

JAWI'S WRITING AS A MALAY ISLAMIC INTELLECTUAL TRADITION

Masyhur Dungcik

Raden Fatah State Islamic University of Palembang

E-mail: *masyhur_uin@radenfatah.ac.id*

Abstract:

Jawi writings began to show their role in the Malay Land since the entry of Islam into the archipelago. However, at this time Jawi writings seem to have been marginalized by Rumi or Latin writings. This condition is inversely proportional to what happens when Malay (Jawi writing) reaches a high level in its time. At that time Christian priests had to translate the Bible into Malay so they could spread their religion in Malay lands. Whereas at present, Muslims must transliterate the Qur'an into Latin letters so that Muslims can read it in Malay lands. This fact shows that the Malays have experienced a setback in the intellectual tradition that was once possessed in the form of Jawi writing. This research aims to find out the role of Jawi writings in the past and what must be done to safeguard one of the valuable intellectual traditions of Malay Islam. The results show that currently Jawi writing has become a rare commodity in the Indonesian Malay world. While neighboring countries such as Malaysia and Brunei still retain Jawi writing through their use on street names, buildings and other public facilities. The Indonesian Malay world community is more familiar with Latin writing than Jawi writing. Therefore, systematic efforts are needed to reintroduce and maintain the treasury of Jawi writing to the younger generation in the Indonesian Malay world.

Keywords: *Jawi writing, Malay language*

Introduction

Malay language, which is the result of Malay culture, has been used by Malay people for a long time. In fact, Malay has been the main language since the Srivijaya era. The discovery of inscriptions in the South Sumatra region in particular, shows that since the beginning of the seventh century AD there has been a form of Malay language that functions as the official language of the Malay kingdom. The use of Malay can be traced from archaeological evidence in the form of inscriptions or inscribed stones in the Malay region.

From the archaeological evidence found, it can be concluded that the Malay community has had a writing system at least since the seventh century AD. There are at least four inscriptions that reinforce this argument; namely Kedukan Bukit Inscription dated 683 AD, Talang Tuo Inscription dated 684 AD, Kapur City Inscription dated 686 AD, and Karang Brahi Inscription dated 686 M. The writing system of the inscriptions uses Pallava or Palawa writings. But actually, long before the evidence was found, the people in Malay land already had symbols of indigenous writing before the arrival of outside influences, namely the rencong writing (Nik Safiah Karim 2010, 21).

The use of the ancient Malay language and the Kawi and Pallava scripts in the tombstone clearly shows the tradition of writing in the Srivijaya and pre-Islamic times in state activities and diplomatic relations. But this writing tradition only developed

among Hindu monks and palace clerks and ordinary people.(Muhammad Bukhari Lubis et al. 2006, 3)

Along with the arrival of Islam in the Malay world, Jawi writings emerged from Arabic script with certain adjustments and additions. Compared to Latin writing as it is used now, Arabic writing in the Malay world has long been known, even long before the Malay people were familiar with the Latin writing / letter system. The arrival of Islam in the Archipelago brought together Arabic writing as a writing system in Malay. Malay language reaches its level as an international language because it is supported by its role as the language of instruction in the spread of Islam in the Malay region. Because Islam has a high scientific tradition, the Malay language with the use of Javanese writing also becomes a high scientific language as well. Apart from being the language of instruction in spreading Islam throughout the Malay region, Malay is also used for international relations in the fields of trade, shipping, military and so on. In fact, priests who spread Christianity use this language to spread their religion and translate the Bible into Malay.

Jawi writing is a legacy of Malay civilization that has been adapted from the Arabic alphabet and adapted to the designation in Malay. As a result, Jawi writings developed rapidly in the Malay realm along with the development of Islam and were used in religious activities, literature and so on. The history of Jawi writings has been almost 700 years in the hearts of Malays. In the last two centuries Jawi writings have developed rapidly along with the development of Islam and the Malays. However, the heyday of Jawi writing in the Malay Islands did not last long. This is due to the arrival of European invaders in the Malay Land. They began to establish Malay schools by introducing Rumi's writings. (Harun Aminurrashid 1966, 154).

At present, Jawi's writing seems to have been marginalized by Rumi's writings or Latin writings. The current condition is inversely proportional to what happens when Malay (Jawi writing) reaches a high level in its time. At that time Christian priests had to translate the Bible into Malay so they could spread their religion in Malay lands. Whereas today, we Muslims must transliterate the Qur'an into Latin letters so that Muslims can read it in the Malay land.

This fact shows that the Malays have experienced a setback in the intellectual tradition that was once possessed in the form of Jawi writing. To a more alarming level, the Malays lack confidence using their own language. As we know, how many absorption elements of foreign languages are more often used in Indonesian. The same conditions can be found in other Malay allied countries. Many absorption words from English are taken as the default language in Malay and Brunei. Even though Jawi writing is still used in both countries, it must be accompanied by Latin writing. This happens because Jawi writings are no longer a "host in their own country". Even in Singapore, the Malay language has been "driven out of one's own home". When in fact Singapore was the first Malay Country founded by Parameswara.

This research is not intended to be a fun apology with the height of Malay civilization it has ever had, especially its language. But rather it is intended as a material for self-introspection of negligence that we have ever made so that the condition of the Malays "seems" not to be taken into account by the eyes of the world. Because actually there are too many examples that can be used as proof that only by using their own language will a nation become a great nation.

Malay Language and Jawi's Writing

The development of Malay in relation to Jawi writings can be found based on the cultural influences that enter the Malay world. Two cultures that had a profound influence on Malay were Indian culture and Arabic culture.

Based on the influence of these two cultures, Malay language can be grouped into two major groups, namely: Old Malay language influenced by Indian culture, from the seventh century to the thirteenth century, and Classical Malay language influenced by Arabic culture, from the thirteenth century to the present. The Malay language between the two periods was called the Malay language at the time of the transition from Hinduism to Islam or the Malay language of Praklasik.

In the context of Jawi writing, discussions on Malay will focus on Pre-classical and Classical Malay. Because in this phase Jawi writings start to have a role. While in Old Malay, Sanskrit with Pallawanya has an important role. All evidence of the use of the Praklasik Malay is recorded on stones, especially tombstones. Almost all inscriptions initially showed that this influence did not use Malay but instead used Arabic as the main medium (Noriah Mohamed 1999, 67).

Among the evidences of the use of Malay in this transition period are;

1. King Fatimah's gravestone in the grave of Sultan Abdul Jalil, Kampung Mengkasar, Pekan, Pahang who died in 900 H.
2. Princess of the tombstone of the Sultan of Brunei, dating from 903 AD, which is found on Jalan Residency, Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam.
3. Tombstone of Sultan Malik al-Saleh dating from 1279 AD, found in Pasai, Sumatra.
4. Sheikh Ahmad Majanu's gravestone dating from 1464 AD found in Sungai Udang, Melaka.
5. Terengganu's tombstone found in Kuala Berang, Hulu Terengganu which according to Syed Naquib al-Attas dated between 1303 and 1397 AD (Nik Safiah Karim 2010, 18).

The writing on this inscription is very different from the writing used today. The discovery of Terengganu Compound Stone (TCS/BBT) dated February 22, 1303 AD has become evidence of the use of Jawi writing in the Malay world. According to Adi Yasran the Jawi spelling system found in TCS has been almost perfect in spelling and Jawi letters. This is proof that the writing contained in BBT is the oldest Jawi writing in the world. (Adi Yasran bin Abdul Aziz 2010, 13).

Evidence in the form of tombstones above shows that there are two cultural influences in the transitional period, namely India and Arabia. The gravestone of Sheikh Majanu was carved in Old Malay using old Kawi and Jawi script. While Terengganu's tombstone shows a mixture of native Malay words with Sanskrit, Javanese and Arabic loan words written in Jawi script.

Other evidence is as stated Noriah Mohamed (1999, 67) that is; a gravestone of Sheikh abd. al-Kadir ibn Husain Syah Alam that was found in Langgar, Alor Setar dated 903 AD, a tombstone was found in the Phan-rang region, Champa, dated 1039 AD and a stone inscribed with Arabic script form kufi. It contains expressions about the payment of excise, debt and so on laws. In addition, also found tombstone dating to 1082 in Leran, Gresik, owned by Fatimah bt. Maimun bin Hibat Allah. Another

example of a stone that uses Arabic but also uses the Kawi script is the tombstone of Ratu al-Ala dating from 1389 AD.

The discovery of stone inscriptions written in Arabic shows that Arabic and Arabic script have been accepted and used in communication in writing by the local community, although other characters such as the Kawi script continue to be used as long as the Arabic / Jawi script has not been fully used.

If the Malay language Pre -asik is still influenced by Indian culture, not so with Classical Malay. Classical Malay already has its own script and already has a standard language concept, due to the arrival of Islam. In other words, "The standard Malay language began to become with the acceptance of the Arabic alphabet as Malay writing ... the standard Malay language began to become when Islam became the religion of the Malays" (Lutfi dan Umar dalam Noriah Muhamed, 1999, 77). Thus the classical Malay language is no longer entered into the influence of Indian culture, especially in the writing system. The writing system used at this time was the Jawi writing system or the Jawi script.

With this Jawi writing, Malay language has more role as the language of science and writing language.

History and Development of Jawi Writing

The history of the script or Malay Jawi/Arabic writing system in the archipelago began when the Malays accepted Islam. According to Nik Safiah Karim (2010, 24) most researchers believe that the Arabic writing system or scripts began to be adapted as scripts for Malay spelling after the 7th century Hijrah or the 13th century AD. The first clear evidence showing the use of Arabic scripts for Malay-language texts is those found in the Terengganu Corresponding Stone. The Jawi spelling system found in Terengganu Corresponding Stone is a combination of the Arabic spelling system and the Malay spelling system.

The Malays before the arrival of Islam had used a number of other writing systems including the Pallava script system and the Kawi script. Jawi writings have been used since the 10th century AD ie along with the arrival of Islam to the Malay Islands. Along with the development of Islam, Jawi writings have taken over the writing system used before that because it is more appropriate and facilitates the learning process especially for studying Islam. (Ahmad et al. 2012, 58). Jawi writing art has been known for centuries in the archipelago. Its appearance is directly related to the arrival of Islam in the archipelago.

Certainly no data has yet been found as to when Islam entered the archipelago. However, some historical records show the existence of a small community of Arabs and Islamic Persians residing on the west coast of Sumatra and Java in 674 AD and the presence of a Jambi Malay King, Sindravarman who converted to Islam in 718 AD This shows that the arrival of Islam started in those years. In fact, according to Awang Muhammad Jamil who quoted Sayyid Alwi bin Tahir al-Haddad, the Islamic Kingdom of Perlak emerged in 650 AD The establishment of this kingdom was followed by the emergence of the Samudera Pasai kingdom in 1042 AD From Perlak and Pasai the Islamic religion was developed to other countries in this region such as the Malay Land, Java, Brunei, the Philippines, Sulawesi, the Maluku islands and countries in the Gulf of Siam and Indochina (Noriah Mohamed 1999, 65). The historical record above can lead us to estimate when the entry of Islam in the Malay Land.

The most important issue that occurred due to the arrival of Islam was the influence of Islam on the people in the Malay realm, including the Malay language. In the beginning, Jawi writings were the official writings of the state of Brunei Darussalam. Only in its development, this paper began to be used widely in Malaysia, the Philippines, and Indonesia. According to the British historian, WG Shellabear, Malays received this Malay Arabic writing and reading system directly from the Arabs. It was the Arabs who first used the Arabic writing system to write Malay, which was then known as the Jawi script. Regarding who gave the name to the writing as Jawi, is not known with certainty.

Some experts attribute the term Jawi to Java or Jawa. But apparently, linking the term Jawi to Java or the island of Jawa turned out to be inaccurate because Jawi writings already existed and were used in Sumatra before Jawa fell into the hands of Muslims. In addition, Javanese are only part of the ethnic groups in the archipelago / Malay and the native language of the Javanese is not Malay.

There is also an opinion which states that the term Jawi is used to refer to the archipelago region, especially Southeast Asia and its inhabitants. This is possible because most scholars who come from the archipelago often carry the name Al-Jawi behind his name, such as: Sheikh Abdul Samad al-Palimbani al-Jawi, Sheikh Muhammad Arsyad al-Banjari al-Jawi, Sheikh Muhammad Zainuddin al-Sambawi al-Jawi, Sheikh Yusuf Khalwati al-Makassari al-Jawi, Sheikh Muhammad Daud al-Fatani al-Jawi, etc. (Deqy, Sayyid n.d., 317-18).

Syed Muhammad Naquib stated that the term Jawi among the Arabs was used to refer to the inhabitants of the land of Jawa, and Jawa in this context referred to the entire population of the origin of the Malay archipelago. Specifically Hurgronje also stated that in the Holy Land of Mecca people who came from the Malay archipelago were identified as al-Jawah or jawah among Arabs, Persians, Turks, Indians and others (Noriah Mohamed 1999, 85).

The term Jawi is very closely related to Islam, when referring to the phrase Jawi entry in the Malay community. The term "Jawi" means "circumcision" which is something that must be done if someone converts to Islam. More specifically, the term Jawi is used to refer to Arabic characters used in writing Malay. From here the term Jawi then develops its meaning, which is to refer to the language that uses the script so that the Malay language is also called the Jawi language. Likewise Jawi is associated with the religion of the Malays / Muslims so that people who convert to Islam are called Jawi.

As it is known that the Malay Arabic letters or Jawi writings actually use Arabic characters (Hijaiyah letters). However, not all elements in Hijaiyah letters are used in Malay Arabic letters, due to language adjustment factors, such as the use of harakat (punctuation). Conversely, there are some additions in Jawi writing that are not contained in Hijaiyah letters such as the addition of a dot above or below a letter, or the addition of the letter itself. Thus, it can be said that in its development Jawi writings cannot be separated from the influence of the parent script, namely Arabic script. So there are researchers who share the development of writing or the Jawi script to the Jawi script which received Arabic influence and the Jawi script which received Malay influence.

What is meant by the Jawi script that accepts Arabic influence is the Jawi script which still uses diacritical marks (lines) of the Arabic alphabet, both in all texts and

some words in the text. Whereas what is meant by the Jawi script that accepts Malay influence is the Jawi script that uses vowels (witness letters) to replace diacritical marks (lines) on Arabic characters (Noriah Mohamed 1999, 86).

Looking at the current Jawi writing system, it can be concluded that the Jawi script used is the Jawi script that accepts Malay influence, where the Jawi writing that we encounter today does not use diacritical marks (lines) but uses witness letters, except in Pegon letters, namely letters Arabic used to write Javanese in Indonesia. This means that the Jawi writings originally used Arabic script along with their diacritical marks.

When compared, between the use of lines and the use of witness letters, the use of lines is relatively simpler and easier to understand than the use of witness letters. Because the omission of diacritical marks often causes difficulties and errors in reading Jawi writings. And this is further compounded by the inconsistency of the use of witness letters in Jawi writing today, even though it is considered to be in accordance with existing rules. Conversely, the use of diacritical marks guarantees accuracy in reading Jawi writings.

The Role of Jawi Writing in Malay Land

As is known Jawi writings began to have a role in the Malay Land since the entry of Islam into the archipelago. In this regard Hashim Musa and Boris Parnickel stated; It cannot be denied that Islam contributes to the fostering and intellectual development of the Malays in particular from the aspect of language and writing tradition. This is evidenced by the existence of many works in Jawi writings after Islam entered the region. In some cases it is known that relics from the Hindu-Buddhist era were also revived by using the Malay language inscribed with Jawi (Othman 2011, 15).

In ancient times, Jawi writings had an important role in people's lives. It is used as official writing in all fields of state, customs and trade. For example, Jawi writing was used in important agreements between the Malay royal parties and the colonial peoples, such as the Portuguese, Dutch and English. In fact, the manuscript of the country's independence of Malaysia was written in Jawi writing. (Dia, Rid, and Sya 1999).

It is recognized that with the advent of Islam, Malay language emerged as the language of science, the language of writing, the language of instruction, even as the language of scholars and prominent scholars. In Islam every person is required to study, and specifically instructed to learn to read, especially reading the Holy Qur'an. For this purpose in Melaka in the fourteenth century places of religious study were established. Even the palace was used as a center for learning, discussion, translation and other writing activities. Besides the palace, learning centers sprung up at the time. In Aceh emerging learning centers such as; meunasah, rangkang, and balee. A collection of shells and balee form a dayah. Therefore, it is not surprising that the royal palaces of Samudera-Pasai, Melaka and Aceh became centers of scientific development in Malay lands.

The activities in these learning centers not only gave birth to well-known religious figures in Malay land but also became a means of developing Malay because in these activities Malay was used as the language of instruction. In writing, the language of instruction meant of course Malay in Jawi writing because at that time only Jawi writing was known in the tradition of writing Classical Malay. Jawi writing

or Jawi script system is what has been used to perform a variety of written functions and guidelines for the spoken language of Classical Malay society in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and so on so that the nineteenth century when Rumi's writing began to be used extensively (Noriah Mohamed 1999, 90).

From the description above we can know how the role of Jawi writings in the past. The role of Jawi writing is as a basic standard of mentioning and writing in Classical Malay language so as to deliver this language as the lingua franca and language of science in Malay at that time. But now, Jawi writings seem to be a rare commodity in the Malay world, especially in Indonesia. While in neighboring countries such as Malaysia and Brunei, there is still an effort to maintain the Jawi writing through its use in the names of roads, buildings and other public facilities, this is not the case in Indonesia. Here the public is more familiar with Latin writing. Almost no street names, buildings and shops / shopping centers are written in Jawi.

Conclusion

The discussion of Jawi writing in relation to the position and role of the Malay language in the Malay World, especially after the arrival of Islam seems to have no relevance to the current condition of the Malay world. But if it is related to the terminology of Malay Islam, we need to make the Malay people aware of what must be done to safeguard one of these valuable Malay Islamic intellectual traditions. We also need to realize how the process of transition from the Jawi writing system to the Rumi/Latin writing system as it is today.

The process of transitioning the Jawi writing system to Rumi took place around the 1950s, during which the language congress held in Singapore issued a resolution (decision) so that the Rumawi writings would become Malay national writing. The proposal of the young Malay literary generation received strong support from the Indonesian delegation led by Parjono, an intellectual Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) at that time. As we know that the communist movement at that time was very hostile to Islam, which was considered only as an Arabic religion. Therefore, the communist group hates anything that smells of Arabic or is considered arrogant, including Arabic script. They are determined to 'nationalize' the Malay Arabic writings which are considered part of Arabic identity.

The subsequent development of Rumawi writings took place so rapidly and quickly that the government which dealt with the problems of Islam in the Malay Peninsula (which previously used Malay Arabic writing and should have been maintained) had participated in the current development of Rumawi writings. As a result, the younger generation of Malays after the 1950s to this day lacks familiar Malay Arabic writing (and of course the Koran writing) and even many do not know it at all. (M. Irfan Shofwani 2005, 9–13) . Finally, we need to ask, is the reason for shifting the writing system at that time still the reason for the lack of use of Jawi writing in our society today? Allah knows best.

Bibliography

- Adi Yasran bin Abdul Aziz. 2010. *Perbandingan Tulisan Jawi Dan Kosa Kata Pada Batu Bersurat Piagam Terengganu Dengan Manuskrip Undang-Udang Melaka Dan Kedah.* (Seminar Batu Bersurat, di Dewan Batu Bersurat, Musium Negeri Terengganu, Bukit Losong, Kuala Terengganu pada 18hb-19hb April 2010),.
- Ahmad, Shakila et al. 2012. "Cabaran Tulisan Jawi Sebagai Warisan Masyarakat Peradaban Bangsa Melayu." *Journal of Techno Social* 4(2): 81–88.
- Deqy, Sayyid, Teungku. *Korpus Mapur Dalam Islamisasi Bangka*. Yogyakarta: Penerbit Ombak.
- Dia, Rid, and Sya. 1999. "Abjad Arab Dalam Penulisan Bahasa Melayu." *REPUBLIKA*. <https://www.republika.co.id/berita/dunia-islam/islam-nusantara/09/06/24/58687-abjad-arab-dalam-penulisan-bahasa-melayu>.
- Harun Aminurrashid. 1966. *Kajian Sejarah Perkembangan Bahasa Melayu*. Singapura: Pustaka Melayu Malaysia Press Limited.
- Lutfi dan Umar, dalam Noriah Muhamed. 1999. *Sejarah Sociolinguistik Bahasa Melayu Lama*. Pulau Pinang: Universiti Sains Malaysia.
- M. Irfan Shofwani. 2005. *Mengenal Tulisan Arab Melayu*. Yogyakarta: Balai Kajian dan Pengembangan Budaya Melayu dan Penerbit AdiCita.
- Muhammad, Bukhari Lubis et al. 2006. *Tulisan Jawi Sehimpunan Kajian*. Shah Alam: Pusat Penerbitan Universiti (UPENA), UiTM.
- Nik Safiah Karim. 2010. *Panorama Bahasa Melayu Sepanjang Zaman*. Kuala Lumpur: Universiti Malaya.
- Noriah Mohamed. 1999. *Sejarah Sociolinguistik Bahasa Melayu Lama*. Pulau Pinang: Penerbit Universiti Sains Malaysia.
- Othman, Hussain. 2011. *Konsep Pensejarahan Melayu: Perspektif Kosmologi*. Johor: Darul Ta'zim: Penerbit UTHM.