

December 2022

Islamic cultural and Arabic linguistic influence on the languages of Nusantara; From lexical borrowing to localized Islamic lifestyles

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Recommended Citation

Mahfud, Choirul; Astari, Rika; Kasdi, Abdurrohman; Mu'ammam, Muhammad Arfan; Muyasaroh, Muyasaroh; and Wajdi, Firdaus (2022) "Islamic cultural and Arabic linguistic influence on the languages of Nusantara; From lexical borrowing to localized Islamic lifestyles," *Wacana, Journal of the Humanities of Indonesia*: Vol. 22: No. 1, Article 11.

DOI: 10.17510/wacana.v22i1.914

Available at: <https://scholarhub.ui.ac.id/wacana/vol22/iss1/11>

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From lexical borrowing to localized Islamic lifestyles

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ABSTRACT

This article reviews the breadth of the influence of Arabic on the languages of Nusantara, from the early arrival of Islam in the archipelago to the modern era.¹ Focusing on both linguistics and culture, we pay attention to precolonial exchanges, regional languages – in particular Bima, Sasak, Javanese, Sundanese, and Bugis – and the recent influence of Arabic and Islamic culture on the development of technological products, Islamic financial systems, and Islamic lifestyles in contemporary Indonesia. From era to era, Arabic has not only played a role in enriching the vocabulary of the languages of Nusantara, it has also contributed to the social, religious, educational, literary, philosophical, legal, political, scientific, and cultural domains.

KEYWORDS

Arabic; languages of Nusantara; Islamic culture; Islamic lifestyles.

¹ This collaborative research was supported and funded by Institut Teknologi Sepuluh Nopember (ITS) Surabaya, Indonesia.

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1. INTRODUCTION

As a multicultural society, Indonesia houses a rich diversity of languages which continue to develop and change under the influence of various global languages and cultures. This article deals specifically with Islamic culture and the Arabic language. We analyse the continuities and changes in the linguistic influence of Arabic and Islamic cultural influence – which we see as interrelated phenomena – on the languages of Nusantara. Over the centuries, both have exerted a significant influence on shaping the archipelago's linguistic and cultural identity (Azyumardi Azra 1994; Abdul Munif 2010; Ronit Ricci 2011; Karel Steenbrink 2011). This influence extends back to the precolonial era and has deeply affected the beliefs, social practices, languages, cultures, and educational and political systems in the archipelago (Moch. Syarif Hidayatullah 2012; C. Mahfud 2019b; M. Tolchah and M.A. Mu'ammam 2019). Islam has been generally positively received by the peoples of the archipelago.

We begin by pointing out that the Arabic language is not only used by ethnic Arabs, but also fulfils official functions in approximately twenty-five countries in Africa, Asia, and elsewhere in the world, including Indonesia. The Association of African Universities has institutionalized Arabic as one of its three languages, whereas the United Nations (UN) have acknowledged Arabic as an official language since 1973 (Makruf 2009). In Indonesia and elsewhere in Nusantara, the Arabic language inevitably plays an important role for Muslims. The privileged position of Arabic in the Islamic world is religiously motivated but is also supported by a number of language-internal reasons. It is rich in vocabulary (*mufradāt*), metaphors (*tashbihāt*), words (*lafẓ*), and synonyms (*mutarādif*). Its grammatical structure (*qawā'id naḥwiyya*) is unique and concise, whereas its syntax (*tarkīb wal jumal*), morphology (*qawā'id al-ṣarfīyya*), etymology (*ishtiqaqiyya*), and lexicology (*'ilm al-dilālāt*) have inspired the admiration of many. Arabic is omnipresent in the daily life of Muslims in worship, prayer, and other religious ritual activities. Learning and teaching Arabic, too, is regarded as a form of worship because Arabic is the language of the Qur'ān (R. Astari et al. 2020; F. Rahim 2020) and the key to understanding all Islamic teachings.

The Arabic language can be distinguished into *Fuṣḥā* 'formal; official' and '*Āmmīyya* 'informal; non-formal; vernacular registers', which differ in terms of grammar (*naḥw*) and word formation (*ṣarf*). In short, *Fuṣḥā* Arabic pays closer attention to the standardized rules of *naḥw* and *ṣarf* than does '*Āmmīyya* Arabic. *Fuṣḥā* is the language of the Qur'ān, official situations, poetry, literary prose, and scientific works (Emil Badī' Ya'qub 1982). It also serves as a unifying language, able to resolve disputes between Arab nations, because it is similar throughout the Arab world. Those communicating in *Fuṣḥā* understand each other despite coming from different national backgrounds. *Fuṣḥā* is also understood to be the Arabic in use at the time of the Prophet Muhammad. It was officially inaugurated as an international language by UNESCO on 18 December 1982, a date known as World Arabic Day. '*Āmmīyya* Arabic, by contrast, is used in ordinary matters, daily activities, and in everyday life. This

register is commonly referred to as a market language. *‘Āmmiyya* Arabic has various regional varieties, hence we find considerable differences between Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Tunisia, Egypt, et cetera (Ya’qub 1982).

This article explores the languages of Nusantara and the influence Arabic and Islamic culture on them. We pay attention to the domains of literature, worldviews, opinions, practices, actions, scholarly perspectives, lifestyles, technology, and the Islamic financial system, all of which have been enriched by Arabic loanwords. We argue that, for centuries, as a language of social practices, religion, education, and culture, Arabic has synergized with the indigenous languages of Nusantara. Given that Islam has been embraced by most Indonesians, many Arabic loanwords in the languages of Nusantara, including standard Indonesian, pertain to the religious, scientific, and cultural domains. In addition to loanwords, Arabic language and literature made a huge contribution to the Sufistic literature of the archipelago (Syamsul Hadi 2015; M. Darori Amin 2000; M.H. Bakalla 1990). From poetry to novels, many Sufistic works have been written by Indonesians, among them Hamzah Fansuri, Acep Zamzam Nur, and others. It also stands to reason that Arabic plays an important role in Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*), which have been leading institutions in the spread of the Arabic language and literature across the archipelago. At present, social media, *madrassas*, and tertiary institutions have become equally important in this domain (Muyasaroh et al. 2020; Rahmawati et al. 2018; Mahfud 2018). Given the large number of Muslims in the archipelago, Indonesians with some knowledge of Arabic can be said to be quite numerous.

We divide the discussion of Arabic and Islamic influence on the languages of Nusantara into three parts. Firstly, we trace the early history of contact to get a sense of the background to this important topic. Secondly, we explore a number of languages (Bima, Sasak, Javanese, Sundanese, Bugis) spoken in regions with a long tradition of acculturating and adapting Arabic and Islamic culture to local practices – and doing so peacefully and harmoniously. This tradition is known in Indonesia as *Islam Nusantara* ‘Nusantara Islam’ (Akhmad Sahal and Munawir Aziz 2015). Finally, we investigate contemporary influences, such as language testing, Islamic fashion, educational applications, sharia’-friendly housing and banking, and the film industry. Looking at the second and third topics especially, we feel the broader literature available is patchy and this has inspired us to write the present article and advocate for a more integrative and interconnective approach. The complex intersections between linguistic and cultural influences explored in this article have a direct bearing on contemporary problems in Indonesia and the two are inextricably linked one another.

2. EARLY HISTORY

Islam has caused fundamental cultural changes in the societies of Nusantara. For instance, it brought an end to practices of self-immolation historically expected of widows in Java and Bali (Anthony Reid 1992, 2015). Other

consequences have included the introduction of circumcision and the dietary replacement of pork by mutton. The latter change was complicated to impose because pigs were the primary source of meat and a central element in the traditions and rituals of pre-Islamic ceremonies. These two features therefore assumed a central place in a person's conversion, so that the process of early Islamization in the archipelago must have been of a deeper, less superficial character than is often claimed. Muslims not only introduced the profession of faith (*shahāda*), prayers, and other religious observances to substitute the pre-existing ones, their religion also changed society in the sense that Islam is a prophetic religion which offers an exclusive way to salvation and requires its adherents to display certain external traits (Reid 1992).

Although the Arabic language and Islam entered the archipelago through Muslim traders in the seventh century CE, the actual development of Islam only began in the eleventh and twelfth centuries CE (Tajuddin Nur 2014). Hence, Arabic influence spans over a millennium. Besides loanwords, it introduced a writing system known as *Jawi* (< *Jāwī*) and brought with it an unprecedented level of scientific knowledge. This transition was spearheaded by the sultanate of Melaka, which rose to prominence as a cultural centre in the western archipelago after the fall of Srivijaya. The latter was a Hindu-Buddhist kingdom, while Melaka was Islamic. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries CE, when the spread of Islam was gaining ground, the Malay lingua franca had already developed into an additional language of Islamic culture in the archipelago (Azra 1994; Ricci 2011). As its Arabic-derived *Jāwī* script outperformed the pre-existing Indic alphabet, many Malay words and expressions related to Islam were accepted into other languages of Southeast Asia. The Javanese language also has an extensive classical literature on Islam. Islamic teachings were initially transferred orally before later being written down in the old Javanese script. As the knowledge of writing and Arabic were absolute necessities in the spread of Islam, the Arabic script gradually began to prevail in Javanese religious texts (Fauziah 2008).

In colonial times, the term *ulama Jawi* referred to the scholars of Islam from the archipelago. This *Jāwī* scholarly tradition began in the seventeenth century with Nuruddin ar-Raniri, Abdur Rauf from Singkel, and Syekh Yusuf from Makassar (Amirul Ulum 2017) and its traces can still be observed today. Significant numbers of Islamic manuscripts appeared in Arabic, Malay, and Javanese. Malay literature in particular was permeated by many Islamic influences (Liaw Yock Fang 2011). It was categorized into literary fiction, historical literature, and literature book. *Jāwī* manuscripts encompassed the teachings on Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*), the oneness of God (*tawhīd*), Sufism, poetry, and prose. They all required a knowledge of Arabic, especially when dealing with the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth. The first Malay Qur'ān translation works were made by Abdur Rauf of Singkel in the seventeenth century and Al-Ghazālī's seminal work was translated in the eighteenth century by Abdul Samad of Palembang. The Javanese writing tradition was also strongly influenced by Arabic manuscripts (Annabel Teh Gallop 2002, 2019). In Saudi

Arabia, Jāwī scholars enjoyed a high reputation. Nawawi al-Jawi al-Bantani, for example, was granted the title Syekh Hījaz, whereas Ahmad Khatib from Minangkabau was an imām in the Masjid al-Ḥarām in Mecca. These scholars generally sought knowledge from renowned scholars from the Ḥaramayn (Mecca and Medina). The resultant linguistic influence travelled in both directions, as can be seen from the toponyms used as *nisbah* appended to the Arabic names of Indonesian intellectuals: Syekh Muhammad Arsyad al-Banjari, Syekh Nawawi al-Jawi al-Bantani, Abdus Samad al-Palimbani, Ahmad Khatib as-Sambasi, Abdul Karim al-Bantani, Ahmad Rifai Kalisalak, Abdullah al-Khalidi al-Minangkabawi, Junaid al-Batawi, Syekh Ahmad Nahrawi al-Banyumasi, Hasan Mustafa al-Garuti, and Abdul Gani Bima (Taufik Abdullah et al. 2016).

The Arabic language has been significant in enriching the vocabularies of the languages of Indonesia, which absorbed its lexicon in the domains of religion, literature, philosophy, law, politics, science, and lifestyle. As the lingua franca of the archipelago and eventually Indonesia's national language, Malay was crucial to the distribution of Arabic loanwords (Russell Jones 1978; Hadi 2015). This lexical absorption was followed by the internalization of Islamic ideas and concepts, featuring various types of change and adaptation (Muhammad Abdul Jabbar Beg 1979; Daniel L. Palls 1996). Among the most significant donor languages of Malay, Arabic comes second only to Sanskrit and is followed by Persian and Hindi respectively (Jones 1978). The number of Arabic loanwords in Malay has been estimated at 150 (James Howison 1801), 219 (Frank Athelstane Swettenham 1881), 385 (W.G. Shellabear 1916), 2,000 (Hadi 2015), and 3,000 (Denys Lombard 2005). Their absorption has been explained as a process of linguistic Islamization (Syed Muhammad Nauqib Al Attas 1990), encompassing technical vocabulary as well as concepts vital to the understanding of Islam. The Arabic influence in Islamized languages serves to express Islamic views and unite the foundations of faith, morality, and legislation. Previously non-existing words were initially absorbed in their religious sense. For example, the word *sahabat* (< *ṣaḥāba*) 'friend' initially denoted a friend of the Prophet and entered into common usage later. The word *wajib* (< *wājib*) was first used in relation to religious prescriptions on circumcision, yet its usage has expanded significantly in more recent times. In modern Malay, *wajib* 'obligatory' differs from its near-synonym *harus* 'must', as the former carries distinct connotations of absolute necessity (J.S. Badudu 1979).

The most common Arabic loans in Malay are Islamic in nature. However, Arabic has also enriched Malay in the realms of literature, philosophy, law, politics, science, economy, state administration, and culture. Table 1, which synthesizes the work of Al Attas (1990), Badudu (1979), and Hadi (2015), illustrates this point.

Malay/Indonesian	Arabic etymon	Meaning
<i>adil</i>	<i>ʿādīl</i>	‘justice’
<i>akhirat</i>	<i>ākhirā</i>	‘afterlife’
<i>akhlak</i>	<i>akhlāq</i>	‘morals’
<i>Allah</i>	<i>Allāh</i>	‘God’
<i>amal</i>	<i>ʿamal</i>	‘charity’
<i>ayat</i>	<i>āya</i>	‘verse’
<i>azan</i>	<i>adhān</i>	‘call to prayer’
<i>batal</i>	<i>bāṭil</i>	‘canceling’
<i>dunia</i>	<i>dunyā</i>	‘world’
<i>fikir</i>	<i>fikr</i>	‘thought’
<i>haj</i>	<i>ḥajj</i>	‘pilgrimage’
<i>halal</i>	<i>ḥalāl</i>	‘not forbidden’
<i>haram</i>	<i>ḥarām</i>	‘forbidden’
<i>hidayat</i>	<i>hidāya</i>	‘right guidance’
<i>hikmah</i>	<i>ḥikma</i>	‘wisdom’
<i>hukum</i>	<i>ḥukm</i>	‘law’
<i>ilahi</i>	<i>ilāhī</i>	‘divine’
<i>jemaah</i>	<i>jamāʿa</i>	‘congregation’
<i>Jumat</i>	<i>jumʿa</i>	‘Friday’
<i>kalimat</i>	<i>kalima</i>	‘sentence’
<i>kertas</i>	<i>qirṭas</i>	‘paper’
<i>lohor</i>	<i>zuhr</i>	‘midday prayer’
<i>makruh</i>	<i>makrūh</i>	‘reprehensible’
<i>malaikat</i>	<i>malāʾika</i>	‘angels’
<i>nabi</i>	<i>nabī</i>	‘prophet’
<i>rasul</i>	<i>rasūl</i>	‘messenger’
<i>rukun</i>	<i>rukn</i>	‘pillar’
<i>sabar</i>	<i>ṣabr</i>	‘patience’
<i>sahabat</i>	<i>ṣaḥāba</i>	‘friend’
<i>salat</i>	<i>ṣalāh</i>	‘prayer’
<i>sebab</i>	<i>sabab</i>	‘because’
<i>sujud</i>	<i>suḥūd</i>	‘prostration’
<i>sunnah</i>	<i>sunna</i>	‘proper conduct’
<i>syahadat</i>	<i>shahāda</i>	‘profession of faith’
<i>tamat</i>	<i>tamma</i>	‘end’
<i>tawakal</i>	<i>tawakkul</i>	‘absolute trust in God’
<i>wajib</i>	<i>wājib</i>	‘obligation’
<i>zakat</i>	<i>zakāh</i>	‘philanthropy; tithe’
<i>zikir</i>	<i>dhikr</i>	‘repeating Allah’s praises’

Table 1. Arabic loanwords in Malay/Indonesian.

Some Islamic-Arabic political concepts of more recent coinage, such as *adil* 'justice' (< 'ādil), *beradab* 'civilized' (< *adab*), *perwakilan* 'representative' (< *wakīl*), and *musyawarah* 'consideration' (< *mushāwara*), became an essential part of the foundational philosophy of the modern Indonesian state (*Pancasila*). Without these Islamic concepts from Arabic, Indonesia's founding fathers would have had great difficulty in formulating the *Pancasila* (Y. Latif 2018; J. Burhanudin 2018; Abdurrahman Wahid 2007; Kuntowijoyo 1994). Arabic influence can also be seen in the naming of state institutions, such as the Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat (People's Consultative Assembly) and Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat (House of Representatives), exhibiting the Arabic loans *majlis* 'council' and *ra'iyya* 'the people' in addition to those mentioned above.

All the above scholarship focuses on Malay/Indonesian. However, in the next section, we show the importance of looking at the languages of other regions in the archipelago displaying equally an important relationship with Arabic.

3. REGIONAL INFLUENCES

In this section, we pay attention to five languages: Bima, Sasak, Javanese, Sundanese, and Buginese. Of course, we realize that there are many more languages, but these five stand out in the sense that they are all spoken in bastions of relatively moderate Islam. Therefore, their particular relationship with Arabic, we believe, is especially significant to those interested in creating and sustaining peaceful and harmonious societies. In looking at these regional languages from a comparative perspective, we try to discern patterns which will also be valid elsewhere. This underlines the importance of a comparative analysis.

With regard to the adoption of Arabic words in Sasak, four developments have been observed: differences in usage, phonology (sound changes), semantics (changes in meaning), and purpose (Adi Rimbun Kusuma et al. 2012). Meanwhile, five reasons for lexical borrowing have been proposed: convenience, enrichment, the absence of words to express certain ideas, a sense of ownership, and common ground with other speech communities (Lalu Gede Suparman 1994; Nazir Tohir 1985). The point is that none of these phenomena is unique to Sasak. The phonological integration of Arabic loanwords into Sundanese has been analysed in terms of noise removal, sound attenuation, sound addition, and sound change. For example, the Arabic word *idhīn* is pronounced *idin* in Sundanese, as the Arabic phoneme /ð/ <ð> is absent from the latter language. In the realm of morphology, it has been observed that verbal nouns (*maṣḍar*) can be re-analysed as subjects (*ism fā'il*), singular words (*mufrad*) can become plural (*jam'*) and vice-versa, and morphemes can be added to Arabic loans. For example, the verbal noun *adl* 'justice' has been borrowed into Sundanese as a subject (*adil*), which can receive Sundanese morphemes such as the circumfix *ke-an* (*keadilan* 'justice'). Meanwhile, the singular word *ism* 'name' has been borrowed into Sundanese as *asma*, its plural form (Rudi Irawan 2020). Again, none of these observations is unique to Sundanese and

this holds true for many of Indonesia's other regional languages as well. The way ahead, therefore, is a comparative analysis of Arabized regional languages of Nusantara. Below, we offer some initial steps and miscellaneous observations in the hope that future scholars will add to them.

3.1. BIMA

The arrival of Islam in the town of Bima left a mark both on its religious system and on the local language. Arabic loanwords appear to have entered here in the wake of trade. As one of the commercial centres between Melaka and Maluku, Bima enjoyed a strategic geographical and physiographical position and was frequented by Arab traders who regularly plied this shipping route. Historically, Islam entered Bima from Ternate. From the records of the Ternatan rulers, it can be seen how important the sultan of Ternate and his people were in spreading Islam across the eastern parts of archipelago. During the reign of Sultan Khairun, the third sultan of Ternate (1536-1570), an Aceh-Demak-Ternate alliance was formed to increase co-operation between these three Islamic countries in efforts to propagate the influence of Islam in the archipelago. Under Sultan Baabullah (1570-1583), Islamization efforts from Ternate saw an increase in preaching and trading activities in Bima (Erwin et al. 2013). Bima's Islamization took place in three distinct periods: the arrival of Islam (1540-1621); Islamic growth (1621-1640); and the heyday of Islam (1640-1950) (M. Hilir Ismail 2008). Eventually, Bima adopted a royal system of rules based on Islamic principles under which the sultan replaced the king and the sultanate was grounded on Islamic teachings, customs, traditions, and cultural practices. Bima's sultans and scholars encouraged and contributed significantly to the use of Arabic terms and vocabulary (I Wayan Tama et al. 1966). Arabic influence was implemented through Islamic education (Sri Wahyuningsih and Nurul Zuhriyah 2018).

Islamic practices in the Bima sultanate include *molu*, *aru raja to'i* (minor feast; 'Īd al-Fiṭr), *aru raja na'e* (great feast; 'Īd al-'aḍḥā), and the *barzanji* tradition. In this context, *barzanji* (< *Barzanjī*) refers to a prayer, praise, or the narration of the history of Prophet Muhammad, which is sung to a specific rhythm, usually on the occasion of births, circumcisions, marriages, and the celebrations of the birthday of the Prophet. This *maulud* (< *mawlid*) tradition is called *molu* in Bima. In this ceremony, people are reminded that, to uphold the glory of Islam, one must share the Prophet's courage in the face of great adversity. Another Islamic tradition is called *jikir* (< *dhikr*), whose purpose is to remember God by repeated reading of *Lā Ilāha Illā llāh*. This practice is called *tahlilan* (< *tahlīl*) elsewhere in Indonesia. By multiplying expressions of gratitude to God and repeating His praise, this ritual is believed to ease the human burden.

The Arabic loanwords as given in Table 2, all of which have undergone phonological integration, have been observed in the Bima language.

Bima	Arabic etymon	Meaning
<i>baruka</i>	<i>burqa</i> ‘	‘burqa’
<i>fiki</i>	<i>fikr</i>	‘thought’
<i>haba</i>	<i>khabar</i>	‘news’
<i>hami</i>	<i>ḥamīd</i>	‘praiseworthy’
<i>hamis</i>	<i>khamīs</i>	‘Thursday’
<i>kahawa</i>	<i>qahwa</i>	‘coffee’
<i>La Kaya</i>	<i>Ruḡayya</i>	‘name’
<i>Mina</i>	<i>Amīna</i>	‘name’
<i>Qaro’a</i>	<i>al-Qur’ān</i>	‘Quran’
<i>sahibul hajat</i>	<i>ṣāhib + al-ḥāja</i>	‘host’

Table 2. Arabic loanwords in the Bima language.

3.2. SASAK

Sasak is another Eastern Indonesian language, spoken by the majority of the people of Lombok. Its Arabization is evident from Sasak dictionaries, other books, and videos. Qur’ān translations from Arabic into Sasak are also attested. A text known as the *Babad Selaparang* reveals that Lombok is home to numerous ancient manuscripts (Jamaluddin 2011, 2017), many of which highlight the value of working hard, displaying spirit, *ikhlas* ‘sincerity’ (< *ikhhlās*), and *tawakal* ‘trust in God’ (< *tawakkul*). They encompass the realms of literature, religion, history, law, politics, customs, and moral values. Besides Sasak, some of the manuscripts from Lombok have been written in Arabic, Malay, Sanskrit, Javanese, Balinese, and Buginese (Suparman 1994; T.C. van der Meij 2017; E.P. Wieringa 2018).

The *Cilinaya* manuscript, a literary work on the Sasak people, contains a number of Islamic nuances and Arabic loanwords. The manuscript begins with the sentence *Bismillahirrahmanirrahim*. The story contains the word *sadat* (< *shahāda* ‘profession of faith’) and also features the word *Alah* (< *Allāh* ‘God’) (R. Aris Hidayat 2008; Emi Budiwanti 2000). The *Cilinaya* manuscript narrates the story of a woman who loves a man from a different caste and socio-political background. Although they love each other, their union is not condoned by their parents. A Muslim woman called Aunt Cili eventually passes on parental permission. Before dying, the woman utters the *shahāda* as an expression of obedience to God (Hidayat 2008). The excerpt reads as follows (Hidayat 2008: 40).

Juru towek ger signa muni
Kamu bahe loweq laok hakan
Manjurna lei glis
Silaq sida paca Sadat

The trembling clerk said
Only you have much sense
Then he immediately
Allowed the reading of the *shahāda*

The linguistic character of this Sasak manuscript can be seen as a prime example of the early nature of Arabic influence on the languages of Nusantara.

3.3. JAVANESE

The Javanese language is spoken in the eastern, central, and northwestern parts of the island Java, albeit with considerable regional differences. Islam spread across the island in the wake of Arab traders, whose language influenced social, economic, and religious activities (M. Maftukhin 2016; Mahfud 2019a; H. Nashir and M. Jinan 2018). On a phonological level, the integration of Arabic loanwords into Javanese constitutes an interesting case study of linguistic acculturation. It involves a good number of phonological changes (Dwi Marfuah 2012), as exemplified in Table 3.

Phonological changes		Arabic etymon	Javanese examples
changes in vowels	<i>waqt</i>	/a/ > /ə/	<i>wektu</i> 'time'
	<i>dunyā</i>	/u/ > /o/	<i>donyo</i> 'the world'
	<i>thalāthā</i>	/u/ > /ə/	<i>seloso</i> 'Tuesday'
	<i>rizq</i>	/i/ > /ə/	<i>rejeki</i> 'fortune'
vowel shortening	<i>zakāh</i>	/a:/ > /a/	<i>jakat</i> 'alms'
	<i>yatīm</i>	/i:/ > /i/	<i>yatim</i> 'orphan'
monophthongization	<i>shaiṭān</i>	/ai/ > /e/	<i>setan</i> 'devil'
	<i>tauba</i>	/au/ > /o/	<i>tobat</i> 'repentance'
vowel epenthesis	<i>aṣl</i>	word-medial /a/	<i>asal</i> 'origins'
	<i>ilm</i>	word-final /u/	<i>ilmu</i> 'science'
changes in consonants	<i>adhān</i>	/ð/ (ذ) > /d/	<i>adan</i> 'call to prayer'
	<i>'aql</i>	/q/ (ق) > /k/	<i>akal</i> 'mind'
	<i>ākhirā</i>	/x/ (خ) > /k/	<i>akerat</i> 'the hereafter'
	<i>ḥājjī</i>	/h/ (ح) > /k/	<i>kaji</i> 'pilgrim'
	<i>aṣl</i>	/sʕ/ (ص) > /s/	<i>asal</i> 'origins'
	<i>wāriṭh</i>	/θ/ (ث) > /s/	<i>waris</i> 'legacy'
	<i>sharṭ</i>	/ʃ/ (ش) > /s/	<i>sarat</i> 'a condition'
	<i>fiṭra</i>	/f/ (ف) > /p/	<i>pitrah</i> 'nature'
	<i>zamān</i>	/z/ (ز) > /ʝ/	<i>jaman</i> 'era'
	<i>ba'da</i>	/ʕ/ (ع) > /ʔ/	<i>bakdo</i> 'after'
	<i>du'ā</i>	/ʕ/ (ع) > /ŋ/	<i>dongo</i> 'to pray'

Table 3. Phonological changes of Arabic loanwords in Javanese.

Arabic loanwords now form an important part of the Javanese language. On Monday 23 March, 2020, at 10 a.m., speaking in the Kepatihan Ward of Yogyakarta, Sultan Hamengku Buwono X provided a fascinating example. Addressing his subjects in a message about the COVID-19 outbreak in

Yogyakarta, he encouraged the community to display an attitude of patience (*sabar-tawakal*), acquiescence (*tulus-ikhlas*), sincerity, and resignation (physically and spiritually), accompanied by ongoing endeavours to combat the pandemic.

Ingsun, Hamengku Buwono, ing dina kang kebak was-was lan tidha-tidha iki, nyuwun para warga sami ndedonga kanjuk ing ngarsaning Gusti Allah, mugi kita saged enggal kaparingan pepadhang. Ing tanggap darurat awit saka sumebaring virus corona iki, kudu diadhepi kanthi sabar-tawakal, tulus ikhlas, pasrah lahir-bathin, lan kairing ikhtiar tanpa kendhat. Semoga uga, kita, kang kajibah ngesuhi para kawula. Wong sabar jembar, ngalah urip luwih berkah [...] (Cobaning Gusti Allah awujud Virus Corona).²

I, Hamengku Buwono, on this day loaded with apprehension and uncertainty, urge the people to pray in God's presence that we may be given new light. In our emergency response to the outbreak of this coronavirus, it must be met with patience, sincerity, by submitting the inner and outer self and unstint[ing] efforts. May we be entrusted with the guardianship of the people. Patient people shall obtain vast wealth, those who put others first will see greater blessings [...].

In the above statement, we see the use of Arabic as part of an attempt to appeal to the people in a plea to find the strength to weather the Covid-19 crisis. The loanwords are *Allah* 'God' (< *Allāh*), *batin* 'internal' (< *bāṭin*), *berkah* 'blessing' (< *baraka*), *darurat* 'emergency' (< *ḍarūra*), *ikhlas* 'sincerity' (< *ikhhlās*), *ikhtiar* 'efforts' (< *ikhtiyār*), *lahir* 'external' (< *zāhir*), *ndedonga* 'to pray' (< *du 'ā*), *sabar* 'patience' (< *ṣabr*), and *tawakal* 'trust' (< *tawakkul*).

3.4. SUNDANESE

Sundanese, especially in the regions of Cirebon and Banten, has undergone a process of Islamization since the end of the sixteenth century CE (A. Rosidi 2009, 2011). In many places, the Sundanese language is used for religious activities, such as recitations, lectures, some sermons, and instruction in Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) and *majlis taklim* (< *majlis* 'council' + *ta līm* 'religious teaching'). The latter is a flexible institution of religious education, which is open for everyone from any age, profession, and ethnicity, and can be held in the morning, afternoon, evening, or at night, in a classroom or at other locations. Teaching materials, known as Yellow Books (*Kitab Kuning*), are written in Sundanese and even the Qur'ān has been translated into this language. For examples of Arabic loanwords in Sundanese see Table 4.

² Retrieved from <https://corona.jogjaprovo.co.id/>.

Sundanese	Arabic etymon	Meaning
<i>abdi</i>	<i>'abd</i>	'slave or servants'
<i>ahérat</i>	<i>ākhirā</i>	'the hereafter'
<i>dikir</i>	<i>dhikr</i>	'praise to Allah'
<i>duniya</i>	<i>dunyā</i>	'livingness in the world'
<i>jakat</i>	<i>zakāh</i>	'tithe'
<i>jaman</i>	<i>zamān</i>	'era'
<i>kures</i>	<i>Quraish</i>	'the Kuraish tribe'
<i>magrib</i>	<i>maghrib</i>	'Maghrib pray'
<i>masjid</i>	<i>masjid</i>	'mosque'
<i>misil</i>	<i>mithāl</i>	'example'
<i>niyat</i>	<i>niyya</i>	'intention or willingness'
<i>paham</i>	<i>fahm</i>	'understand'
<i>patwa</i>	<i>fatwā</i>	'instructions or guidance'
<i>pikir</i>	<i>fikr</i>	'think'
<i>salat</i>	<i>salāh</i>	'praying'
<i>saum</i>	<i>ṣawm</i>	'fasting'
<i>selam</i>	<i>Islām</i>	'Islamic religion'
<i>takwa</i>	<i>taqwā</i>	'piety'
<i>tinja</i>	<i>istinjā'</i>	'cleansing the body'
<i>wabah</i>	<i>wabā'</i>	'epidemic'
<i>wulu</i>	<i>wuḍū'</i>	'ablution'

Table 4. Examples of Arabic loanwords in Sundanese.

3.5. BUGINESE

The Arabic influence on the Buginese language and its manuscript tradition (*lontara*) is far from trivial, even though no linguistic studies dedicated to the topic are known to us. In the wake of Islamization, Arabic loanwords are now widely found in the Bugis speech community of South Sulawesi. This process was accelerated when Islam became the official state religion (Ahmad Rahman and Muhammad Salim 1996). Arabic also influenced the pre-existing *lontara* script. In a mixed writing tradition, the *lontara* letter *ka* was symbolized by the Arabic number 2, *ga* by the number 2 plus a dot below, *nga* by the number 7 plus a dot at the top, et cetera. In this way, all eighteen letters could be represented by Arabic numerals. This hybrid script was called *lontara bilang-bilang* 'number script' and is believed to have existed during the reign of Sultan Alauddin Raja Gowa XIV.

Islam also underwent a localization in the Bugis areas. Upon arrival in South Sulawesi, Islam was enriched by aspects of *panngaderreng*, which can be understood as good habits, common rules, customs, and a system of norms in Bugis society. This hybrid system is founded on five key concepts: *ade'*, *bicara*,

rapang, *wari*, and *sara'*. The word *ade'* means custom (< *'āda*). The word *bicara* means 'to speak' and can be interpreted in the Bugis context as all circumstances related to issues of justice. *Rapang* denotes behavioural guidelines in society, while *wari* refers to distinguishing right from wrong, for example, in state administration. The word *sara'* refers to Islamic law (*shar'iyah*). Together, these terms constitute a combination of local norms and Islamic teachings which has characterized Bugis society over the centuries (Mattulada 1985).

4. CONTEMPORARY MANIFESTATIONS

Apart from religious piety, the chief socio-economic dynamics which prompt Indonesians to prefer Arabic, in addition to English, have to do with the new advantages and opportunities it offers. Arabic-speaking students have access to greater professional career opportunities in the fast-growing economies of Arab countries in the Middle East and North Africa. Someone who can speak Arabic can communicate with more than 300 million native Arabic speakers, opening the door to excellent international career opportunities. Indonesians are particularly motivated to learn Arabic by the prospect of becoming students in Arab countries and later lecturers, journalists, international lawyers, humanitarian workers, and a host of other job opportunities. The popularity of Arabic lessons has surged as a result. In Pare, Kediri, which is better known for its *Kampung Inggris* (village for studying English), courses in Arabic and other international languages are also available.

There are at least three well-known institutions authorized to test Arabic proficiency according to the international TOAFL model (Test of Arabic Foreign Language): the Arab Academy (www.arabacademy.com), the Saudi Arabia National Center for Assessment in Higher Education (*al-Markaz al-Waṭanī li al-Qiyās wa at-Taqwīm fie at-Ta'lim al-'Alī*), and the training and testing division of the King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz International Centre for the Arabic Language (*Markaz al-Malik 'Abdul 'Azīz ad-Dawli li Khidmat al-Lughat al-'Arabiyya*) (www.kaica.org.sa). To this day, various variants and formats of the TOAFL continue to be developed in a number of countries, including Indonesia, providing opportunities for everyone who wishes to improve their Arabic language skills and enhance their educational prospects, career goals, and international relations (Muhbib Abdul Wahab 2007).

The development of Arabic language testing has seen satisfactory outcomes in Indonesia, although some challenges do remain. The TOAFL is essentially a proficiency test for people who do not use Arabic as their everyday language. Just like the TOEFL (Test of English Foreign Language), which is set to meet the requirements for work or university enrolment at home and abroad, the TOAFL is designed to meet the standards of various professional institutions of Islamic higher education. The test began to be used as one of the requirements for the MA and doctoral entrance exams at UIN (Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University) from 1999/2000, at the UIN Jakarta Language Development Centre, famous for its pioneering of standardized Arabic language tests. Currently, the TOAFL exam is an entrance

requirement of Islamic state universities throughout Indonesia. For several functions concerned with education and training, the Ministry of Education and Culture, the Ministry of Religions, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs now also require Arabic proficiency tests.

At present, the TOAFL is used for multiple purposes: testing Arabic proficiency as part of a standardized graduation procedure; improving the quality of Arabic proficiency in undergraduate, MA, and doctoral programmes in Indonesian Islamic Education institutions; and establishing standards in the ability to speak Arabic, especially for people who wish to continue their Islamic studies in the Middle East or work in Saudi Arabia. Lukman Hakim Saifuddin, Indonesia's Minister of Religious Affairs (Working Cabinet, 2014-2019), has announced that the country could become a global centre for Islamic religious education, as it is equipped to provide the best facilities and services. According to Saifuddin, Indonesia has more Islamic tertiary institutions than those countries which have traditionally served as centres of Islamic higher education, such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Therefore, it is thought this opportunity will directly benefit the Muslim community in Indonesia and more broadly aid the advancement of the nation.

In addition to religious education, Arabic influence in contemporary Indonesia can be seen in fashion, technology, lifestyles, Islamic finance, and the film industry. In the realm of women's fashion, the two most widespread Arabic loanwords are *hijab* (< *ḥijāb*) and *jilbab* (< *jilbāb*). Etymologically, the latter is often derived from Arabic *jalaba* 'to gather or bring' or *jalb* 'stretching; exposing something from one place to another'. The specific meaning of the *ḥijāb* is a 'robe', that is to say, a voluminous item of clothing worn by women to cover their head and chest areas. Nevertheless, the definitions of these words in Indonesia are somewhat different. At first, the veil was referred to as a *kerudung*, later *jilbab* was preferred. In the 1980s, the term *hijab* overtook *jilbab* in popularity. A trendy *hijab* community has emerged in recent times, imbuing the lifestyles of Muslim women's fashion in Indonesia with new colour. At present, the word *hijab* no longer refers to the proper procedures for covering the female body according to Islamic law but has become the name of an accessory of Muslim women's fashion. The *hijab* tradition therefore constitutes an example of Islamic culture which has continued to develop over time.

Islamization and Arabization have also had technological implications. Lately, many products are offering Islamic fashion treatments. Most prominent are *hijab* washing machines. Electric washing machines offered by PT Sharp Electronics Indonesia, Home Appliance Polytron, and Aqua Japan have introduced Hijab Series machines adapted to protect *hijab* from damage. Here, the word *hijab* is clearly used by entrepreneurs to catch the attention of Indonesian Muslimas, ranging from Islamic school students to career women who certainly lack the time to launder their *hijab* by hand. Hence it has clearly presented a valuable business opportunity, especially since electric machines can provide individual facilities for laundering *hijab*. The type of fabric used

for a *hijab* tends to be delicate and smooth – usually a type of chiffon or cheesecloth or a diaphanous scarf – and care must be taken in laundering it, let alone putting it in a machine with other dirty clothes. Interestingly, the marketing team have designed posters and organized campaigns distributed through online media which explicitly contain the word “*hijab series*” as part of their appeal (see Image 1). The marketing team has assured consumers that the Hijab Series washing machine will launder *hijabs* without fear of the fabric being damaged or causing discoloration, underlining that the machine is equipped with a pulsator designed to run at a certain speed to prevent fabric damage during the laundering process. The promotion of this device began in 2018 and it continues to be in demand among Indonesia’s Muslim community.



Image 1. The product of the Hijab Series washing machine. (Photograph by Rika Astari, 2020).

Besides the wearing of the *hijab*, the influence of Arabic in modern Indonesian society can be seen in the community’s desire to learn the language through specific online products and technologies. When we typed the Indonesian phrase *belajar bahasa Arab* (learn Arabic) in Google search, the query generated around 47,200,000 results in 0.62 seconds, revealing without a shadow of doubt that Internet users in Indonesia are enthusiastic about learning Arabic via Google and other platforms of information technology. We therefore also explored free Indonesian technology products from which to learn Arabic on Google Play Store (Image 2). Many websites contain reviews and provide recommendations for potential users of their software to learn Arabic via a smartphone. In our Google search, we found a multitude of downloadable applications.

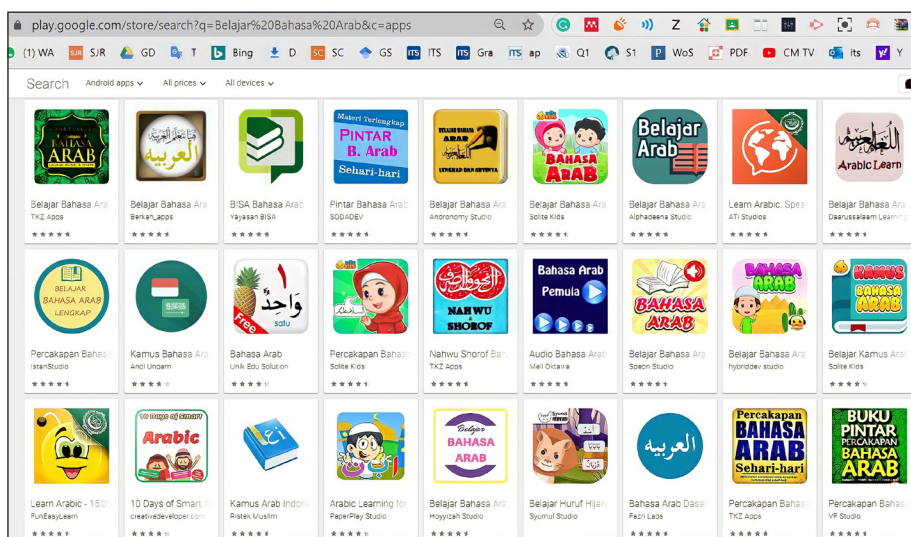


Image 2. Arabic learning applications in Indonesian. (Retrieved from: play.google.com).

The *gadgetized.net* website lists the 25 best-rated applications which can help anyone who wants to learn Arabic via a smartphone. These apps are often recommended to support the learning of Arabic of both beginners and advanced speakers (Table 5). Most Arabic learning applications can be easily downloaded via smartphones and help Indonesian consumers to study or learn more about this language.

No.	Name of applications		
1	Pintar Bahasa Arab Sehari Hari	14	Kosakata Bahasa Arab Lengkap
2	Belajar Bahasa Arab Praktis dan Lengkap	15	Learn Arabic
3	Secil Belajar Bahasa Arab+Suara	16	Belajar Bahasa Arab Offline
4	Belajar Bahasa Arab Lengkap Dengan Artinya	17	Nahwu Shorof Bahasa Arab Lengkap
5	Mondly Belajar Arab	18	Belajar Hijaiyah & Bahasa Arab
6	Kamus Bahasa Arab Offline	19	Belajar Bahasa Arab Al-Qur'an
7	Percakapan Bahasa Arab Lengkap	20	Belajar Bahasa Arab-5000 Frasa
8	Arabic Vocalbularies	21	Audio Bahasa Arab Pemula
9	Belajar Bahasa Arab Lengkap	22	Bahasa Arab Dasar
10	Arabic Learn Belajar Bahasa Arab Praktis	23	Bahasa Arab Untuk Anak
11	Arabic Study: 10 Hari Pintar Bahasa Arab	24	FunEasyLearn Belajar Bahasa Arab
12	Nahwu Shorof Lengkap Offline	25	Secil Kamus Arabic-Indonesia
13	Bisa Bahasa Arab Nahwu Shorof		

Table 5. The 25 best-rated Arabic learning applications. (Retrieved from: <https://www.gadgetized.net/aplikasi-belajar-bahasa-arab/>).

Arabization and Islamization can also be observed in the lifestyle choices of Indonesian Muslims, particularly in the phenomenon of sharia' housing. Sharia' housing refers to a type of property whose conveyancing system is implemented in accordance with the sharia', particularly in the sense that the ownership scheme is run according to the precepts of Islam. These new Indonesian trends in business and Muslim lifestyles are expressed in a number of Arabic terms, targeting people in search of new alternatives in their choice of housing and/or properties in an environment which approaches Islamic norms as closely as possible (see Image 3).



Image 3. Promotional posters. (Retrieved from: www.perumahansyariahku.com).

Sharia'-concept dwellings have begun to appear in various regions of Indonesia. Their popularity indicates that people are beginning to require a *halal* lifestyle in their everyday lives. Sharia' property developers tap into this need by providing houses with payment schemes which tally with the Islamic sharia'. Although their primary clients in Indonesia are Muslims, members of non-Muslim communities interested to buy sharia' housing are also welcomed. Indonesian property and housing developers seem to understand that the concept of sharia' housing is a new, promising opportunity. Their promotional strategies, both in the media and online, particularly when they refer to the procedures for purchasing sharia' housing without involving borrowing money with interest and problematic contracts. The words *riba* 'interest on investment' (< *ribā*), *Islam* (< *Islām*), *syariah* 'Islamic law' (< *shar' iyya*), and *akad* 'covenant' (< *'aqd*) are some common examples of such Arabic loanwords.

The influence of the Arabic language and Islamic culture is also evident in Islamic finance (sharia' banking). In recent years, banks and financial systems in Indonesia have begun to feature the Arabic term *syariah*. There are two types of banking systems operating in Indonesia: conventional banks and Islamic banks. In accordance with Law No. 21 of 2008, sharia' banks run their

businesses on sharia' principles. Commercial banks which use the word *syariah* on their logo include PT Bank Muamalat Indonesia, PT Bank Victoria Syariah, Bank BRI Syariah, Bank BNI Syariah, Bank Syariah Mandiri, Bank Syariah Mega Indonesia, Bank Panin Syariah, PT BCA Syariah, and many more (see Image 4). These banks use various Arabic terms denoting Islamic legal principles which are regulated by *fatwas* issued by the Indonesian Council of Ulama, including '*adl wa tawazun*' 'justice and balance' (< '*ādī wa tawāzun*'), *alamiyah* 'universalism' (< '*alāmiyya*'), *gharar* 'fraud', *haram* 'prohibited' (< '*ḥarām*'), *maslahah* 'benefit' (< '*maṣlaḥa*'), *maysir* 'gambling', *riba* 'usury' (< '*ribā*'), and *zalim* 'cruel' (< '*zālim*'). The implementation of sharia' banking and the supervision of prudential principles and good governance is the task of the Indonesian Financial Services Authority (Otoritas Jasa Keuangan), as is the case with conventional banking, with adjustments to the specific requirements of sharia' banking.



Image 4. Islamic financial systems in Indonesia carrying the Arabic word *syariah*. (Retrieved from: <https://jurnalmanajemen.com/perbankan-syariah/>).

Modern influences can also be found in a number of Indonesian film productions which carry Islamic nuances and use Arabic words. This influence can be seen in their titles, content, and messages. Islamic-themed films generally aim to teach Indonesian Muslim communities about the need to understand Islam better. They are thought to inculcate positive values and convey moral messages to the community. Indirectly, these films also contribute to the influence of Arabic. As will be shown in Image 5, Arabic vocabulary can be found in film titles such as *Ayat-ayat cinta* (The verses of love), *Ketika cinta bertasbih* (When love glorifies God), *Dalam mihrab cinta* (In the niche of love), *Assaalamualaikum Beijing* (Greetings from Beijing), and *Di bawah lindungan Kakbah* (Under the protection of the Kaaba).



Image 5. Indonesian films containing Arabic words. (Retrieved from: <https://jadiberita.com/57585/5-film-islami-indonesia-terlaris-di-bioskop.html> and <https://www.tribunnewswiki.com/2020/05/05/film-di-bawah-lindungan-kabah-2011>).

The film *Ayat-ayat cinta* 'The verses of love', directed by Hanung Bramantyo, tells the story of an Indonesian man living in Egypt who has to choose between four women who like him. Starring Fedi Nuril, Rianti Cartwright, Carissa Putri, Zaskia Adya Mecca, and Melanie Putra, the film sold 3,581,947 tickets in cinemas throughout Indonesia, making it the most popular Islamic film at the time it came out. The Arabic element in its title consists of the word *ayat* 'verse' (< *āya*). The next best-selling Islamic film is *Ketika cinta bertasbih* 'When love glorifies God', containing the loanword *tasbih* (< *tasbīḥ*). Released in 2009, the film tells the story of a young man named Azzam, educated at Al Azhar University in Cairo, who is struggling to support his mother and younger siblings in his native village. Starring Kholidi Asadil Alam, Oki Setiana Dewi, Andi Arsyil Rahman, Alice Norin, and Meyda Safira, the film sold 3,100,906 cinema tickets. *Dalam mihrab cinta* 'In the niche of love' is another popular Islamic film, whose title contains the Arabic word *mihrab* 'niche (of a mosque)' (< *miḥrāb*). Selling 623,105 tickets and starring Dude Harlino, Asmirandah, and Meyda Sefira, it tells the story of a young man named Syamsul who is determined to study at a *pesantren* in Kediri, East Java. In this town, he meets Zizi, the daughter of the school's owner. Eventually, the two grow closer and the seeds of love begin to unfurl. *Assalamualaikum Beijing*, released in 2014, is an adaptation of a novel by Asma Nadia. The film narrates a very complicated love struggle, yet also contains plenty of knowledge about Islam and beautiful scenes set in China. Arabic influence is found in its title *Assalamualaikum* 'peace be upon you' (< *as-salāmu 'alaykum*) (Image 6).



Image 6. *Assalamualaikum Beijing*. (Retrieved from: <https://jadiberita.com/58958/film-assalamualaikum-beijing-ditayangkan-di-jepang.html>).

Finally, the film *Di bawah lindungan Kakkah* 'Under the protection of the Kaaba' is an Indonesian romantic drama directed by Hanny R. Saputra and released in 2011. The influence of Arabic is seen in the word *Kakkah* (< *Ka'ba*). Starring Herjunot Ali and Laudya Cynthia Bella, it is an adaptation of the 1978 novel of the same name written by Buya Hamka. The film is set in a Minangkabau village in West Sumatra in the 1920s. It recounts the story of the loyalty and sacrifice in the name of love made by a young man named Hamid, born into a low-income family and raised solely by his mother. Hamid and his love interest, Zainab, come from different social backgrounds. Hamid receives his school funding from Zainab's father and his mother actually works at Zainab's family home. The two fall in love. However, because of their economic disparity and a feeling of indebtedness, Ms. Hamid forbids her son to approach Zainab. The would-be couple share the dream that every human being is free to love and be loved. Yet they face many trials; from the expulsion of Hamid from the village, because he was accused of touching Zainab disrespectfully, to the arranged marriage of Zainab to the son of a wealthy merchant. Although Hamid and Zainab feel that their hopes of being together have vanished, they remain loyal to their promise to sustain their love. Hamid eventually ends up in Mecca where he performs the *Haji*, while Zainab keeps her promise to marry only a person whom she loves. In Mecca, Hamid continues to worship, until he dies before the Kaaba after learning that Zainab has passed away.

In all these examples, the Arabic language and Islamic culture are entities which influence and contribute to contemporary Muslim lives in Indonesia. They symbolize a transformation among the devout Muslim community which is "neither anti-Islamic, nor non-Islamic, nor secular" (Heryanto 2014). The film *Ayat-ayat cinta*, which portrays mixture of religious piety and secular

culture, is a key example of this post-Islamist culture. Even through its actors included non-Muslims, the audiences were still happy with the film. The main character, Fahri, is not depicted with a beard, but portrayed as handsome, smart, neat, and fluent in various languages, including Arabic. Hence, he represents a middle way by remaining a devout Muslim without being too old-fashioned. The same phenomenon can be seen in Muslim fashion trends and related issues. It shows that, in the current era of globalization, the Arabic language and Islamic culture are not at odds with the indigenous languages and cultures of Nusantara. Instead, Islamic culture and Arabic influence can be seen as social capital among Indonesia's hybrid cultural expressions, locally and globally.

5. CONCLUSION

This article has traced the influence of Arabic in the archipelago through historical contacts, the Arabization of five regional languages (Bima, Sasak, Javanese, Sundanese, and Bugis) and a focus on Arabic proficiency tests, several modern films, lifestyles, property, and financial systems in Indonesia. Cumulatively, it can be concluded that there is a long tradition of integration and interconnection between Arabic and the languages of Nusantara. Three aspects stand out in this regard, namely: efforts to develop the vocabularies as well as the grammars and cultures of local communities. The influence of Islam and the Arabic language can be described as an enduring process, exhibiting a multitude of contributions, functions, goals, and value-added elements, affecting the socio-religious practices, economic activities, and cultural traditions of Indonesia's Muslim communities. Some scholars believe that this influence is waning, since the position of English has become dominant and many Indonesian Muslims prefer to continue their studies at Western universities rather than universities in the Middle East. However, as we have shown in some detail, the contemporary influence of Arabic on the linguistic landscape of Nusantara is an ongoing process of adaptation and acculturation. Arabic is used for branding and marketing technological, financial, fashion-related and lifestyle products, particularly those used by Muslim consumers in Indonesia. Other advantages and benefits to be gained by learning Arabic include obtaining a greater knowledge of Islam, improving international relations and advancing professional careers. Ultimately, we believe that the symbiosis of Arabic with the languages of Nusantara – as we have attempted to describe it in this article – will be beneficial to the Indonesian people.

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