



## **Semantic Change of Arabic Loanwords in Indonesian: A Comparative Analysis of Religious and Secular Contexts**

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### **ENGLISH ABSTRACT**

This study examines the semantic changes of Arabic loanwords in Indonesian by comparing their use across religious and secular contexts. The analysis focuses on five Arabic loanwords—*īmān*, *zakāt*, *‘ilm*, *‘ādil*, and *ḥākīm*—which were selected through purposive sampling based on their occurrence across multiple textual sources, morphological productivity, and conceptual significance in Indonesian discourse. Employing a descriptive qualitative approach, the study integrates semantic theory and Hockett’s language borrowing theory. Data were collected from the Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (KBBI), religious texts, public speeches, digital media, and relevant academic literature. The analysis was conducted through identification, classification, and interpretation of contextual meanings. The findings indicate that *īmān* and *‘ilm* have undergone semantic broadening, extending beyond their original religious meanings into wider social, psychological, educational, and intellectual domains. In contrast, *zakāt* and *ḥākīm* have experienced semantic narrowing due to institutional specialization within religious, legal, and administrative contexts. Meanwhile, *‘ādil* has undergone a connotative shift from a predominantly moral-religious concept to a more pragmatic socio-political meaning. From the perspective of language borrowing theory, the findings

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suggest that these loanwords exhibit characteristics consistent with the processes of adoption, adaptation, and assimilation within Indonesian. The study demonstrates that semantic change in loanwords is shaped not only by linguistic factors but also by social, cultural, and institutional developments. These findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the relationship between language contact, semantic change, and socio-cultural transformation in contemporary Indonesian society.

**Keywords:** Arabic Loanwords, Semantic Change, Language Borrowing, Religious and Secular Contexts

### **INDONESIAN ABSTRACT**

*Penelitian ini mengkaji perubahan makna kata serapan bahasa Arab dalam bahasa Indonesia dengan membandingkan penggunaannya dalam konteks keagamaan dan sekuler. Analisis difokuskan pada lima kata serapan, yaitu imān, zakāt, ‘ilm, ‘ādil, dan ḥākim, yang dipilih berdasarkan kemunculannya dalam berbagai sumber dan signifikansinya dalam wacana bahasa Indonesia. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif dengan teori semantik dan teori penyerapan bahasa Hockett. Data diperoleh dari Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (KBBI), teks keagamaan, pidato publik, media digital, dan literatur ilmiah. Analisis dilakukan melalui tahap identifikasi, klasifikasi, dan interpretasi makna berdasarkan konteks penggunaannya. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa imān dan ‘ilm mengalami perluasan makna ke ranah sosial, pendidikan, dan intelektual. Sebaliknya, zakāt dan ḥākim mengalami penyempitan makna karena spesialisasi dalam konteks keagamaan dan hukum. Sementara itu, ‘ādil mengalami pergeseran makna dari konsep moral-religius menjadi makna sosial-politik yang lebih pragmatis. Penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa perubahan makna kata serapan dipengaruhi oleh faktor linguistik, sosial, budaya, dan institusional. Temuan ini memperlihatkan adanya hubungan antara kontak bahasa, perubahan makna, dan perkembangan sosial budaya dalam masyarakat Indonesia.*

**Kata Kunci:** Kata Serapan Arab, Perubahan Makna, Penyerapan Bahasa, Konteks Keagamaan dan Sekuler

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### **Introduction**

Language contact is a primary mechanism by which languages expand their lexical resources and develop new semantic structures. In multilingual societies, lexical borrowing is common when speakers adopt linguistic elements from one language into another to accommodate new cultural, religious, social, or intellectual concepts (Hasbi et al., 2025). As borrowed words become integrated into the recipient language, they often undergo phonological adaptation, morphological integration, and semantic transformation. Consequently, loanwords provide valuable evidence for understanding the interaction between language, culture, and social change.

Indonesian offers a particularly rich context for investigating these processes. Throughout its history, Indonesian has incorporated lexical elements from numerous

languages, including Sanskrit, Arabic, Dutch, English, and Chinese (Ukhrawiyah, 2019). Among these influences, Arabic holds a distinctive place because of its close association with the spread of Islam in the Indonesian archipelago. Centuries of religious, educational, and cultural interaction have led to the incorporation of thousands of Arabic-derived lexical items into Indonesian. Many of these words are now firmly embedded in everyday communication and are no longer perceived as foreign. Their presence reflects not only linguistic borrowing but also the transmission of religious concepts, cultural values, and intellectual traditions.

The integration of Arabic loanwords into Indonesian, however, does not simply involve the transfer of lexical forms. As these words become part of the recipient language, their meanings may expand, narrow, shift, or acquire new connotations in response to changing communicative needs and socio-cultural conditions (Muttakin et al., 2026). Such semantic developments are particularly evident in words that operate across different communicative domains. In contemporary Indonesian, many Arabic loanwords are used not only in religious discourse but also in education, politics, law, administration, media communication, and everyday social interaction (Mainasara et al., 2022). As a result, the meanings of these words are continuously negotiated and reinterpreted within different contexts of use.

Previous studies have examined Arabic loanwords in Indonesian from various perspectives, including etymology, historical linguistics, lexical borrowing, and phonological adaptation. Research has shown that Arabic has made a significant contribution to the Indonesian lexicon and that many borrowed forms have undergone structural adjustments to conform to Indonesian linguistic patterns (Durkin, 2014). Other studies have explored semantic change in Arabic-derived vocabulary and have emphasized the role of social and cultural factors in shaping meaning (Haugen, 1950). These studies collectively demonstrate that Arabic loanwords constitute an important component of Indonesian vocabulary and that their meanings continue to evolve over time.

Firdaus and Yohanes (2023) investigated semantic changes in Arabic loanwords found in Friday sermon texts published by NU Online. Their findings indicate that the borrowing process affects the semantic components of loanwords, resulting in changes at both lexical and contextual levels. This study emphasizes the importance of usage

context in analyzing semantic change. Similarly, Ukhrawiyah (2019) examined semantic changes in Arabic-derived vocabulary in Indonesian within specific social contexts. The results demonstrate that social and cultural contexts significantly influence semantic change, particularly in religious terminology, highlighting the necessity of incorporating social factors into semantic analysis.

Arabic has played a major role in shaping the Indonesian lexicon, especially through the Islamization process that began in the seventh century, according to Hakami et al. (2023) Arabic loanwords such as *īmān*, *zakāt*, and *‘ādil* exhibit semantic changes that reflect society's communicative needs. Earlier research by Alifiansyah et al. (2023) underscores the importance of linguistic adaptation in the borrowing process, revealing that many semantic changes arise from local cultural pressures and social needs. In addition, Pantu (2014) found that Arabic loanwords constitute the third-largest source of Indonesian vocabulary after Dutch and English, with significant phonological and morphological adaptation. Semantic change in Arabic loanwords often occurs due to differences in social and cultural contexts. Yahya et al. (2021) Note that words such as *īmān*, which carry explicitly religious meanings in religious discourse, have expanded to denote belief or trust in secular contexts. Other studies indicate that digital media also influence semantic shifts, broadening the use of these loanwords in everyday life (Harianto et al., 2025). For example, *‘ādil*, originally rooted in Islamic legal and ethical concepts, is now more commonly used in modern law and governance. Major factors influencing semantic change include cultural interaction, education, and mass media. According to Sofa & Sugianto (2024), local culture plays a crucial role in adapting the meanings of loanwords to align with prevailing social norms.

Furthermore, the contextual use of loanwords in contemporary communication has demonstrated that borrowed lexical items may develop new meanings and functions beyond their original semantic domains as a result of social, cultural, and institutional influences (Haspelmath & Tadmor, 2009). Therefore, further investigation is needed to understand how Arabic loanwords in Indonesian undergo semantic change across religious and secular contexts. Arabic loanwords in Indonesian undergo semantic change in line with the dynamic and adaptive social and cultural development of Indonesian society (Pateda, 1986).

Despite these contributions, several issues remain insufficiently explored. Existing studies generally focus on the historical origins of Arabic loanwords, their lexical adaptation, or their use within specific religious settings. Comparatively little attention has been devoted to examining how the meanings of Arabic loanwords shift across different communicative domains, particularly between religious and secular contexts. Furthermore, previous research rarely combines semantic analysis with language borrowing theory to explain how borrowed lexical items undergo both semantic transformation and linguistic integration within contemporary Indonesian. As a result, the relationship between semantic change and borrowing processes remains inadequately understood.

This study addresses that gap by examining how Arabic loanwords develop different meanings across religious and secular contexts and by analyzing these developments through the combined perspectives of semantic theory and language borrowing theory. Rather than treating borrowed words as static lexical units, the study views them as linguistic forms whose meanings continue to evolve in response to changing social, cultural, and institutional environments. Such an approach makes it possible to understand not only what semantic changes occur but also how those changes relate to broader processes of linguistic integration.

The study focuses on five Arabic loanwords: *īmān*, *zakāt*, *‘ilm*, *‘ādil*, and *ḥākim*. These terms were selected through purposive sampling for their occurrence across multiple textual domains, their morphological productivity in Indonesian, and their representation of distinct conceptual fields, namely faith, religious obligation, knowledge, morality, and authority. Their presence in both religious and secular discourse provides an appropriate basis for examining how semantic change operates across different communicative settings.

Accordingly, this study aims to analyse the semantic changes of selected Arabic loanwords in Indonesian by comparing their use in religious and secular contexts. Specifically, the study seeks to identify patterns of semantic broadening, narrowing, and connotative shift in the loanwords *īmān*, *zakāt*, *‘ilm*, *‘ādil*, and *ḥākim*, and to examine these changes within the framework of language borrowing theory. By integrating semantic and language borrowing theories, the study aims to explain how Arabic loanwords have been adapted and integrated into Indonesian and how their meanings

have evolved in response to social, cultural, and institutional developments. Through this analysis, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of the relationship between language contact, semantic change, and socio-cultural transformation in contemporary Indonesian society.

## Methods

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach to examine semantic change in Arabic loanwords in Indonesian. A qualitative design was selected because it enables an in-depth exploration of meaning variation across different communicative contexts and facilitates the interpretation of linguistic phenomena within their social and cultural settings (Creswell, 2014). The analysis focuses on five Arabic loanwords—*īmān*, *zakāt*, *‘ilm*, *‘ādil*, and *ḥākīm*—which were selected through purposive sampling based on four criteria: (1) their occurrence across multiple data sources, (2) their morphological productivity in Indonesian, (3) their conceptual significance in both religious and secular discourse, and (4) the availability of contextual data that allows comparison across communicative domains.

The study draws on both primary and secondary sources. Primary data consist of lexical and contextual occurrences of the selected loanwords collected from the Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (KBBI), the Indonesian translation of the Qur’an published by the Ministry of Religious Affairs, classical Islamic works such as *Ihyā’ ‘Ulūm al-Dīn* by al-Ghazālī and *Tafsīr Faṭḥ al-Qadīr* by al-Shawkānī, contemporary religious lectures, public speeches, news reports, and other publicly accessible texts representing secular discourse. Secondary data include scholarly books, journal articles, and previous studies on semantics, language borrowing, and Arabic loanwords in Indonesian. These sources were selected to capture the use of the loanwords across both religious and secular domains (Patton, 2002).

Data were collected through documentation and textual analysis. Instances of the five loanwords were identified, recorded, and organized according to their contexts of use. Religious contexts were defined as texts primarily concerned with Islamic teachings, beliefs, rituals, and values, whereas secular contexts were defined as texts focusing on social, political, legal, economic, educational, scientific, or administrative issues. In cases where religious and secular elements overlapped, classification was based on the

dominant communicative function of the discourse rather than the etymological origin of the word.

Data analysis followed the interactive model proposed by Miles Huberman and Saldana (2014), consisting of identification, classification, and interpretation. The identification stage involved locating occurrences of the selected loanwords and their contextual meanings. The classification stage grouped the data into religious and secular domains and identified usage patterns across contexts. Finally, the interpretation stage applied semantic theory to analyze processes of semantic broadening, narrowing, and connotative shift, while Hockett's language borrowing theory was used to examine evidence of adoption, adaptation, and assimilation. Through this procedure, the study provides a systematic account of how Arabic loanwords have developed semantically and functionally within contemporary Indonesian.

## Result and Discussion

### *Identification of Arabic Loanwords*

**Table 1.** Semantic Comparison of Arabic Loanwords in Indonesian in Religious and Secular Contexts

No.	Loanword	Arabic Origin	Basic Meaning	Religious Context	Non-Religious Context
1	Faith ( <i>Īmān</i> )	<i>īmān</i>	Belief, faith, inner conviction	Belief in God, pillars of faith	Personal conviction, confidence, trust, and optimism
2	<i>Zakāt</i>	<i>zakā</i>	Purification, growth, blessing	Obligatory almsgiving in Islam	Socio-economic instrument for wealth redistribution, poverty alleviation, and social development
3	Knowledge ( <i>'ilm</i> )	<i>'ilm</i>	Knowledge, learning	Religious knowledge	Scientific knowledge, science, and technology
4	Justice ( <i>'ādil</i> )	<i>'adl</i>	Balance, moral justice	Justice according to divine law	Legal, social, and political justice
5	Judge ( <i>Hākīm</i> )	<i>ḥakama / ḥākīm</i>	Wise person, Ruler, governor, judge, authority figure	Authority and judgment in accordance with Islamic law	Judicial officer in a modern legal system

This study analyzes five Arabic loanwords that are widely used in both religious and secular contexts in Indonesian: *īmān* (faith), *zakāt* (almsgiving), *‘ilm* (knowledge), *‘ādil* (justice), and *ḥākim* (judge). The selection of these five loanwords was based on a transparent purposive sampling procedure. First, the terms recur across the data sources examined, including KBBI (1991), religious texts, digital media, public speeches, and academic literature, providing sufficient context for analysis. Second, their high degree of morphological productivity—reflected in derivative forms such as *keilmuan*, *keadilan*, *kehakiman*, and *keimanan*—demonstrates that these loanwords have been deeply assimilated into the Indonesian linguistic system. Third, these terms represent important concepts within both Islamic and broader social discourse, making them suitable for examining semantic change across different communicative contexts. Finally, their occurrence in both religious and secular domains enables a systematic comparison of semantic developments. Therefore, the selection of these five loanwords was based on their contextual relevance, morphological productivity, conceptual significance, and the availability of data across multiple domains (Ricci, 2010).

### ***Theoretical Framework***

Semantics is a branch of linguistics concerned with the study of meaning in words, phrases, and sentences. According to Palmer (1981) Semantics provides a framework for understanding how meaning is transmitted, maintained, or transformed within a language. In the context of this study, semantic theory helps explain how Arabic loanwords in Indonesian undergo semantic change influenced by cultural, social, and religious contexts. Chaer (2012) classifies semantic change into several major categories: 1) Semantic broadening (generalization) occurs when a word with a specific original meaning comes to encompass a wider range of meanings. For example, the Arabic word *‘ilm* initially referred primarily to religious knowledge, whereas in Indonesian it has expanded to include all fields of knowledge, including science, technology, and the arts. 2) Semantic narrowing (specialization), by contrast, occurs when a word with a broad original meaning becomes more restricted in its use. An example is the word *zakāt*, which in Arabic broadly denotes “purification” but in Indonesian is primarily confined to a specific religious obligation involving the distribution of a portion of wealth. 3) Semantic shift refers to a more radical change in

meaning, in which a word acquires a meaning that differs substantially from its original sense. For instance, the word *ḥākim* originally meant “a wise person” in Arabic, but in Indonesian it denotes a legal official who adjudicates cases.

According to Ullmann (1972) Semantic change is driven by both internal (linguistic) and external (social, historical, and psychological) factors.]: 1) Linguistic factors include the structural characteristics of the recipient language, such as phonology and morphology, which can influence semantic development. For example, the Indonesian word *‘ilm* has undergone semantic broadening to encompass all forms of knowledge, not only religious knowledge. 2) Historical factors, including social and cultural change—particularly those linked to colonialism and modernization—have also contributed to semantic shifts, as evidenced by the use of *zakāt* not only in religious contexts but also in broader discussions of social charity. 3) Social factors further shape interpretation, as societal norms influence how loanwords are understood. For example, the word *‘ādil* carries a universal moral meaning within Islamic jurisprudence, yet in contemporary Indonesian usage it is more often associated with state law and legal institutions.

Therefore, semantic theory is used in this study to analyze how the meanings of Arabic loanwords, such as *īmān*, *zakāt*, and *‘ādil*, have developed in Indonesian in both religious and secular contexts. This theory helps explain the processes of semantic change that occur when words are adopted into another language and culture. Through semantic analysis, the study also identifies shifts, expansions, or narrowing of meaning influenced by social, cultural, and linguistic factors in Indonesian society.

Language borrowing is the process by which linguistic elements are adopted from one language into another. Hockett (1958) conceptualizes this process in three main stages: 1) The first stage is adoption, in which a word is borrowed from the source language with minimal or no modification, as in the case of *zakāt*, which entered Indonesian directly from Arabic without significant phonological change. 2) The second stage is adaptation, in which the borrowed word is adjusted to conform to the recipient language's phonological and morphological rules. An example is *‘ādil*, adapted from the Arabic root *‘adl*. 3) The final stage is assimilation, in which the borrowed word becomes an integral part of the recipient language, often accompanied by semantic change. For

instance, the word *'ilm*, which originally referred to religious knowledge in Arabic, has been assimilated into Indonesian and now encompasses all forms of knowledge.

This theoretical framework helps explain the mechanisms underlying the integration of Arabic loanwords into Indonesian. It clarifies how their meanings are reshaped in accordance with the linguistic system and sociocultural norms of the recipient language. In addition, the framework provides a basis for understanding the semantic adaptation and contextual usage of Arabic-derived vocabulary in Indonesian society. It also highlights the influence of cultural interaction and language contact on the development of word meanings over time.

### ***The Meaning of 'ādil in Religious and Secular Contexts***

In a religious context, the word *'ādil* (justice) linguistically denotes placing something in its proper position in accordance with Islamic law (*sharī'a*). Terminologically, this study draws on Imam al-Ghazālī's definition in the fourth volume of *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, where justice is understood as aligning human actions with divine law and moral norms so that every decision is made with careful consideration of the common good (*maṣlaḥah*). In this sense, justice is not merely a legal principle but an ethical foundation that governs individual conduct and social relations (Al-Ghazali, 2021).

The concept of *'ādil* appears frequently in religious texts, particularly in the Qur'an, where the term is mentioned twenty-eight times. Its repeated occurrence underscores the centrality of justice as a core moral and theological value in Islam. One example can be found in the Qur'an, Surah al-Mā'idah (5):8 ("Qur'an Kemenag," n.d.-a):

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ لِلَّهِ شُهَدَاءَ بِالْقِسْطِ وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَاٰنُ قَوْمٍ عَلَىٰ أَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا ۗ إِعْدِلُوا ۖ إِعْدِلُوا هُوَ أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوَىٰ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ

Translation by Kemenag 2019:

8. "O you who believe, stand firmly for justice for the sake of Allah, bearing witness with fairness. Do not let hatred toward a people cause you to act unjustly. Be, for justice is closer to righteousness. And fear Allah. Indeed, Allah is All-Aware of what you do."

In this verse, the term *'adl* (justice) denotes moral balance in decision-making, regardless of personal bias or animosity. Justice is regarded as a manifestation of *taqwā*

(God-consciousness) that brings a person closer to Allah. In *Zubdat al-Tafsīr min Faḥ al-Qadīr*, al-Shawkānī explains that *‘adl* in this verse means placing matters in accordance with their rightful claims without partiality, whether toward allies or adversaries. In this context, justice requires equal treatment of all parties and must not be swayed by hatred or hostility.

Al-Shawkānī further emphasizes that justice is not limited to interpersonal relations but also extends to social governance, administration, and judicial proceedings. Justice must be upheld universally, including toward those who may be disliked or regarded as enemies. According to al-Shawkānī, the phrase “justice is closer to righteousness” indicates that justice is a primary indicator of a servant’s *taqwā* toward Allah. Genuine piety cannot be realized without justice, as justice is an essential aspect of obedience to Allah in safeguarding the rights and obligations of fellow human beings (Al-Shawkani et al., 2008).

In secular contexts, the word *‘ādil* is widely used across a broad range of discourses. It appears frequently on social media, in academic discussions, at press conferences, in political speeches, in legal discourse, and in broader social commentary. The term is also frequently used by Prabowo Subianto, the eighth President of the Republic of Indonesia, in various speeches and official press statements. One such instance is his speech at the National Solidarity Movement (*Gerakan Solidaritas Nasional, GSN*) event at the Indonesia Arena in Jakarta on Saturday, November 2, 2024, where he shared key lessons from the Ottoman Empire's successful civilization. He stated, “No nation can achieve success without clean governance. Prosperity can only be attained where there is justice” (Tv, 2024).

Prabowo employs the term *‘ādil* to connect traditional and religious values with the context of modern Indonesian politics. This usage reflects prevailing social norms in Indonesian society that uphold justice as a fundamental principle of state life and governance. In speeches delivered at national events, the word *‘ādil* functions as a rhetorical device to construct an inclusive vision and evoke emotional resonance. This illustrates how justice is positioned as a central pillar in political campaigns and as a persuasive tool for gaining public support. Prabowo uses the term *‘ādil* to bridge local values—rooted in religiously informed concepts of justice—with global values, particularly those associated with socio-economic justice.

Moreover, Prabowo links justice to clean governance and freedom from corruption. In the Indonesian context, this linkage is especially relevant given the challenges the country faces in building transparent and accountable institutions. This discourse positions *'ādil* as a central element of political reform and national development. The term is also used to call for the equitable distribution of prosperity, reflecting public aspirations for an inclusive economic system grounded in social justice. These statements reinforce the importance of justice as a moral principle that unifies the nation around a collective vision of shared prosperity.

### ***The Meaning of 'ilm in Religious and Secular Contexts***

In Islam, *'ilm* (knowledge) is regarded as one of the fundamental elements Muslims are obliged to pursue, as it serves as the primary means of knowing Allah and fulfilling His commandments. Knowledge occupies a central position in a Muslim's faith. In this religious context, *'ilm* is traditionally understood as religious knowledge, which functions as the principal instrument for performing acts of worship and living in accordance with divine guidance. In *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* (Volume 1, Chapter on the Virtue of Knowledge), al-Ghazālī states: "Knowledge is the primary foundation that elevates human status in both this world and the Hereafter. True knowledge belongs to those who understand the purpose of creation and are able to guide others toward Allah." Al-Ghazālī explains that knowledge is not merely theoretical but also practical (Al-Ghazali, 2021). Religious knowledge, in particular, holds a privileged status because it guides human beings to live in accordance with Islamic law (*sharī'a*) and to attain eternal happiness.

Al-Ghazālī further emphasizes that knowledge is a means of understanding the purpose of creation and of directing humans toward devotion to Allah. This assertion reinforces *'ilm*'s role as the primary foundation for practicing Islamic law. He places knowledge as inseparable from faith (*īmān*) and action (*'amal*), arguing that acts of worship performed without proper understanding are invalid or even misleading. Within the religious framework, *'ilm* serves as the means to achieve the perfection of worship. It is not limited to ritual matters alone but also encompasses moral conduct (*akhlāq*), theology (*tauḥīd*), and social relations (*mu'āmalāt*). Al-Ghazālī underscores the

transformative dimension of knowledge, which brings individuals closer to Allah and enables them to serve as moral guides within the community.

In secular contexts, *‘ilm* is understood as systematic knowledge acquired through education, research, and scientific inquiry. Unlike its religious usage, where it primarily refers to religious knowledge and Islamic teachings, in contemporary Indonesian the term *ilmu* encompasses a broad range of disciplines, including natural sciences, social sciences, medicine, technology, and education. This broader meaning is reflected in common expressions such as *ilmu pengetahuan* (science), *ilmu kedokteran* (medical science), *ilmu hukum* (legal studies), and *ilmu sosial* (social sciences). The widespread use of these expressions demonstrates that the Arabic loanword *‘ilm* has expanded beyond its original religious domain to become a general term for organized and systematic knowledge in modern Indonesian society. This semantic broadening reflects the influence of educational development, scientific advancement, and the increasing role of formal institutions in shaping contemporary language use. Therefore, in secular discourse, *ilmu* functions not only as a means of understanding the world but also as a foundation for scientific innovation, professional expertise, and social progress.

### ***The Meaning of Zakāt in Religious and Secular Contexts***

The term *zakāt* derives from the Arabic root *zaka*, meaning to purify or cleanse, both materially and spiritually. In a religious context, *zakāt* is inseparable from its spiritual significance and its status as a mandatory religious obligation. Its use in the Qur’an, Hadith, and other religious texts conveys divine commands, offers moral reminders, and motivates Muslims to fulfill this obligation as part of their faith. In this sense, *zakāt* functions not only as a ritual act but also as a means of spiritual purification, strengthening the relationship between humans and God.

In a secular context, *zakāt* is often understood in terms of its social and economic functions. Here, the term takes on a more pragmatic meaning, referring to a mechanism for redistributing wealth to reduce poverty and support social development. *Zakāt* is viewed as a socioeconomic instrument that contributes to social justice, economic equity, and the empowerment of disadvantaged communities.

Indonesia’s Minister of Finance, Sri Mulyani Indrawati, 2016-2025, has emphasized the importance of optimizing *zakāt* management to support national

development. She stated that *zakāt* management should adopt an approach similar to tax administration to ensure transparency and accountability. This statement was delivered at the 2nd Annual Islamic Finance Conference in Yogyakarta on August 23, 2017. She noted that “the optimization of *zakāt* management can become an important part of the national development strategy” (Deny, 2017). In this context, the term *zakāt* is used to bridge religious concepts with public policy, highlighting its role as a financial instrument that can contribute to economic development. Sri Mulyani also pointed out that *zakāt*'s potential in Indonesia is substantial, amounting to approximately IDR 217 trillion, equivalent to more than 10% of the national budget. However, this potential has not been fully realized, as only around 2% of *zakāt* funds have been successfully collected through the National *Zakāt* Agency (BAZNAS). She stressed the need for public education regarding the importance of paying *zakāt* mal, not only *zakāt* fitrah, as well as the necessity of transparent and professional *zakāt* fund management.

### ***The Meaning of īmān in Religious and Secular Contexts***

In a religious context, the word *īmān* derives from the Arabic root *āmana*, meaning “to believe” or “to have faith,” and, terminologically, refers to a firm belief in God, His angels, His revealed books, His messengers, the Day of Judgment, and divine decree (*qada* and *qadar*). This term is widely used in religious sermons and Islamic studies, including a lecture delivered by Ustadz Adi Hidayat at Masjid Istiqlal, Payakumbuh, West Sumatra, on October 13, 2024, where he explains that *īmān* denotes a strong conviction free from doubt and serves as the fundamental foundation of a Muslim's life, influencing all aspects of behavior and worldview. Furthermore, *īmān* is described as dynamic, as it can increase through acts of worship and righteous deeds while decreasing due to sin and negligence; therefore, maintaining and strengthening *īmān* requires consistent engagement in practices such as reciting the Qur'an, understanding the meaning of worship, and engaging in continuous self-reflection (Hidayat, 2024).

Ustadz Adi Hidayat emphasizes that *īmān* is inherently dynamic and fluctuating, aligning with Islamic theological concepts in which faith can increase through acts of worship and righteous deeds and decrease through sin and negligence. This perspective is particularly relevant in modern life, where constant temptations and challenges

continually test an individual's faith. According to the lecture, true *īmān* must be manifested in behavior, highlighting the intrinsic relationship between faith and moral conduct (*akhlaq*) in Islam. In this sense, *īmān* is not merely an individual spiritual state but also has broader social implications, influencing interpersonal relationships and contributing to societal well-being. Furthermore, this explanation reflects a contemporary understanding of *īmān* as not only a religious concept but also a source of inner strength that enables individuals to *مواجهة* life's challenges, providing a moral and spiritual framework for leading a meaningful and purposeful life.

In secular contexts, the word *īmān* is often used more broadly to refer to confidence, conviction, or trust in a particular goal, principle, or course of action. This broader meaning can be found in motivational and public discourse in Indonesia, where the term is not always used in a strictly theological sense. For example, in various educational and motivational settings, expressions such as "*memiliki iman pada kemampuan diri sendiri*" (having faith in one's own abilities) and "*iman bahwa kerja keras akan membawa keberhasilan*" (belief that hard work will lead to success) are used to emphasize confidence and optimism rather than religious doctrine (Peale, 2003). In these contexts, *īmān* functions as a psychological and social concept associated with perseverance, self-confidence, and positive expectations about the future. This usage demonstrates a process of semantic broadening, whereby the original religious meaning of *īmān* as faith in God expands to include a more general sense of belief, trust, and personal conviction in contemporary Indonesian discourse.

### ***The Meaning of Ḥākīm in Religious and Secular Contexts***

In a religious context, the term *ḥākīm* comes from the Arabic root *ḥakama*, which means to decide or judge wisely. In Islam, this term refers to Allah as Al-Ḥakīm (The All-Wise) and also to people who make decisions based on Islamic law. This meaning is reflected in the Qur'an, Surah al-An'ām (6):18 ("Qur'an Kemenag," n.d.-b):

وَهُوَ الْقَاهِرُ فَوْقَ عِبَادِهِ وَهُوَ الْحَكِيمُ الْخَبِيرُ

Translation by Kemenag 2019:

18. "And He is the Supreme Authority over His servants, and He is All-Wise, All-Aware."

The term *ḥākim* in Surah al-An'ām (6:18) refers to one of Allah's attributes, namely *Al-Ḥakīm* (The All-Wise). This attribute affirms that Allah is the ultimate judge of all matters, exercising perfect wisdom that transcends human understanding. In a religious context, the use of this term teaches Muslims to understand and accept Allah's decrees with full faith, as everything determined by Allah contains profound wisdom and serves a beneficial purpose for His servants.

In a secular context, the term *ḥākim* refers to a legal official responsible for adjudicating cases in court in accordance with applicable laws. Judges are regarded as symbols of justice within the modern legal system. In criminal cases such as theft, the expression “do not take the law into your own hands” is commonly used when members of the public attempt to punish offenders without going through legal procedures. In this context, the word *ḥākim* signifies the formal authority legally entitled to make judicial decisions. The phrase “taking the law into one's own hands” implies the act of assuming the role of a judge by individuals or groups without any legal basis.

In everyday usage, the term *ḥākim* often serves as a reminder to society to respect formal legal authority and avoid anarchic actions, such as vigilantism. At the same time, the word carries a positive connotation of wisdom and fairness in decision-making, both in legal contexts and in broader social interactions. This usage reflects the importance of legal integrity as a fundamental value for maintaining social harmony.

### ***Theoretical Analysis***

**Table 2.** Semantic Change Analysis Based on Semantic Theory and Language Borrowing

<b>No.</b>	<b>Word</b>	<b>Type of Semantic Change</b>	<b>Semantic Analysis</b>	<b>Language Borrowing Process</b>
1	<i>Īmān</i>	Semantic broadening	From theological faith to broader notions of conviction and personal belief	Adoption → phonological adaptation → productive derivation ( <i>keimanan, mengimani</i> )
2	<i>Zakāt</i>	Semantic narrowing	From purification and growth to a specific obligatory almsgiving institution.	Direct adoption with institutionalized semantic specialization
3	<i>'ilm</i>	Semantic broadening	From religious knowledge to universal knowledge across academic disciplines	Full assimilation and productive derivation ( <i>ilmu, ilmiah, keilmuan</i> )

4	<i>'ādil</i>	Connotative shift	From moral-religious justice to socio-political and legal justice	Phonological adaptation and morphological productivity ( <i>keadilan, pengadilan</i> )
5	<i>Ḥākim</i>	Semantic narrowing	From ruler/governor/judge to a specific judicial officer	Semantic specialization and institutional assimilation within the legal system

### **Semantic Theory Approach**

The semantic analysis of the five Arabic loanwords—*īmān* (faith), *zakāt* (almsgiving), *'ilm* (knowledge), *'ādil* (justice), and *ḥākim* (judge)—demonstrates that lexical borrowing is frequently accompanied by semantic modification. According to lexical semantic theory, meaning changes may occur through semantic broadening, semantic narrowing, or connotative shift when words are transferred into new linguistic and socio-cultural environments (Zaimah et al., 2025).

The word *īmān* originally refers to faith and inner conviction in Islamic theology. In Indonesian, however, its usage extends beyond strictly religious discourse and may also refer to conviction, trust, confidence, or personal belief in broader social contexts. Although the religious meaning remains dominant, the term exhibits semantic broadening because it can be applied to situations involving personal commitment, confidence, and certainty outside formal theological discussions.

A different pattern appears in the word *zakāt*. In Arabic, *zakāt* is semantically associated with purification, growth, blessing, and spiritual cleansing in addition to its technical legal meaning. In Indonesian, the term has undergone semantic narrowing because it primarily denotes a specific religious obligation involving the transfer of wealth according to Islamic law. The broader spiritual and metaphorical dimensions of the Arabic concept are less prominent in everyday Indonesian usage, reflecting the institutionalization of *zakāt* within religious administration and public policy.

The word *'ilm* represents another example of semantic broadening. In classical Arabic, *'ilm* generally refers to knowledge and learning within a broad intellectual and religious framework. After entering Indonesian as *ilmu*, its meaning expanded to include virtually all fields of knowledge, ranging from religious studies to modern scientific

disciplines such as social sciences, political science, natural sciences, and computer science. This semantic expansion reflects the integration of Islamic intellectual heritage with modern educational and scientific traditions in Indonesia.

Unlike the previous examples, *'ādil* demonstrates a connotative shift. In Arabic, the concept of *'adl* emphasizes moral balance, fairness, and the ethical obligation to place things in their proper position. In Indonesian, *adil* continues to retain this moral meaning but has acquired additional socio-political and legal connotations. The term frequently appears in political discourse, legal institutions, public policy debates, and social justice campaigns. Consequently, its meaning has shifted from a predominantly ethical-religious concept toward a more pragmatic and context-dependent social value.

The clearest example of semantic narrowing is found in *ḥākim*. In Arabic, *ḥākim* may refer to a ruler, governor, authority figure, or judge. In Indonesian, however, *hakim* is largely restricted to the meaning of a judicial officer responsible for adjudicating legal disputes in courts. The broader political and administrative meanings associated with the Arabic term are no longer dominant. This narrowing corresponds to the terminological precision required by Indonesia's modern legal system.

Overall, the semantic development of these five Arabic loanwords demonstrates three major patterns of meaning change: semantic broadening (*īmān* and *'ilm*), semantic narrowing (*zakāt* and *ḥākim*), and connotative shift (*'ādil*). These findings indicate that language borrowing involves not only the transfer of lexical forms but also the restructuring of meaning in response to the communicative needs, cultural values, and institutional frameworks of the recipient language community.

### ***Language Borrowing Theory Approach***

From the perspective of Hockett's (1958) language borrowing theory, the Arabic loanwords examined in this study provide evidence of borrowing processes involving adoption, adaptation, and assimilation within Indonesian. These processes illustrate how foreign lexical items gradually become integrated into the linguistic system of the recipient language.

The adoption stage is reflected in the historical transfer of Arabic vocabulary into the Malay-Indonesian linguistic sphere through long-term religious, educational, and cultural contact. The spread of Islam throughout the Indonesian archipelago facilitated

the introduction of terms associated with theology, law, knowledge, and social ethics. Words such as *īmān*, *zakāt*, *‘ilm*, *‘ādil*, and *ḥākim* were borrowed because they represented concepts that were central to Islamic civilization and required lexical representation in the receiving language.

The adaptation stage is visible in both phonological and morphological modifications. Several Arabic sounds that do not exist in Indonesian underwent phonological adjustment. For instance, the pharyngeal consonant /ħ/ in *ḥākim* became /h/ in *hakim*, while consonant clusters found in Arabic forms such as *‘ilm* and *‘adl* were adapted into the Indonesian forms *ilmu* and *adil*. Morphological adaptation is equally evident through the productive use of Indonesian affixation. Borrowed forms serve as bases for derivations such as *keimanan*, *mengimani*, *keilmuan*, *ilmiah*, *keadilan*, *pengadilan*, *kehakiman*, and *menghakimi*. The emergence of these derivatives indicates that the borrowed words have become integrated into the grammatical structure of Indonesian.

The assimilation stage is reflected in the extent to which these loanwords function beyond their original religious contexts. The word *ilmu* is now widely used across academic disciplines and scientific domains. Similarly, *adil* has become a central concept in legal discourse, political rhetoric, and public administration. *Hakim* functions as an institutionalized legal term within the Indonesian judiciary, while *zakat* has been incorporated into formal administrative structures through state-recognized zakat management institutions. The term *iman* likewise appears in broader communicative contexts to express conviction and personal belief. These developments demonstrate that Arabic loanwords have become deeply embedded in Indonesian linguistic and social practices.

Viewed through Hockett’s framework, borrowing is not merely the transfer of lexical forms but a process of linguistic and cultural integration. The findings reveal that Arabic loanwords in Indonesian have undergone structural adaptation, semantic modification, and functional expansion as they interact with the linguistic norms and socio-cultural realities of Indonesian society. Rather than remaining static borrowings, these lexical items continue to evolve through ongoing processes of contextual reinterpretation and semantic negotiation.

## Conclusion

This study has shown that the five Arabic loanwords examined—*īmān*, *‘ilm*, *zakāt*, *‘ādil*, and *ḥākim*—exhibit different patterns of semantic change in contemporary Indonesian. The terms *īmān* and *‘ilm* have undergone semantic broadening, extending beyond their original religious meanings into wider social, psychological, educational, and intellectual domains. In contrast, *zakāt* and *ḥākim* have experienced semantic narrowing as their meanings have become increasingly specialized within religious, legal, and administrative contexts. Meanwhile, *‘ādil* demonstrates a connotative shift, moving from a predominantly moral-religious concept toward a more pragmatic meaning associated with political, legal, and social discourse. These findings indicate that semantic change is shaped not only by linguistic factors but also by cultural practices, institutional developments, and changing communicative needs within Indonesian society.

From the perspective of Hockett’s language borrowing theory, the findings suggest that the five loanwords display characteristics consistent with the processes of adoption, adaptation, and assimilation. Adoption is reflected in the incorporation of Arabic lexical items into Indonesian through long-standing religious and cultural contact. Adaptation can be observed in phonological and morphological adjustments, including forms such as *ilmu*, *adil*, *keimanan*, *keadilan*, and *kehakiman*. Assimilation is evident in the integration of these loanwords into diverse domains of Indonesian life, including education, law, governance, and public discourse. However, the degree of assimilation varies among the loanwords, indicating that borrowing is an ongoing and dynamic process rather than a uniform linguistic outcome.

Overall, this study highlights the close relationship between language borrowing and semantic change in a multilingual and multicultural society. Nevertheless, the findings should be interpreted with caution, as the study focuses on only five loanwords and relies on selected textual sources rather than a systematic corpus-based dataset. Future research may expand the range of loanwords examined and employ corpus-based approaches to provide broader and more empirically grounded evidence of semantic change and borrowing processes in Indonesian.

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