaib', it seems that the articulatory vowel change is no longer applicable. Moreover, the meaning of 'ajib' includes 'ajaib', good, delicious, and tasty. 'Ajib' has actually become more popular in culinary discussions.

Harem

The word 'harem' has recently been frequently used by the public to refer to certain meanings. In the dictionary, this word is already listed in the fourth edition of KBBI, with the following definitions: 1) a (large) house where the sultan's concubines reside (in Arab lands), and 2) the women residing in the harem; the sultan's concubines (in Arab lands). In the online version, 'harem' is defined with three meanings: 1) a separate section of the house specifically for women in Arab countries, 2) a group of women married to one man, 3) a group of females controlled by one male during mating season. The interpretations of this word differ to some extent while still falling under the same concept.

Both the fourth edition and online versions of the dictionary do not provide an explanation as to whether this word is borrowed from Arabic or not. In terms of everyday language usage, the findings of Nashoih's research are interesting to note. By recording a conversation among residents of Embong Arab in Malang, he found that the word 'harem' was used quite frequently. The language used by the residents was informal Arabic or colloquial Arabic. 'Harem' was interpreted as a reference to women (Nashoih, 2018).

CONCLUSION

In the development of the Indonesian language, borrowed words from Arabic continue to increase. In the updated versions of Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (KBBI)-the fourth, fifth, and online editions—there are thousands of new borrowed words from Arabic that have been incorporated into Indonesian. Among the numerous added Indonesian words, many of them are borrowed from Arabic.

This paper applies three analysis steps, namely identification of borrowed words, analysis of word usage in context, and drawing conclusions, using primary sources such as dictionaries and secondary sources from internet pages. The observations reveal the presence of six new borrowed words rooted in Arabic, namely ‘kalas’, ‘qurani’, ‘islah’, ‘kafah’, ‘ajib’, and ‘harem’.

Two words, *kafah* and *ajib*, serve as examples of more recent borrowed words from Arabic compared to the other four words. These two words were added in the most recent edition, particularly the online version. The KBBI explicitly states that *kafah* is borrowed from Arabic, supported by existing research and Arabic dictionaries. On the other hand, *ajib* is not directly mentioned in the dictionary as a word derived from Arabic. However, existing research confirms that *ajib* underwent vocal articulatory changes, becoming *ajaib*. Thus, interestingly, this word has now become its own borrowed word with, among other meanings, *ajaib*.

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