The Hidden Indonesian Language Literacy Curriculum In Arabic Language Textbooks For Islamic Junior High School

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Abstract

Many religious-based schools and universities in Indonesia have widely implemented Arabic language textbooks as a learning material. However, Arabic is often considered challenging to learn due to its distinct linguistic origin from the Indonesian language. Therefore, there is a need for effective methods to facilitate students in learning Arabic just as they learn Indonesian. Surprisingly, a covert approach to learning Indonesian is also applied to studying Arabic. There are influential Arabic language textbooks that teach Indonesian grammar implicitly. This research aims to analyze the presence of curriculum of Indonesian language literacy in Arabic language textbooks, mainly for grades VII, VIII, and IX in Indonesian Islamic Junior High Schools (Madrasah Tsanawiyah or MTs). These textbooks were published by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia in 2020. The research method used is a qualitative descriptive approach, which involves content analysis of each chapter in these three books. The research findings reveal a significant amount of Indonesian language literacy content in Arabic textbooks. This content appears as explanations that serve as material clarification for students. Notably, the Indonesian language explanations account for 10% of the grade VII textbooks and 2% of the grade VIII and IX textbooks. Three forms of Indonesian language literacy content were successfully identified: language for comprehension introduction, comparison, and grammar contextualization.

Keywords: Hidden Literacy; Indonesian Language; Arabic Language; Textbook Studies

INTRODUCTION

Language has become a tool for human communication, enabling interaction and understanding among individuals. Without language, human activities would be hindered, as it serves as a means to convey intentions and purposes. Similarly, the progress of scientific knowledge heavily relies on the role of language in its dissemination. Moreover, language serves crucial functions beyond communication, acting as a vehicle for thinking, expression, describing ideas, and connecting different groups (Rock, 2019) (Afjalurrahman, 2018) (MoChridhe, 2019). One of the languages commonly taught in Indonesia is Arabic, given that the majority of its population practices Islam. This is because the guidance for Muslims, namely the Quran and Hadith, is written in Arabic, necessitating an understanding of the language to comprehend the teachings contained within. Arabic has also significantly contributed to enriching and expanding the vocabulary of the Indonesian language. Loanwords from Arabic have become commonly used by Indonesians in everyday communication. Moreover, Arabic has become a foreign language taught in Indonesia, particularly in Islamic-based schools. The teaching of this
language not only emphasizes communicative learning but also mastery of grammar (qawaid) and syntax (nahwu) (Supriyanto, 2016) (Baroroh & Tolinggi, 2020) (Aprianto & Zaini, 2019).

Nevertheless, Arabic is still considered difficult for native Indonesians due to significant differences with the Indonesian language (Zubaidah, 2017) (Zainuri, 2019). This is because Arabic originates from a linguistic family vastly different from Indonesian. Unlike Indonesian, which belongs to the Austronesian or Malay-Polynesian linguistic family, Arabic is part of the Semitic family (Ruslan et al., 2023) (Waltisberg, 2020) (Crevels & Muysken, 2020). Moreover, the emphasis on nahwu (Arabic grammar rules) taught in schools tends to be challenging for learners, especially those lacking sufficient foundational knowledge in Arabic learning. Several previous studies have analyzed the relationship between Arabic and Indonesian languages. According to Handayani & Gazali (2018) (Krisnawilujeng et al., 2023), in general, the subjects in Arabic and Indonesian share similarities. However, there are quite significant differences between them. For instance, subjects in Indonesian are not affected by word type, predicate, or word quantity, unlike Arabic where subjects and predicates are highly influenced by word type and quantity. Huda (2019) (Khasanah & Baehaqie, 2021) (Nikmah, 2019) then compared the object structure in the Arabic-language newspaper Al-Jazirah with the object structure in the Indonesian-language newspaper Tempo. Both languages exhibit similarities in using nouns as objects. However, Arabic and Indonesian differ in the order of placing the object within the sentence. In Arabic, the object can precede the subject, and the predicate isn’t required to come after the subject, whereas in Indonesian, the object must follow the predicate preceded by the subject.

A study conducted Kamal (2018) (Fehri, 2018) (Al-Omari et al., 2020) also showed that the placement of adjectives in Arabic must correspond to masculine or feminine, singular, dual, or plural forms. Conversely, Indonesian does not have such arrangements, suggesting that Arabic tends to be stricter and more organized in sentence structure. Mukhibat (2015) (Afzal, 2019) argues that Arabic language instructors need to use methods that minimize learners’ difficulties. One potential method is utilizing cognates, leveraging Indonesian vocabulary similar to Arabic. Additionally, Pribadi (2014) (Lind et al., 2020) (Zurqoni et al., 2020) applies a hermeneutic approach as the foundation for translating from Arabic to Indonesian. Nevertheless, there remains a knowledge gap in previous research, as many studies have primarily focused on the comparisons and differences between the Arabic and Indonesian languages, as well as the best methods for teaching Arabic. Therefore, this study aims to uncover and analyze the presence of Indonesian language literacy within Arabic language books. Researchers argue that the existence of this literacy facilitates learners’ understanding of Arabic. This literacy refers to the use of notes and explanations in Indonesian within Arabic language materials to clarify and comprehend the Arabic content. The study specifically focuses on the utilization of Arabic language textbooks used in the seventh, eighth, and ninth grades at Islamic Junior High Schools (Madrasah Tsanawiyah-MTs) across Indonesia. These books were published in 2020 by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia.

METHOD

The research design utilized is the descriptive qualitative method to analyze the presence of Indonesian language literacy within Arabic language textbooks. This method
aims to provide comprehensive conclusions in explaining a specific phenomenon. Descriptive qualitative research is often considered less interpretive than interpretive descriptive methods since it does not necessitate researchers to provide deep interpretations of the collected data or information. It is a less theoretical method compared to other qualitative methods in research. The descriptive qualitative method seeks to offer explanations from a naturalistic inquiry, committed to studying something in its natural state, thus not requiring in-depth interpretations (Mohajan, 2018) (Bradshaw et al., 2017) (Ritchie et al., 2013) (Lambert & Lambert, 2012). Using the descriptive qualitative method, this research endeavors to analyze the existence of Indonesian language literacy in Arabic language textbooks, specifically for seventh, eighth, and ninth grades in Indonesian Islamic Junior High Schools (MTs) published by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Indonesia in 2020. Additionally, this study aims to understand and depict the complex phenomenon of Indonesian language literacy within foreign language texts, particularly Arabic.

Data Collection

The research sample consists of Arabic language textbooks used by MTs (Islamic Junior High Schools) students in Indonesia, spanning grades VII, VIII, and IX. These books were published by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Indonesia through the Directorate General of Islamic Education in 2020, underpinned by Minister of Religious Affairs Decree Number 183 of 2019 concerning the Curriculum of Islamic Education and Arabic Language in Madrasahs. The selection of Arabic language textbooks as the research sample is due to their comprehensive content, widely used in Arabic language instruction at Middle Schools (SMP) under the Ministry of Religious Affairs, including MTs. These textbooks provide a moderate and comprehensive understanding of religious teachings for students, guiding them in internalizing religious values. Therefore, the Arabic language textbooks serve as a reference for students’ thinking, attitudes, and actions in their daily lives, which are later transformed into broader social behaviors (Masruxhin, 2020) (Elyas & Picard, 2010) (Al & Editörden, 2010) (Kress, 1979).

Analysis

During the data analysis phase, the researcher conducted a comprehensive analysis of each chapter within the Arabic language textbooks. Texts and sentences were identified and analyzed to comprehend the use of notes and explanations in the Indonesian language. The utilization of the Indonesian language in these texts reveals the hidden literacy within the Arabic language textbooks. Additionally, the researcher identified sections within the textbooks, particularly those containing explanations in the Indonesian language. These explanations might include word definitions, concept explanations, and examples of word or sentence usage.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

After conducting data analysis, this research reveals that there is a substantial presence of Indonesian language literacy in the explanatory sections providing clarification for the learning materials within Arabic language textbooks. These explanations are found in nearly every chapter of the books. When quantitatively measured, the sections containing Indonesian literacy content amount to nearly 10% in the grade VII textbook and 2% in the VIII and IX-grade textbooks. Therefore, it can be said that the VII-grade book has a larger portion of Indonesian literacy-containing sections compared to the other two grade levels. Moreover, the Indonesian content in the
VII-grade textbook also exhibits clearer forms of Indonesian literacy. This is because the VII-grade students are new to the MTs environment, thus having lower exposure to Arabic compared to VIII and IX-grade students. Hence, the VII-grade textbook offers more abundant and clearer Indonesian literacy to aid students in understanding the Arabic they are learning. Upon textual examination, three forms of Indonesian language literacy content are identified within the Arabic language textbooks: introductory language for comprehension, comparative form, and contextualization of grammar. In this context, the VII-grade Arabic language textbook contains both comparative and contextualization of grammar forms, while the VIII and IX-grade textbooks only feature introductory language for comprehension. These forms not only vividly demonstrate Indonesian content within the Arabic textbooks but also attest to the implied value of Indonesian literacy as a hidden curriculum.

**Introductory Language For Comprehension**

The curriculum content of Indonesian literacy in the form of introductory language for comprehension can be found in the VIII and IX-grade Arabic language textbooks in Indonesian MTs. When explaining Arabic language materials, the Indonesian sentences used need to be clear to avoid misconceptions. This aligns with Pribadi’s (2014) (Zulharby et al., 2019) (Hafidz Zaid, 2020) argument that unclear Indonesian usage in Arabic language instruction may create communication gaps with the audience. Improper word arrangement can result in flat and rigid narrative sentences, diminishing the interest of students to delve deeper into the subject.

In the VIII-grade Arabic language textbook, the utilization of Indonesian literacy begins with an explanation of ‘adad tartibi, a form of numerical or counting words indicating levels and following specific patterns (wazan), faa ‘ilun or faa ‘ilatun. In Figure 1, it is evident that the material explanation is concise and clear, encompassing the definition of ‘adad tartibi and its various forms. This clarity aids students in comprehending the provided material more easily.

![The Form of Explanations in Indonesian Language to Elucidate the Concept of Numerical in Arabic Language](https://example.com/fig1)

**Figure 1. The Form of Explanations in Indonesian Language to Elucidate the Concept of Numerical in Arabic Language**


In addition to the concept of numerical or counting words, Indonesian language is also used to explain sentence structures in Arabic known as “jumlah” (noun sentences). Figure 2 illustrates that “jumlah,” particularly “jumlah ismiyyah” (noun sentences), has been clearly explained in Indonesian. Even the sentence structure is briefly but clearly explained, consisting of “mubtada’” (subject) and “khabar” (predicate). Such
explanations can enhance students’ knowledge and skills in constructing “jumlah ismiyyah” accurately and effectively.

**Jumlah Ismiyyah**

Jumlah ismiyyah adalah susunan kalimat yang diawali dengan *ism*. Struktur penyusunan jumlah ismiyyah disebut dengan mubtada’ (subyek) dan khabar (predikat).

Dalam penyusunan jumlah ismiyyah, yang perlu perlu diperhatikan adalah:

1. Mubtada’ harus berbentuk *ism* ma’rifat dan rafa’
2. Khabar harus berbentuk isim nakhir dan rafa’ jika berup isim
3. Khabar harus sealur dengan mubtada’ dari sisi jenis (muḍzaka and muṭannats dan jumlah (mufrad, muṭannats dan jama’)

Figure 2. Explanatory Forms in Indonesian Language for Explaining the Concept and Formation of Sentences in Arabic


Furthermore, explanations regarding nouns or “isim” are also written in the Indonesian language. One form of noun explained is “mashdar,” which refers to a noun describing a specific meaning and not bound by time or tense. Figure 3 demonstrates that Indonesian language explanations are used to describe “mashdar sharih” or “mashdar” with clear pronunciation. To facilitate students’ understanding, the VII-grade Arabic language textbook also provides examples of several sentences that include “mashdar sharih.” These examples are written in Arabic and then explained in Indonesian to clarify their meanings.

Figure 3. Explanatory Forms in Indonesian Language for Explaining the Concept and Example Sentences of Arabic Nouns

Source: (Masrukhin, 2020) *Textbook of Arabic Language for Grade VIII*, page 79

In addition to nouns, in Figure 4, it can be observed that the Arabic language textbook also utilizes Indonesian literacy to explain one of the verb forms in Arabic, namely “fi’il mudhari’.” This is a verb form indicating an ongoing or future action or event. Besides providing the definition, Indonesian language is also employed to explain the letters within “fi’il mudhari’,” encompassing various pronouns like “I,” “we,” “he/she,” and
“you.” Sample sentences along with their meanings are also written in Indonesian for better understanding.

2. *Fi’il Mudhari’*

Fi’il *mudhari’* adalah kata kerja yang menunjukkan terjadinya suatu peristiwa pada waktu yang akan datang, sedang berlangsung atau rutinitas.

a. Ciri-ciri Fi’il *Mudhari’* adalah dimulai dengan huruf *Mudhor*’ah yaitu,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Huruf Mudharah</th>
<th>Arti</th>
<th>Contoh</th>
<th>Arti</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>أ</td>
<td>Saya</td>
<td>أَفْتَنُ الْبَاب</td>
<td>Saya membuka pintu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ن</td>
<td>Kita</td>
<td>نَفْتَ الْبَاب</td>
<td>Kita membuka pintu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ي</td>
<td>Dia</td>
<td>يَفْتَنُ الْبَاب</td>
<td>Dia (lk) membuka pintu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ت</td>
<td>Kau</td>
<td>تَفْتَنُ الْبَاب</td>
<td>Kau (lk) membuka pintu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4. Explanatory Forms in Indonesian Language for Explaining the Concept and Usage Examples of Arabic Verbs


In the Arabic language textbook for Grade IX, Indonesian literacy is also frequently used to explain Arabic language materials. One of these aspects is negation, which denotes statements used to refute or deny someone else’s speech. Figure 5 illustrates that negation in Arabic comprises “*lam nafi*,” meaning ‘not yet or not,’ and “*la nahiyah*,” which means ‘do not.’ The description in Figure 5 also explains that negation statements in Arabic fall under “*fi’il mudhari’*,” a verb form indicating ongoing or future actions/events. To facilitate students’ understanding, the Arabic language textbook also employs Indonesian literacy to further clarify the rules regarding negation statements.

Figure 5. Explanatory Forms in Indonesian Language for Explaining the Concept of Negation in Arabic


Indonesian literacy is then employed to explain information regarding pronouns in Arabic. Similar to the explanations about the concept of imperative or request verbs, the explanation about pronouns is also presented engagingly. Figure 6 illustrates that Indonesian literacy is used to elucidate the meanings of six pronouns in Arabic, namely the pronouns for singular masculine, dual masculine, plural masculine, singular feminine, dual feminine, and plural feminine. This indicates that Arabic is more intricate compared to Indonesian as it distinguishes gender in its pronouns, unlike Indonesian.
Comparison Between Arabic Grammar And Indonesian Grammar

Comparing the grammatical structures of two different languages is crucial in learning a foreign language. This comparison is utilized to avoid ambiguity or confusion in translation, whether it involves translating or explaining concepts, definitions, and examples. Quoting Zubaidah (2017), there are two aspects within the scope of comparing two languages. The first aspect is the internal aspect, focusing on the language’s content to be learned. Meanwhile, the second aspect is the external aspect encompassing civilization, culture, and the local society using that language. In general observation, all languages worldwide have intrinsic aspects in their sentences, whether informative, imperative, or interrogative. Languages also involve sentence structure aspects comprising simple, compound, and complex or compound-complex sentences (Kamal, 2018) (Ballard, 2022).

As previously explained, Arabic differs from Indonesian in terms of pronouns. While Indonesian uses only ‘kamu’ (you) and ‘dia’ (he/she), Arabic includes gender distinction in its pronouns. In Figure 7, it can be observed that Arabic employs different pronouns: ‘anti’ for addressing you (female), ‘anta’ for addressing you (male), ‘hiya’ for addressing she (female), and ‘huwa’ for addressing he (male). However, the usage of ‘I’ is not influenced by gender because both men and women refer to themselves as ‘ana’ (I).

The distinction in gender reference can be observed in the example sentences shown in Figure 8. In the illustration, it is evident that Arabic uses the phrase ‘indahu,’ which means ‘he (male) has,’ and ‘indahaa,’ meaning ‘she (female) has.’ Arabic also employs ‘indaka,’ meaning ‘you (male) have,’ and ‘indaki,’ meaning ‘you (female) have.’ Meanwhile, in the Indonesian language, the second and third-person pronouns consist of only ‘kamu’ (you) and ‘dia’ (he/she).
Figure 8. Explanatory Form in the Indonesian Language to Explain Examples of Using Pronouns in Arabic

The difference in grammar between Indonesian and Arabic languages is also evident in the phrase used to ask ‘what is your name.’ Figure 9 illustrates that the interrogative word used is ‘maa,’ which means ‘what,’ not ‘man,’ which means ‘who,’ hence the sentence structure becomes ‘maasmuka’ and not ‘manismuka.’ If translated directly into Indonesian, it would sound peculiar as ‘maasmuka’ means ‘what is your name.’ Therefore, learners need to comprehend the meaning behind Arabic statements to avoid mistranslations.

Figure 9. Explanatory Form in the Indonesian Language to Explain the Usage of Words and Sentences in Arabic

Contextualization Of Arabic Word Arrangement With Indonesian Language Meaning
In the Arabic language textbook for Grade VII, numerous examples of constructing sentences in Arabic are presented in table form, later translated back into Indonesian. This is evident in Figure 10, demonstrating sentence structure consisting of ‘mubtada’ (subject/noun), ‘man’ut’ (noun given a quality or characteristic), and ‘na’at’ (adjective or characteristic). Considering that English sentences often distinguish the gender of nouns, ‘na’at’ must also correspond to the gender of ‘man’ut.’ For instance, the word ‘diligent’ referring to Ibrahim as a male student is stated as ‘nasyitun,’ while ‘diligent’ for Fatimah as a female student is mentioned as ‘nasyithotun.’ It’s important to note that in Indonesian, ‘na’at’ is positioned with the translation of the word ‘yang…’. Therefore, when translated into Indonesian, sentence number 1 would read as ‘Ibrahim is a diligent student.’
The following explanation discusses the arrangement of Arabic words consisting of ‘mubtada’ (subject or noun) and ‘khabar’ (predicate using a prepositional phrase). In Figure 11, there are examples of the common word arrangement, starting with the subject and ending with the prepositional phrase. For instance, ‘The car is in front of the bicycle.’ From this sentence, it can be seen that ‘the car’ is the ‘mubtada’ placed at the beginning of the sentence, while ‘in front of the bicycle’ is the ‘khabar,’ following the ‘mubtada’ and placed at the end of the sentence. Such word arrangements show that the emphasis is more on the ‘mubtada’ aspect compared to the ‘khabar.’

Meanwhile, Figure 12 illustrates an example of word arrangement that contrasts with the previous explanation. The word arrangement in Figure 12 starts with the ‘khabar’ as a prepositional phrase and is followed by the ‘mubtada’ as the noun. However, it’s essential to underscore that this arrangement applies only when the ‘khabar’ used is a prepositional phrase. For instance, ‘In front of the bicycle (there is) a car.’ This sentence demonstrates that ‘in front of the bicycle’ is the ‘khabar’ or prepositional phrase placed at the beginning of the sentence, while ‘a car’ is the ‘mubtada’ positioned after the ‘khabar’ and at the end of the sentence. Thus, this word arrangement emphasizes the aspect of the ‘khabar’ being used.

**CONCLUSION**

Arabic language has been taught in many schools and higher education institutions in Indonesia, especially those with a religious foundation. However, Arabic tends to be challenging to learn as it comes from a vastly different linguistic background compared to Indonesian. This research aims to uncover and analyze the presence of Indonesian language literacy within Arabic language textbooks. This literacy plays a significant role in facilitating students’ comprehension of Arabic language learning.
research analysis focuses on Arabic language textbooks for grades VII, VIII, and IX in Indonesian Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs) published by the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs in 2020.

Employing a descriptive qualitative method, the study finds that within these Arabic language textbooks, there is a substantial presence of Indonesian language literacy within the explanatory sections aiding the students. Explanations in Indonesian language content reach up to 10% in the grade VII textbook, while 2% in grades VIII and IX. In the Arabic language textbooks, there are at least three elements of Indonesian language literacy present. These include introductory language forms that can be found in the grade VIII and IX textbooks, as well as comparative and contextualization of grammar found in the grade VII textbook. These three forms indicate the implicit role of Indonesian language literacy as a hidden curriculum.

The research outcomes can be valuable for teachers, especially those teaching in MTs, to better understand the role of Indonesian language literacy in the Arabic language textbooks they use. Teachers should recognize that Indonesian language literacy significantly aids students in the foreign language learning process. Furthermore, the research findings can guide policymakers in crafting foreign language textbooks in the future. Policymakers need to thoroughly review these textbooks before publication to ensure optimal preparation and avoid errors that might create ambiguities in understanding the intended meaning. This is because, even after in-depth study and analysis of the Arabic language textbooks, the researcher still identified typos or errors in word/sentence construction. Additionally, inconsistencies were found in the Arabic word writings, which could potentially create confusion and ambiguity for students.

REFERENSI


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