

Etymological Doublets JAWI Orthography in Kamus Dewan Perdana

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ABSTRACT

Loanwords are a vital linguistic resource used to fill lexical gaps in the development of the Malay language. Each year, the use of dual spellings in Kamus Dewan shows a significant increase. Issues related to foreign loanwords, particularly those of Arabic origin, are often examined more in terms of Rumi spelling rather than Jawi. As a result, both Jawi and Arabic orthographies or spellings have been incorporated into the dictionary, with a noticeable rise in entries especially for words of Arabic origin. This situation also impacts Jawi spelling, particularly in discussions on etymological doublets in Kamus Dewan Perdana (KDP, 2021). Therefore, this study examines Arabic loanwords written in KDP through the lens of Collins' (2018) principle of etymological doublets and the Pedoman Umum Ejaan Jawi Bahasa Melayu Dewan (PUEJBMD, 2020). The aim of this study is to identify the presence of etymological doublets in Jawi script. The findings reveal that both orthographic forms exist and have resulted in the formation of etymological doublets in KDP.

Keywords: Orthography, Semantics, Twin Words, Arabic Loanwords, Jawi, Malay Language

INTRODUCTION

Etymological doublets (hereafter ED) refer to two or more lexical items that originate from the same root or etymological source and yield paired forms that are either identical or display equivalence or similarity, despite undergoing changes in orthography, phonology, morphology, or semantics, such that they may appear as two distinct items in the target language, such as Malay. Within the scope of this study, ED denotes lexical pairs derived from the same Arabic source word which, upon their integration into Malay, sometimes exhibit modifications in form and sound. ED display variation in Jawi orthography, pronunciation due to phonological adaptation, and meaning. Nothofer (2009) observes that etymological doublets may at times constitute borrowings from two or more source languages. This observation corresponds with Collins (2018: 86) who notes that in Malay, certain doublets are the result of multiple borrowing events, once directly from the original language and once through an intermediary language. Furthermore, there also exist cross-linguistic items from unrelated language families that demonstrate resemblance or similarity in form.

The presence of ED is of particular interest in Malay lexicography because lexical items sharing a common origin may be documented as separate dictionary entries following historical processes of borrowing and linguistic adaptation. Such forms provide evidence of how foreign words have been accommodated within the Malay linguistic system and reflect different stages of lexical development. Their documentation in dictionaries therefore offers valuable insights into the evolution of the Malay vocabulary and the mechanisms through which loanwords become established in the language.

Arabic-derived ED constitute a significant area of investigation due to the extensive influence of Arabic on the Malay lexicon through religious, educational, and cultural contact. As the principal reference work for contemporary Malay, Kamus Dewan Perdana (KDP) provides an important resource for examining the representation of these lexical pairs. An analysis of Arabic-derived ED in KDP contributes to a deeper understanding of lexical standardisation and the relationship between etymology, Jawi spelling, phonological adaptation, and semantic development in Malay.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The study and discussion of Arabic loanwords are often conducted within the scope of semantics, morphology, lexicology, and phonology. In this regard, the discipline of etymology serves as the main foundation to examine the phenomenon of etymological doublets derived from Arabic lexical items that were borrowed and absorbed into the Malay language. The views, issues, and discussions raised by previous scholars provide guidance for researchers to conduct further studies. Such information is highly valuable for researchers to trace more deeply the existence of etymological doublets in dictionaries. In addition, this study constitutes an added value in the academic world which can serve as a reference for future research.

The study of etymological doublets has been conducted by [Nothofer \(2009\)](#) and [Collins \(2018\)](#). Their research presents several etymological doublets (henceforth EDs) from Arabic loanwords (henceforth ALs) in dictionaries. Their studies discuss EDs derived from Arabic loanwords, for example, the lexical items *dewan*, *diwan*, *dipan*, and *diwani*, which originate from the Arabic-Persian root ([Nothofer, 2009](#)). Collins, on the other hand, emphasizes the existence of paired lexical items such as *kalimah* and *kalimat*, as well as *qisas* and *kisas*, which originate from the same root but are spelled differently in *Rumi* script. As a result, there are many EDs in Malay dictionaries. Although their research on EDs from ALs has been carried out, these studies have only focused on spelling and meaning in *Rumi* script, without taking into account the *Jawi* orthography. Furthermore, the data referred to in previous studies were from older dictionaries, namely the third edition of *Kamus Dewan*. 17. [Kiflie et. al \(2026\)](#) study examines Arabic loanwords in Malay, focusing on etymological and general phonological adaptation processes such as the substitution or simplification of phonemes like /ʃ/, /h/, /q/, /f/, and /x/ due to differences between Arabic and Malay sound systems. However, the study remains limited in its discussion of how these phonological changes are reflected in *Jawi* orthography. The relationship between sound change and graphemic representation is not systematically analysed, creating a clear research gap in the detailed examination of *Jawi* spelling variation, particularly within lexicographic sources such as *Kamus Dewan Perdana* (KDP).

Subsequently, quantitative research was conducted by [Muhammad \(2018\)](#), and [Muhammad & Abdul Jabar \(2018\)](#) focusing on *Jawi* and Arabic orthography. Their study explains that there is confusion in the use of Arabic letters in *Jawi* script, such as between *zai* (ز) and *dhāl* (ذ), or *sīn* (س) and *tha* (ث) among students of the Department of Malay Language, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, University Putra Malaysia. Their study also found that respondents lack in understanding the rules for the use of consonants [ز], [ذ], and [ظ] in *Jawi* script, in addition to the inadequacy and ineffectiveness of the rules presented in the *Jawi* writing system. Another factor is that the phonemes [ز], [ظ], and [ذ] have already been assimilated and adapted to the closest Malay pronunciation of the phoneme [ز] or [z]. Second, the confusion of respondents to identify the origin and form of the lexical items, whether they are loanwords or native Malay words, has led them to use the Malay phoneme [z] or [ز] in their writing. Although research on *zai* (ز) and *dhāl* (ذ), or *sīn* (س) and *tha* (ث) has been conducted, it is still not comprehensive. Meanwhile, [Kasimin \(1987\)](#) analyzed errors of Arabic vocabulary in the dictionary by [R.J Wilkinson \(1901\)](#) and *Kamus Dewan* using a comparative method between the two languages, i.e., Malay spelling, transliteration, and Arabic orthography but presented in *Rumi* and *Jawi* forms, and emphasized weaknesses in the inaccurate assignment of meanings in the dictionary, such as the meaning of the lexical item *alim* which is obscured by cultural interpretation. Thus, [NorHashim and Abd. Ghani \(2019\)](#) analyzed 17 Arabic verbs in Malay, showing occurrences of narrowing, broadening, retention, and semantic replacement, for example: *iktidal* (narrowing), *badan* (broadening), *jawab* (retention), and *habib* (replacement).

In a broader context, [Jones \(2008\)](#) studied loanwords in Loan-Words in Indonesian and Malay, which explains that Arabic, together with other languages such as Sanskrit, Persian, and Portuguese, influenced the Malay lexicon. However, he only classified loanwords without giving specific attention to *Jawi* orthography. The studies by [Moain and Wan Mansor \(2016\)](#) as well as [Ahmad et al. \(2011\)](#) examined aspects of sound and semantic change in Arabic loanwords, including the example *ustaz*, which in its original context meant professor or grand master, but in Malay is now used rather loosely. Furthermore, [Abdul Aziz et al. \(2017\)](#) studied Arabic loanwords using an etymological approach, for example Arabic loanwords involving the letters *qaf* (ق) and *ta marbutah* (ة) which still require further examination as their effect on *Jawi* orthography remains inconsistent. The transformation of *ta marbutah* (ة) into *ta maftuhah* (ت) should not occur in Malay even if the word ends with the (t) sound, except for established spellings such as *surat*, *dahsyat*, *mesyuarat*, and others. This study demonstrates the potential of etymology in reducing orthographic confusion.

Since *Jawi* script is derived from Arabic letters, the close relationship between the Arabic and *Jawi* writing systems makes *Jawi* orthography important for understanding the development of Arabic loanwords in Malay. Nevertheless, observations of previous studies show that there still exists a significant gap in research focusing specifically on Arabic loanwords in terms of EDs, particularly in *Jawi* orthography, in contemporary dictionaries such as *KDP*. Based on the discussion in the problem statement of this study, the objective is to identify the orthography of etymological doublets from Arabic loanwords found in *KDP*. This study only examines ED data that exhibit similarities and differences through 14 letters, namely, (ط), (ظ), (ض), (ص), (ش), (ز), (ذ), (خ), (ح), (ث), (ف), (غ), (ع), and (ق).

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative design using a library research approach. The library research was conducted to review scholarly works such as books, journals, theses, dissertations, and research articles that provide theories and concepts relevant to the subject under investigation. The data on etymological doublets (EDs) were obtained from the *KDP*. The data collection process began by identifying Arabic loanwords (AL) in the *KDP* published by *Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka (DBP)*. Each word was aligned with its source language form, its recipient language form, and its orthographic form so that the similarities and differences between the two languages could be observed and summarized. The ED data did not cover the entire corpus of Arabic loanwords in the *KDP*. This is because the focus of the study is to determine the existence of doublets derived from both *Jawi* and Arabic orthography when compared. The selected Arabic loanwords were then examined to determine whether they constituted etymological doublets, based on an etymological approach applying the principles of doublets proposed by Collins (2018).

There are three principles of etymological doublets, namely:

- A pair of words within a single language that originate from the same source. For example, the word *Isnin* (إثنين) is derived from Arabic and has changed into “*Senen*” (سنتين) and “*Senin*” (سنين) in the Malay language, which show similarities in *Jawi* orthography, pronunciation, and meaning, demonstrate the characteristics of etymological doublets.
- Sometimes the source language belongs to a different language family. For instance, the word *wabah* → *udu*² *bb wuduk*¹ (اودو) in Malay *Jawi* is classified as an etymological doublet derived from the Arabic word “*wuduk*” (وضوء). The difference between Arabic loanwords and their doublet forms is often more evident in terms of spelling variation.
- In some cases, the source language is related to the borrowing language, and borrowing may also occur between dialects, resulting in doublets. For example, the words “*sahur*” (سحور) and “*saur*” (ساءور) in Malay pronunciation illustrate such variation.

Subsequently, Arabic loanwords written in *Jawi* were analyzed using the *Pedoman Umum Ejaan Jawi Bahasa Melayu Dewan (PUEJBMD)* to compare orthographic differences between the original Arabic spelling and the *Jawi* spelling forms. This study focused only on ED data that demonstrated similarities and differences involving 14 Arabic letters, namely (ف), (غ), (ع), (ط), (ظ), (ض), (ص), (ش), (ز), (ذ), (خ), (ح), (ث) and (ق). This approach is significant as it provides an official guideline for the adaptation of letters and *Jawi* spelling structures for Arabic loanwords, categorized into two groups: Islamic terminology and general vocabulary used in Malay. In doing so, it helps to identify inconsistencies and changes in the orthographic forms of Arabic loanwords, particularly in the context of EDs examined in this study.

DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS AND FINDINGS

The findings of the analysis indicate the existence of several etymological doublets (EDs) derived from Arabic loanwords (ALs) in the *KDP*, which were identified as undergoing orthographic variation. Based on the three principles of etymological doublets proposed by Collins (2018), the data on EDs from ALs in the *KDP* demonstrates two phenomena: (i) the retention of Arabic loan orthography, and (ii) orthographic modification involving the substitution of 14 specific letters, namely (ف), (غ), (ع), (ط), (ظ), (ض), (ص), (ش), (ز), (ذ), (خ), (ح), (ث).

, (ق) and. This observation is consistent with the findings of [Kasimin \(1987\)](#), Moain and Wan Mansor (2016) and [Abdul Rahman \(2016\)](#), who noted that the above letters had undergone phonological shifts. Drawing upon the ED data in the KDP and early Malay manuscripts, 14 letters specific to the orthography of Arabic loanwords were identified, and comparative analysis revealed that all of them exhibit systematic substitution, as illustrated in Table 1 below.

Table 1. List of Orthography ED in KDP derived from 14 Arabic Letters

No.	Substitution of Letters	Jawi 1 KDP	Jawi 2 KDP	Arabic KBAMD	Rumi 1	Rumi 2
1.	ث ← س	سڤين/ سڤين	اڤڤين	اڤڤين	Senen/Senin	Isnin
2.	ح ← اء	ساءور	سحور	سحور	saur ³	sahur
3.	خ ← ك	كتوبه	خطبه	خطبة	ketubah	khutbah
	خ ← س	سيلف	خلاف	خلاف	silap	khilaf
4.	ذ ← د	مجدوب	مجدوب	مجدوب	majezub ► majedub	majedub
5.	ز ← ج	جكت	زكاة	زكاة	jekat ► zakat	zakat
6.	ش ← س	سوباهت	شبهه	شبهه	subahat	syubhah
7.	ص ← س	سوبت	صحابه	صحابه	sobat ► sahabat	sahabat
8.	ل, د, ز, ض ←	ريلا	رضا	رضا	rela	reda
		اودو	وضوء	وضوء	udu ² bb wuduk ¹	wuduk ¹
		ابيض	ابيض ► ابياز	أبيض	abiad	abiaz ► abiad
9.	ظ ← ل	لاهير	ظاهر	ظاهر	lahir	zahir
10.	ط ← ت	سوتان	سلطان	سلطان	sutan	sultan
11.	ض ← ل / ع ← اء	لاءيف	ضعيف	ضعيف	laip ► daif	daif
12.	غ ← ك	غراب	گورف	غراب	ghurab	gurap ► gurab
13.	ق ← ك	سكر	سقر	سقر	sakar	sakar ► saqar

Islamic Terminology and Common Words

In addition, there are several orthographies or spellings from Arabic loanwords (AL) that are written according to the original Arabic spelling, and there are also those that differ. Based on *PUEJBMD*, the method for spelling Arabic loanwords is divided into two categories, namely Islamic terminology, which is generally spelled according to the original orthography. Meanwhile, for common words, the spelling is modified according to necessity and the current *Jawi* spelling system in *PUEJBMD*. For example, as shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2. List of Islamic Terminology and Common Words

Categories of AL in KDP			
Islamic Terminology		Common Words	
Jawi ED	Rumi ED	Jawi ED	Rumi ED
عفريت	afrit	جماعه	jamaah ► jemaah
عفريت	ifrit	جماعه	jemaah.
علقة	alaqah	اثنين	Isnin
علقة	alkah	سنتين	Senen/ senin
عقيقه	akikah		
قيقه	kekah	ابيض , ابياز	abiaz ► abiad
		ابيض	abiad
بركة	berkat ¹	ابيض	abyad ► abiad
بركة	barakah		
		رحم	raham ► rahim
دعيه	dakyah ► diayah	رحيم	rahim ²
دعايه	diayah		
فقه	fekah ► fiqah, fiqh	داولت	daulat
فقه	feqah ► fiqah, fiqh	دولت	dolat ► daulat
فقه	fikah, fikh ► fiqah, fiqh		
فقه	fiqah ► fiqah, fiqh	ريا	ria ² ► riyak
		رياه	riah ► riyak
فطره	fitrah ²	رياق	riak ⁵ ► riyak
فطرة	fitrat ► fitrah ²	رياء	riyak
وضوء	wuduk ¹	صحابت	sahabat

اودو	udu ² bb wuduk ¹		سوبت	sobat ► sahabat
بدعة	bidaah			
بداءه	bedaaah			
بيدووه	bedooh ► bedaah			

Table 2 above shows several words in the category of Islamic terminology, whose orthography remains unchanged from the source language or etymology, such as (عقبة), (بركة), (فقہ), and (عقبة). In addition, there are also ED classified under Islamic terminology that undergo orthographic change. According to [Lubis et al. \(2014: 122-123\)](#) loanwords that fall into the category of religious or specialized terminology should be preserved in their original spelling. However, based on Table 2 above, the identified doublets show that words within the Islamic terminology group experience changes in form due to adjustments in spelling and Malay pronunciation, such as the deletion of the initial letter in (عقبة), which clearly differs orthographically from its source form, becoming (قبة).

The Arabic pronunciation (عقبة) begins with the glottal fricative (ع) followed by the vowel /a/, but this initial letter (ع) and its sound are dropped in the Malay form. The Malay pronunciation (قبة) in several dialects is simpler, omitting the glottal fricative, and proceeding directly to the main syllable. The letter *qaf* (ق) remains but is weakened in articulation, shifting to a lighter /k/ or softer /q/ sound in Malay dialects.

In addition, substitution of letters at the beginning, middle, and end of words also occurs, such as (وضوء) and (اودو). In the *KDP*, the word wuduk¹ (وضوء) becomes udu² ► wuduk¹ (اودو) in colloquial Malay. This change occurs due to phonological and orthographic adaptation resulting from the interaction of two different language systems. This indicates that the existence of ED from Arabic loanwords in the *KDP* exhibits symptoms of double forms derived from the same source but showing differences in orthography and pronunciation. Furthermore, some Arabic loanwords undergo vowel deletion from the original spelling, as in (دعابه) becoming (دعبه) in Malay pronunciation.

Moreover, in *PUEJBMD*, *ta marbutah* (ة) in Arabic can represent both [h] and [t] sounds. However, when absorbed into Malay, some instances represent [h], others represent [t], and a small number preserve both. Most borrowed words are adapted according to Malay articulation, meaning their pronunciation is modified to fit Malay phonology before entering the language, although at times their meanings also shift in Malay ([Nathesan, 2015: 124](#)). According to *PUEJBMD*, *ta marbutah* (ة), which occurs only at the end of words, is specifically designated for Arabic loanwords. However, not all *ta marbutah* (ة) in Arabic loanwords are retained as in the source language, as seen in (فطرة) and (فطره).

In the *KDP*, there are ED that display the same pattern but with inconsistent spellings, such as *bidaah* (بدعة) producing the variants *bedaaah* (بداءه) and *bedooh* ► *bedaaah* (بيدووه). The use of the letter (ه) in the word (بداءه) in the *KDP* at the end of the word does not conform to the orthographic system set out in [PUEJBMD \(2020: 6\)](#), as follows:

Singular	Final syllable	Medial syllable	Initial syllable
ه	ه	ه	ه

Accordingly, Arabic loanwords in the category of common vocabulary are spelled in several variants, with some retaining the original Arabic form, particularly words that are well established and have long been in use by the community, as shown in Table 2 above. Accordingly, Arabic loanwords in the category of common vocabulary are spelled in several variants, with some retaining the original Arabic form, particularly words that are well established and have long been in use by the community, as shown in Table 2 above. The findings indicate that in the *KDP* there are etymological doublets (ED) which exhibit two orthographic forms, the first being the original Arabic form. For instance, the word (اثنين) 'Isnin' originates from Arabic, as reflected in the presence of the phoneme (ث). In the *PUEJBMD*, the letters (ث), (ش), and (ص) are frequently replaced by (س), as part of the phonetic and orthographic adaptation of Arabic into Malay, particularly in *Jawi* script. For example, the word *sahabat* (صحابيت) is represented as (سوبت) *sobat* ► *sahabat*. This phenomenon occurs because the 14 Arabic letters absent in the Malay phonological system are typically substituted with letters that are closer to Malay phonology. [Ahmad](#)

(2000) states that although certain original Arabic letters are still retained, many have undergone substitution to conform to Malay pronunciation. Based on the data in Table 1, even though Arabic loanwords in the KDP have undergone sound changes and letter substitutions, the original forms are nevertheless included as dictionary entries in order to preserve their etymological authenticity.

According to Haugen (1950) orthographic changes occur because certain sounds in the source language do not exist in the recipient language, thereby necessitating adaptation. For instance, the process of sound substitution occurs by selecting source language phonemes that are closest to the borrowing language. The phoneme (ث) does not exist in the Malay phonological system. Orthographic differences such as (سنين) 'Senen' or 'Senin' illustrate the omission of the sound represented by (ث), as the Malay writing system does not contain this letter.

CONCLUSION

Overall, it was found that etymological doublets (ED) derived from Arabic loanwords in both Jawi and Arabic script within the KDP do exist and exhibit several orthographic variations that may lead to confusion in the selection of standardized spellings. The identified doublets, compared across 14 Arabic letters that have been assimilated, also demonstrate systematic substitutions of letters specifically designated for the orthography of Arabic loanwords. This phenomenon further reflects the influence of orthography and culture in the development of the Malay language. Moreover, there remains a pressing need to refine Jawi orthography in the KDP, particularly in cases such as bidaah (بدعة) and bedooh ► bedaah (بيدوءه), which has yielded the variant bedaah (بداءه) with the final use of the letter (ه), a form that should not occur as it contradicts the guidelines of PUEJBMD. This study has produced findings that may contribute to the fields of lexicography, the Jawi orthographic system particularly Arabic loanwords (AL), the formation of loanwords and terminology, as well as to the etymological study of words. Accordingly, further research is recommended on other foreign languages such as Chinese, Persian, Portuguese, and others, in line with the principles of etymological doublets outlined by Collins (2018) and the PUEJBMD (2020).

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Conflict of Interest

There are no conflicts of interest related to the publication of this paper.

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