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RESEARCH ARTICLE

SEMANTIC ANALYSIS OF ARABIC LOANWORDS IN MALAYSIAN POLITICAL DISCOURSE

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Abstract

Loanwords are words borrowed from one language and incorporated into another. They may originate from a wide range of languages and can be modified to adhere to the phonological and grammatical conventions of the receiving language. The Malay language consists of a vast number of words borrowed from various languages, including Arabic. Arabic loanwords have helped develop the Malay language by enriching and diversifying its vocabulary. While Arabic loanwords are used extensively within the Islamic religious context, they are also employed in other fields, including politics. In Malaysia, where Malay is the official language, the use of Arabic loanwords is common in the political sense. Some Arabic loanwords related to politics have become so integrated into Malay that the pronunciation no longer sounds foreign, while others maintain the sound characteristics of Arabic. This study analyzed the use of Arabic loanwords in the current Malaysian political discourse via mainstream media, specifically newspapers and political blogs, from 2022 to 2023. The Arabic loanwords were then comparatively analyzed in terms of their lexical meaning in the donor and receiving language, as well as their contextual meaning in Malaysian politics. The findings of this study suggest that the intermixing between Islam and politics in Malaysia may have fueled the pervasiveness and trendiness of the use of Arabic loanwords in lieu of equivalent native words and loanwords of English origin, and competing loanword equivalents which have been phonologically modified.

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Introduction:-

Loanwords play a pivotal role in the development of a language. Language borrowing, a process which leads to the emergence of loanwords, is a common phenomenon since language is used as a medium for language speakers to communicate and interact with each other (Nor Hazila & Sharifah, 2018).

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The Malay language has incorporated a vast number of loanwords from numerous languages, such as Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian, Dutch, Hindi, Javanese, Siamese, Tamil, Portuguese, Chinese, Japanese and English (Jones, 2007; al-Jarf, 2021). Among those languages, Arabic is considered as one of the principal sources of Malay borrowing (Hendershot, 1943; Quah, 1999). Arabic loanwords have also become part and parcel of the Malay language to the point that they are no longer discerned as words of foreign origin. Al-Zubaidi (2018) notes that the longer and more frequently a borrowed term has been used in the language, the more closely it resembles the native words of that language. He states that several Arabic loanwords are not at all seen as loanwords by Malays, which is proof of how incredibly well Arabic loanwords have assimilated into the Malay lexicon. From a sociolinguistic perspective, the use of Arabic loanwords in Malay society is profound and pervasive. While Arabic loanwords in Malay are mostly applied within the context of Islam, which is the default religion of Malays and the official religion of Malaysia, they are also used extensively in the field of politics, one of the many “domains” enriched by the use of Arabic loanwords (Idris, 2002; Mahfud et. al., 2021). Additionally, the amalgamation of politics and religion in Malaysia would also lead to widespread use of Arabic loanwords in Malaysian politics. This study discusses the use of Arabic loanwords in Malay within the current Malaysian political context and scenario by examining the political content in mainstream media such as newspapers and political blogs written throughout the years 2022 and 2023. It also analyzes how each loanword differs semantically from its original word in the donor language.

Overview Of The Malay Lexicon:-

Historically, Malays inhabit a region of the world that speaks languages in the Austronesian family of languages. The Malay entity can be proven through the records of I-Tsing (YiJing) (7th century A.D.) who stopped in Sumatra in 644 A.D. and 661 A.D. while on his way to and from India. He recorded the name of Sriwijaya in Palembang as well as the name of “Molu-yu state” in Jambi. In the 15th century, the Malay Sultanate of Malacca took over the government of the Srivijaya Kingdom and had an influence on the development of Islam in the archipelago and developed the Javanese language by identifying it as the “Malay language”. This resulted in the emergence of kingdoms inherited from the Malay Sultanate of Malacca such as the Sultanate of Johor, Terengganu, Pahang and Perak. Such is the development of the Malay language in nature and Malay history in a nutshell (Mohamed, 2011).

The rich geographical history of the Malays has resulted in linguistic diversity within the Malay language itself, giving rise to lexical differences in each state in Malaysia. In the Kelantanese dialect, *sengoti* means right, *keleh* means look and *hungga* means run. The Kelantanese dialect also contains syllables that give meaning and are not found in the Malay language such as *so* means one, *bo* means enough and *lo* means now (Nur Azuki, 2018). On the other hand, there are also lexical differences from this aspect of the Malay language due to the mapping factor. Meanwhile, in the Kedahan dialect, there are six identified variants that refer to the lexical ‘back’ among speakers in the state, which are [puŋkoŋ], [puŋkoŋ], [ɕubuŋ], [ɕubuŋ], [puŋkuŋ] and [ɕubuŋ]. The existence of these variants can be seen due to the geographical space factor in the area (Fazal, 2019).

The Malay lexicon imports words from foreign languages such as Arabic and Sanskrit. It began in the 7th century when the Malay Archipelago used Sanskrit as the language of government and science. Among the words absorbed from Sanskrit are *guru*, *puisi*, *bahasa*, *sastera* and *dosa* (Zaharani, 2011). Similarly, the Arabic language also has a lot of influence in the Malay lexicon. It not only gives influence but has become lexical in the Malay language such as the words *sedekah*, *bazir* and *lazarat*. These words have been given meaning in the Malay language and there are possible differences from a grammatical point of view such as from verbs to nouns and such in Arabic to Malay when the process of language absorption occurs (Abbas, 1988). The change of meaning that occurs for each word occurs slowly with to the passage of time and era. The Malay community never borrows a word without knowing and understanding the true meaning of a word. This does not only happen in the Malay community, but also in other communities or nations that borrow words from other languages also do things like this (Mohamad NorTaufiq&Aniswal, 2023).

Overview Of Arabic Loanwords In Malay:-

Arabic is the second most common language from which the Malay language borrows after Sanskrit (Idris, 2017). Beg (1979) stated that by 1979, there were approximately 1,000 Arabic-originated words in Malay. In the fourth edition of Kamus Dewan, there are more than 2,000 Arabic loanwords, most of which have been phonetically modified to the Malay pronunciation (Nur Afifah et. al., 2021). The immense volume of Arabic loanwords in Malay implies how important they are in the Malay language.

Due to the scarcity of historical references, it is challenging to determine the precise route through which Arabic loanwords took to become part of the Malay lexicon (Idris, 2017). Versteegh (2001) acknowledged this conundrum and remarked that due to the small quantity of extant classical Malay inscriptions, little information is known about the infant stages of the development of the Arabic component of Malay. Campbell (1996), Jones (2007) and Versteegh (2001) assert that Arabic may have traveled from Persia to Malaysia via India, or even China and Champa. It is assumed that Arab traders and missionaries directly introduced loanwords into Malay via Malacca, the early Malay sultanate kingdom that served as a focal point of trade between the East and the West during the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Around that time, the spread of Islam by Arab traders and missionaries resulted in a clash between the Malay and Arabic languages (Zaharani et. al, 2011). From a linguistic perspective, the flexible nature of language renders such clash between languages a common occurrence between societies and civilizations (Muhammad Firdaus & Sharifah, 2021). By examining the immense number of Arabic loanwords in Malay, it could be deduced that religion is the primary cause for such borrowings. Through the practice of Islamic rituals, including some of which could not be performed without these terminologies, Islam as a new religion to the area brought with it considerable Arabic terminologies (Idris, 2017). Essentially, the introduction of Arabic terms has enriched the Malay vocabulary in aspects pertaining to the Islamic religion (Ainur & Zuliana, 2022). On the other hand, the adoption of Arabic loanwords in Malay manuscripts, such as the *Johore State Constitution* or *Undang-undang Tubuh Kerajaan Negeri Johor*, indicate that Arabic loanwords were important not only in religious matters, but also in other fields, such as law (Hanif et. al., 2018).

Tham (1990) has identified two key elements that gave rise to the widespread use of Arabic words in Malay. One of them is the constant endeavor by devout Muslims, many of whom have earned degrees from various universities in the Middle East. Additionally, Malay graduate students in Islamic Studies from universities in Malaysia strived to reestablish the connection between religion and ordinary life in Malay society. There are other factors at play here apart from affirmation of their religiosity such as their past knowledge and the issue of cultural prestige. They naturally know numerous Arabic words since they have a strong command of the language, and they choose to use these words in their own written and spoken work. Additionally, they believe that the usage of Arabic words in their speech or writing, which are unfamiliar to Malay readers, demonstrates their high level of knowledge and cultural prestige (Idris, 2017).

Politics is the second factor leading to the significant use of Arabic loanwords in Malay. Back then, the Malaysian political landscape was largely dominated by two Malay-Muslim political parties: UMNO (United Malays National Organization) and PAS (Pan-Islamic Party of Malaysia). Albeit UMNO was the then government party, PAS, whose leadership is made up of religious experts, constantly urged UMNO to espouse the political agenda of Islamization. In order to fulfill PAS' religious-political demands, thus stifling pressure from Islamists, UMNO formed the Islamic Bank and the International Islamic University Malaysia in 1983. These institutions' impacts have resulted in a significant increase in the use of Arabic terminologies in Malay. The International Islamic University Malaysia has developed into a hub for Islamic studies, where Arabic and English are the official languages of instruction (Tham, 1990).

On the other hand, the existence of the Malaysian national language and religious policy is another prominent factor which adds to the significant amount of Malay borrowing from Arabic (Idris, 2017). Malay is the country's official language, and Islam is recognized as its official religion by Article 152 of the Malaysian Constitution (Federal Constitution, 2010). The relationship between Arabic as the primary medium of the Islamic religion, and Islam as the main religion of Malays, hence, renders Arabic a language of paramount importance to Malays.

Semantic Aspect Of Arabic Loanwords:-

Linguists differ in determining whether the meaning of loanwords in a language is maintained or changed. Abu Awdah (1985) opines that the meaning of words sometimes changes when there is language borrowing due to social factors that affect the meaning of the word. Ullmann (1962) stated several main reasons for changes in meaning in language, which are linguistic, historical, social, psychological, external influences and the need for new words. Wan Salsa Billa (2008) analyzed the semantics of 46 Arabic loanwords in English and Malay. Of this number, seven words are categorized as Arabic loanwords that still retain the original meaning of the source language. The words are Allah, *ghazal*, *muazzin*, Muslim, *kohol*, Ramadan and Islam, while the other 39 words that were analyzed were categorized as Arabic loanwords that experienced a change in meaning either involving narrowing of meaning, expansion of meaning, additional meaning or deviation of meaning. Words that still retain their meaning are usually related to religious terms, although there are religious terms whose meaning is narrowed.

According to Mohd Fauzi (2008), there are 1789 Arabic loanwords in the third edition of Kamus Dewan that include nouns, verbs and conjunctions. Based on the study, there are 1683 Arabic loanwords that have the exact meaning with the original meaning, while the word entry that has almost exact meaning are as many as 37 entries and the word entry that has an incorrect meaning is as many as 77 times. In other words, the majority of Arabic loanword entries in KDEK are accurate, which is almost 94 percent. The findings of his study conclude as follows:

No.	Items	Exact meaning	Almost exact meaning	Inaccurate meaning
1	Arabic Nouns (Total: 1742)	1635	36	70
2	Arabic Verbs (Total: 21)	17	-	4
3	Arabic Prepositions (Total: 27)	25	1	1
4	Arabic Terms (Total: 523)	495	11	17

Table 1:- Arabic loanwords in the third edition of Kamus Dewan translated from Kaseh & Khadijah, (2009).

The table above shows the frequency of entries that have the correct meaning for each aspect of Arabic loanwords. However, the accuracy does not allow the writer to ignore some problems from the aspect of the original meaning that undergoes changes, narrowing and expansion, even if the form of the word is preserved (Za'ba, 1965).

Harishon et. al. (2012) categorizes loanwords into two categories. If there is no lexical change in a loanword, then it is known as 'full borrowing without change'. Inversely, if there is a change from the source word – either by addition, insertion or vocal change, then it is known as 'borrowing with change'.

On the other hand, Zaharani Ahmad (2013) classifies loanwords into three distinct categories:

1. If a word is completely absorbed from a foreign language without any linguistic changes, then it is known as a 'well-integrated loanword'.
2. If a loanword shares features or has the same features and another part is adapted into the recipient language based on the recipient language system, then it is categorized as a 'partially-integrated loanword'.
3. If the vocabulary is adapted and changed completely according to the recipient language, then it is categorized as a 'modified-integrated loanword'.

The transition in meaning of a word in a certain donor language to its loanword in the receiving language may be classified into the following categories (Kaseh & Khadijah, 2009):

1. Retention of original meaning;
2. Expansion of meaning: by which the meaning of a word is extended to several other meanings (Ullmann, 1962);
3. Narrowing or constriction of meaning: which refers to the reduction in the meaning of a loanword compared to its original word in the donor language. Amran (1987) opines that Malay speakers are more inclined towards using only some meanings than using other meanings for the same word. The word *alim* for example, is given the meaning in the dictionary as knowledgeable and clever (in religious matters), as well as pious, or not mischievous. *Alim* in Arabic is used to describe a person who is highly regarded for their religious knowledge and piety. However, Malays tend to interpret the word in a narrower sense in their everyday conversation, by associating the word with someone who is pious, but does not necessarily possess vast knowledge in religious matters;
4. Abbreviation of meaning: for instance, the word *astaga* is short for *astaghfirullah*, which could be interpreted as "Oh God, forgive me". The word *astaga* is also used to express a sense of wonder, surprise and so on (Kamus Dewan, 1989); and
5. Change or alteration of meaning: by which a loanword has a different meaning to its original word in the donor language. An example is the word *khalwat*, which means isolation and solitude in Arabic, but may be interpreted as being alone with the opposite gender in Malay.

Methodology:-

Loanwords are gathered through a discourse analysis of current political news sourced from online Malay news portals, namely Utusan Malaysia, Berita Harian, Malaysiakini, Sinar Harian, HarakahDaily, MalaysiaGazette, SelangorKini, Astro Awani and Kosmo Digital published in 2022 and 2023. A total of 23 loanwords with political connotation was identified. To arrive at the semantic analysis of the loanwords in the host and donor languages, a comparative lexical analysis was carried out. The study discerned the similarities and differences between Arabic loanwords in Malay and their original Arabic words, by citing definitions given by Pusat Rujukan Persuratan Melayu (PRPM) which is developed and updated from time to time by Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, Malaysia; as well as the Almaany website which gathers around eight trusted modern Arabic dictionaries. A semantic analysis of those loanwords is also carried out in the context of Malaysian politics.

Findings And Discussion:

Comparative Lexical Analysis

Table 2 summarizes the comparative lexical analysis of Arabic loanwords in Malaysian politics in terms of meaning and word category. While all the word forms loaned are nouns in the Arabic origin, they are used as both nouns and verbs in the Malay language. From the 23 words analyzed, 15 retained their original meaning. These include words such as *adil*, *amanah* and *fikrah*. 3 words were identified as having gone construction of meaning. They are *bahas*, *dewan* and *risalah*. Only one word showed expansion of meaning which is *siasah*. 4 loanwords with altered meaning were identified: *daulat*, *muafakat*, *ummah* and *usul*.

Lexical Information in PRPM	Lexical Information in Arabic Dictionaries	Summary of semantic analysis
/adil/ +N fair, just, impartial	/ʔ aadil/ +N fair, just, impartial	Retention of meaning
/amanah/ +N trust, trustworthy, obligation, responsibility +V entrust	/amaanah/ +N allegiance, devotion, faith; faithfulness, fealty, fidelity, loyalty, responsibility	Retention of meaning
/bahas/ +N, +V debate, research, discuss, discourse	/bahth/ +N research, discussion, study, survey, inspection, investigation, probe, examination, exploration, inquiry inquest, scrutiny paper, treatise, survey, research, report, prospection, drilling, excavation, hunt, search	Constriction of meaning
/daulat/ +N Greatness, majesty	/dawlah/ +N country, state, nation	Alteration of meaning
/dewan/ +N hall; authoritative body or institution that gives advice, makes decisions etc. through meetings	/diiwaan/ +N bench, couch A group of poems collected together, poetical works, office, department, council, bureau, government, register, notebook, entry	Constriction of meaning
/fasad/ +N damage, destruction, decay, corruption	/fasaad/ +N damage, destruction, decay, corruption	Retention of meaning
/fikrah/ +N thought, idea	/fikrah/ +N motif, notion, opinion, thought, view, impression, idea, conception	Retention of meaning
/hujah/ +N argument	/hujjah/ +N argument	Retention of meaning
/islah/ +V efforts to return a situation to correct state, reform	/isʔ laah/ +N fixing, adjustment, amendment, reformation, correction, rectification mending, overhauling,	Retention of meaning

	rebuilding, reconditioning, repair, reparation, restoration, remedying, repairing, compensation	
/kerusi/ +N chair, seat	/kursiyy/ +N chair, throne	Retention of meaning
/muafakat/ +N cooperation	/muwaafaqah/ +N agreement (in international law): An Agreement between two states following a dispute between them by referring the dispute to arbitration	Alteration of meaning
/muktamar/ +N large conference or congress	/muṭ tamar/ +N a gathering held to discuss on a matter	Retention of meaning
/musyawarah/ +V to discuss or negotiate with other people to solve problems or achieve goals	/mushaawarah/ +N consultation, discussion	Retention of meaning
/rakyat/ +N people, folk, citizen	/raḥ iyyah/ +N people, folk, citizen	Retention of meaning
/rasuah/ +N bribe, corruption	/rishwah/ +N bribe, corruption	Retention of meaning
/risalah/ +N pamphlet, leaflet, brochure, brief article, religious message, dissertation	/risaalah/ +N message, letter, epistle, task, duty, obligation, apostleship, prophethood, dissertation, thesis	Constriction of meaning
/siasah/ +N politics, policy, tactic, maneuver, maneuvering	/siyaasah/ +N policy, politics	Expansion of meaning
/syura/ +N meeting	/shuuraa/ +N meeting, council	Retention of meaning
/tadbir/ +V to manage, govern or administer something	/tadbiir/ +N measure, the good care of	Retention of meaning
/ummah/ +N Muslims, the global Muslim community	/ummah/ +N a tribe or confederation of tribes, people, nation	Alteration of meaning
/usul/ +N proposal, suggestion, motion, origin, nature, proposition +V propose, suggest	/usṯ uul/ +N essentials, fundamentals, principles, basics, elements, rudiments, rules, etiquette, proprieties, decencies	Alteration of meaning
/wakil/ +N representative	/wakiil/ +N representative	Retention of meaning
/Zalim/ +N Cruel, Brutal, Ruthless, Unfair	/Ḍ aalim/ +N Cruel, Brutal, Ruthless, Unfair	Retention Of Meaning

Table 2:-Comparative lexical analysis of Arabic loanwords in Malaysian politics**Contextual Semantic Analysis**

The following is a detailed discussion on the semantic analysis of each Arabic loanword in Malaysian politics as listed in Table 2:

Adil

Among the Malay loanwords that retain their original meaning in Arabic is *adil*. The word *adil* in both Malay and Arabic denotes the qualities of justice, fairness and equity. Examples of usage of *adil* in Malay are: “Saya sentiasabersikap*adil*” (I am always fair), “berlaku*adil*adalahsaturuntututan” (Being fair is a demand), “diaseorang yang *adil*” (He is a fair man) and “diabertanggungjawab*mengadil*ipertandingantersebut” (He is responsible for judging the competition). Unlike in Arabic, *adil* in Malay can be a noun or a verb. A government that is *adil* is a government that treats all people equally and impartially, without favoritism or discrimination. During election seasons, political parties would promise that it would become an *adil* government if it wins the election in order to woo voters. Additionally, the word *adil* is also used in the name of a political party in Malaysia, namely Parti*Keadilan* Rakyat (People’s Justice Party).

Amanah

The word *amanah* in Malay retains its original meaning in Arabic. The word *amanah* in both Malay and Arabic denotes qualities of trust, trustworthiness, loyalty, faith etc. Examples of usage of *amanah* in Malay are: “*Amanah*merupakansatusifat yang mulia” (Honesty is a noble virtue); “sayaakanmenunaikan*Amanah* tersebut (I will carry out that responsibility), “diaseorang yang *amanah* (He is a trustworthy person); and “Diadi*amanahkan*untukmenjagaduititu” (He is entrusted to take care of the money). Unlike in Arabic, *amanah* in Malay can be a noun or a verb. A government that exercises *amanah* is a government that is responsible for managing the nation’s economic resources by preventing squandering of funds, eliminating corruption, as well as implementing various other fiscal policies that help the people prosper and thrive economically. Therefore, it is essentially important for political parties to promise that it would govern the country with *amanah* in order to win the hearts and minds of voters during election seasons. Moreover, the word *amanah* is also used in the name of a political party in Malaysia, namely Parti*Amanah* Negara (National Trust Party).

Bahas

The meaning of the word *bahas* in Malay seems to be narrower than its Arabic original word, *bahth*. In Arabic, the word *bahth* has a broader definition which includes research, discussion, study, survey, inspection, investigation, probe, examination, exploration, inquiry, inquest, scrutiny, paper, treatise, survey, report, prospection, drilling, excavation, hunt, search etc. Whilst in Malay, and especially in the political sense, it usually means debate or discussion of an issue. For example: “Hamzah, Rafiziserta*bahas*usulundipercayaterhadap Anwar” (Hamzah, Rafizi participate in the debate on the vote of confidence in Anwar) (Khairulanuar, 2022).

Daulat

The word *daulat* in Malay is defined as sovereignty, greatness and *majesty*, whereas the definition of its original word *daulah* is country, state or nation. The word *daulat* is used in the current Malaysian political discourse in the context of the sovereignty of the King, or the Yang Di-PertuanAgong. *Daulat* means sovereignty, and *Daulat*Tuanku carries with it the notion of the supremacy of the sovereign. In the Malaysian *Rukun Negara*, loyalty to the King comes after belief in God. The term *Daulat Tuanku* is an expression of reverence to the King, which can be translated as “Long live the King”. Ultimately, *Daulat Tuanku* or *Kedaulatan Raja* is a fundamental principle that has been ingrained into the Malay psyche, even among the more liberal-minded ones. It is worth noting here that the *daulat* of the classical Malay Rulers was not sovereignty in that modern jural sense but an aura — ultimately cosmological and historical in origin throughout the broader Malay Land context — of mystical power and even sanctity that made their descent, and positions as rulers, legitimate. They are legitimate by virtue of their cultural position without enjoying sovereignty, or being the locus of modern political sovereignty, in the technical legal and constitutional sense.

Dewan

The word *dewan* in Malay is borrowed from the Arabic word *diwan*. In semantic terms, it has undergone a certain degree of constriction of meaning before it becomes the word *dewan* in Malay. Originally, the definition of the word *diwan* also includes a collection or compilation of Arabic poems. However, this definition is nowhere to be found in the Malay lexicon for the word *dewan*. Politically speaking, the word *dewan* is used in Dewan Rakyat (House of Representatives) and Dewan Negara (Senate), which are two legislative chambers that form the country’s bicameral Parliament together with the Yang Di-PertuanAgong or King as the head of state (The Official Portal of the Parliament of Malaysia, 2021).

Fasad

Fasad is an Arabic word meaning rottenness, corruption, or depravity. In an Islamic context, it can refer to spreading corruption on Earth or spreading mischief in a Muslim land, moral corruption against God, or disturbance of the public peace. Meanwhile, *fasad* in Malay is a noun which means damage, destruction or badness. The 10th Prime Minister of Malaysia, Anwar Ibrahim, stated in one of his speeches: “Apatahlagi agama Islam yang tegasmenolakpenyalahgunaankuasa dan *fasad* dalam sistem yang mempunyai rasuah yang bermaharajalela di negara kita” (Let alone the religion of Islam which strictly forbids abuse of power in a system plagued by corruption in our country) (KOSMO!, 2023, para. 3).

Fikrah

The definition of the word *fikrah* in Malay is the same as in Arabic. In a political sense, the word *fikrah* is used to denote notions of thought and ideas, as in: “PAS membawakekuatan jentera dan kelangsungan *fikrah* perjuangan” (PAS brings the strength of the machinery and the continuity of the idea of struggle) (Harakah Daily, 2022, para. 7).

Hujah

Hujah in Malay is defined as a statement, argument or debate to support or refute an opinion. A similar definition is found for *hujjah* in Arabic. Unlike in Arabic, *hujah* in Malay can also be used as verb, such as *berhujah*. In Malaysian politics, the word is often used in the context of Members of Parliament and such discussing an issue or motion, so as to support or object said issue or motion. A news headline in 2022 reads: “Ahli Parlimen perlutahu adab *berhujah*” (Members of Parliament should know the ethics/manners of debate) (Muhammad Amnan, 2022).

Islah

The meaning of the word *islah* in Malay is no different from its original Arabic word. In Malay, *islah* means “efforts to return a situation to the correct state” or reform. Whereas in Arabic, it means fixing, adjustment, amendment, reformation, correction, rebuilding, repair, restoration, remedying, repairing and so on. The use of this word in Malaysian politics could be seen in Anwar Ibrahim’s speeches, for example: “Saya menyeru kepada seluruh kakitangan kerajaan agar bersama-sama membawa negara ke arah pemulihan melalui semangat *islah*” (I call on all government employees to lead the country together towards recovery through the spirit or value of reform) (Ratna, 2022). The word *islah* could be seen as an Arabic-Islamic counterpart for the word *reformasi* that is frequently used by Anwar Ibrahim, who, as the Prime Minister of Malaysia, promises to eliminate various issues hampering the country’s progress such as corruption.

Kerusi

The word *kerusi* in Malay means chair or seat, which is a direct translation of *kursiyy* in Arabic. In Malaysian politics, it is used to refer to a seat in Parliament or State Assembly, as well as the constituency it represents. For example: “PRU15: Pas Johor akur terima empat *kerusi*” (15th Malaysian General Election: Johor PAS accepts decision to be given only four state seats) (Nor Azura, 2022); and “Radzi menang di *kerusi* Putrajaya” (Radzi wins Putrajaya Parliamentary Seat) (Mohd Husni, 2022). The word *kerusi* in Malay, apart from its default meaning, i.e., a chair or seat, has become synonymous with political power. To win a seat in Parliament or State Assembly means winning a constituency it represents, thus giving the representative political power. In Arabic, *kursiyy* also means throne, which is also synonymous with power. Although winning a seat in Parliament is nowhere near ascending a throne, winning the most parliamentary seats in this country does give the winning party the power to rule the country. Thus, the word *kerusi* in Malay does retain its original denotations in Arabic.

Muafakat

The word *muafakat* in Malay is defined as cooperation, whereas the definition of its original word *muwafaqah* is defined as an agreement or consensus. The word *muafakat* is heavily used in the current Malaysian political discourse in the context of political cooperation. For example: “semangat *pemuafakatan* yang terjalin antara UMNO dan PAS boleh diteruskan dalam konteks lain walaupun kedua-dua parti tidak bekerjasama di bawah agenda *Muafakat Nasional*” (the spirit of cooperation forged between UMNO and PAS can be continued in other contexts even though the two parties are no longer working together under *Muafakat Nasional* agenda) (Zatul, 2022, para. 1). It is worth noting here that the word *muafakat* is found in the term *Muafakat Nasional*, an informal political coalition between three Malay-Muslim dominant political parties, namely UMNO (United Malays National Organization), PAS (Malaysian Islamic Party) and PPBM (Malaysian United Indigenous Party), also known as Bersatu; Which ceased as UMNO and the other two parties went separate ways in the recent 15th Malaysian General Election. The meaning of

the word *muafakat* in Malay indicates a slight alteration of meaning for the word *muafaqa* in Arabic, as the latter solely means agreement, whilst the former means cooperation between people.

Muktamar

The word *muktamar* in Malay refers to a gathering place for discussion. A similar meaning could also be found for the word *mu'tamar* in Arabic. In the Malaysian political context, the word *muktamar* is used heavily by PAS (Malaysian Islamic Party) as it refers to its annual gathering or assembly as *MuktamarTahunan PAS*, instead of using a native Malay word such as *perhimpunan*, as in Perhimpunan Agung UMNO (United Malays National Organization Annual Assembly). The meaning of the word *muktamar* is exactly the same in both Malay and Arabic.

Musyawarah

Musyawarah in Malay means to discuss or negotiate with other people to solve problems or achieve goals, while in Arabic, it means consultation or discussion. Its use can be found in the Malaysian political discourse, for instance, the Minister of Digital Communications of Malaysia, Fahmi Fadzil stated: “Ini adalah Kerajaan Perpaduan yang dibentuksecarabersama, di mana dasarataukeputusanpentingakandibuatsecaramusyawarah, termasukdalamisupelantikan Jemaah Menteri” (This is a Unity Government formed jointly, where important policies or decisions will be made by discussing, including in the issues of the appointment of the cabinet) (Suraya, 2022, para. 4). Although *mushawarah* is a noun in Arabic, it can either be used as a noun or a verb in Malay, such as *bermusyawarah*. Semantic-wise, the word carries with a similar definition in both Arabic and Malay.

Rakyat

The word *rakyat* in Malay and *ra'yyahin* Arabic both mean the people or citizens of a country, as a collective. There was a headline in a Malaysian newspaper, entitled: “Unity government: Will *rakyat* be sacrificed for political expediency?” (Letchumanan, 2022). The word *rakyat* is used heavily among Malaysian politicians as a slogan in a political rhetorical manner in order to attract people and gain their votes in election seasons.

Rasuah

Rasuah is the offering, giving, receiving, or soliciting of any item of value to influence the actions of an official, or other person, in charge of a public or legal duty. Malay language retains the original meaning of *rishwah* in Arabic. There is a government agency in the country called “Suruhanjaya Pencegahan*Rasuah* Malaysia” (The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission), that investigates and prosecutes corruption in the public and private sectors. An example of use of the word *rasuah* in current Malaysian political discourse is: “Amanat Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim berhubungkepentinganmembanteras*rasuah*, harusditerjemahkandenganpelaksanaantindakantegas oleh agensipenguatkuasaberkaitan*rasuah* dan integritisertaakauntabilitiperkhidmatanawam” (Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim’s mandate regarding the importance of combating corruption should be translated into the implementation of strict action by enforcement agencies related to corruption, integrity and accountability of public service) (Rohaniza, 2023, para. 1).

Risalah

The definition of the word *risalah* in Malay does not include prophethood or apostleship in Islamic theology, or duties and obligations, as found in its donor language; but it could, however, mean prophetic messages, as in: “menyampaikan*risalah*kenabian” (conveying the prophetic message). Politically speaking, the Malay word *risalah* is often used in an Islamic context to illustrate the dissemination of Islamic message and ideas, for instance: “...mencetakgenerasiterbaikdenganmembawar*isalah* Ilahi kepadasemuabangsa dan zaman di seluruh dunia” (to produce the best generation by bringing the message of God to all people and times all around the world) (Harakah, 2022, para. 1).

Siasah

The word *siasah* in Malay means politics and policy, for example, *siasahislami* (Islamic politics) and *siasah syariah* (Islamic governance). Aside from politics and policy, the definition for *siasah* in Malay also include tactics and mischief, for instance: “sekarangdisedangmengatursiasahhendakmembalassakithatinya” (now he is plotting to repay his heartache) (Pusat RujukanPersuratanMelayu, n.d.). This is an addition to the original meaning for the word *siyasah* which only means politics, policy and leadership in Arabic.

Syura

Syura is an Arabic word that literally means consultation and, in its simplest form, as an Islamic principle, calls upon Muslims to gather and, through articulate, debate and sound reason, form productive opinions and strategies of implementation. The Malay language retains the original meaning of *shura* in Arabic. In Malaysian politics, the Majlis SyuraUlamak PAS or the PAS Syura Council or is one of the highest entities in the Malaysian Islamic Party, PAS. It is a body empowered to interpret, explain and elaborate on PAS' policies, interpret the PAS Constitution, issue directives for PAS policies to be followed, maintain that PAS' policies and resolutions be adhered to and to control PAS' discipline. It is the highest body in PAS even though it does not wield executive power.

Tadbir

Tadbir in Malay is defined as an act of managing, governing or administering something, be it a government, company, institution, organization and so on. Examples are: “*mentadbir* sesebuah negara” (governing a country), and “*pentadbir* sesebuah syarikat” (administration of a company). This is not very far from its original meaning in Arabic which roughly carries a similar meaning. The word *tadbir* in Arabic is used as a noun, whilst in Malay, it may be used verbally or with suffixes and prefixes, such as *mentadbir*, *ditadbir*, *pentadbiran* and so on. It may even be accompanied by another word such as *tadbir urus* to form a new phrase, which means governance. For example: “*Tadbir* urus mestijelas, mesti wujudkan jawatankuasa di persekutuan, adajawatankuasasaringan, pengurusan dan pemantauan di peringkat negeri juga” (Governance must be clear, there must be a committee at the federal level, there is a screening, management and monitoring committee at the state level as well) (Madiha, 2022, para. 9).

Ummah

As for the word *ummah* in Malay, it has undergone some changes in the meaning of the original word in Arabic. *Ummah* in Arabic is defined as a nation, tribe or group of tribes. For example, Allah says in the Quran: “(and We have sent) to each *ummah* a prophet (Yunus: 47). Whereas, the Malay lexical knowledge usually specifies the word *ummah* as the Muslim community. For example: “Penyatuan *ummah* Pas dan UMNO, formula terbaik” (Unification of PAS and UMNO, the best formula) (Astro Awani, 2022).

Usul

As for the word *usul* in Malay, it is defined as proposal, suggestion, motion, origin, nature, proposition; and in the political context, it is often used to denote a parliamentary motion. This is in stark contrast to the original meaning of *usul* in Arabic, which defines it as essentials, fundamentals, principles, basics, elements, rudiments, rules, etiquette, proprieties, decencies. Arabic instances for the word *usul* are *uṣūl fiqh* (principles of Islamic jurisprudence), *uṣūl al-dīn* (principles of Islamic theology) and *uṣūl al-da'wah* (principles of da'wah). Whereas an example of the use of the word *usul* in Malay, specifically in Malaysian political discourse would be: “pembentangan *usul* undipercayabagi keabsahan pelantikan Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim sebagai Perdana Menteri ke-10” (presentation of a motion of confidence in the validity of the appointment of Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim as the 10th Prime Minister (Astro Awani, 2022, para. 1).

Wakil

The word *wakil* in both Malay and Arabic means representative, or someone acting on behalf of someone else through delegated power. In the Malaysian political context, the term *wakil* is often used in the term *wakil rakyat*, which could be translated literally as representative of the people. A *wakil rakyat* usually refers to a member of the Parliament or State Assembly appointed via elections in the democratic process. The meaning of *wakil* in Arabic is retained after it is brought into the Malay lexicon.

Zalim

The word *zalim* in both Malay and Arabic is used interchangeably for cruelty or unjust acts of exploitation, oppression, and wrongdoing, by which a person either deprives others of their rights or does not fulfill his obligations towards them. In the Malaysian political context, the term *zalim* is often used to refer to any kind of oppression. For example, “Anwar tolak politik dendam, berlaku *zalim* seperti kerajaan terdahulu” (Anwar rejects the politics of revenge, and of acting tyrannically like the previous government) (Sofia, 2023). The meaning of *zalim* in Arabic is also retained after it is brought into the Malay lexicon.

Tendency To Use Arabic Loanwords In Malaysian Politics

By analyzing the current political discourse in Malaysia, we are able to observe different ways in which Arabic loanwords are employed. In some cases, Arabic loanwords are used in circumstances where they are usually

irreplaceable by other words. This includes common words such as *adil*, *rakyat*, *zalim* and *rasuah*. In other cases, Arabic loanwords are used despite the presence of other vocabularies, be it a native word or a loanword from another language, such as English. Examples are *risalah* instead of *pesanan* or *mesej*, *islah* instead of *reformasi*, *fikrah* instead of *idea* and *siasah* instead of *politik*. There are also instances where more Arabic-sounding Arabic loanwords are favored over other Arabic loanwords that have been phonetically adapted to fit Malay utterances and thus sound less Arabic, such as *ummah* instead of *umat*. In fact, some of these loanwords are not only used in Malay news portals, but they also appeared in political news written and published in English. One such example is *rakyat* which appeared in an article in the Malay Mail digital news portal (Letchumanan, 2022, November 29) and *ummah* in another Malay Mail news article (Malay Mail, 2023, March 15). This clearly portrays that some Arabic loanwords are so well-integrated into the society that they are used even in political discourses in English.

The reason some politicians and political parties tend to use Arabic loanwords instead of native words or loanwords from other languages, or loanwords that sound more Arabic instead of loanwords that sound less Arabic, may boil down to their religious ideological background and influence. Since Arabic is the language of Islam, it is no surprise that those who are more 'Islamic' tend to use more Arabic-sounding terms. A clear example of a political party that heavily uses Arabic terms is PAS, or the Malaysian Islamic Party. The party heavily uses Arabic terms and loanwords such as *syura*, *ummah*, *ulama'*, *fikrah* and *muktamar*. As its name suggests, PAS is a political party that distinguishes itself from other parties with its Islamic ideology (Muhammad Faiz & Wan Fariza, 2015). Since its inception, PAS has aimed to govern the country with Islam as the foundation and shariah law as the legal system (Wan Saiful, 2020). The party has constantly endeavored to win the hearts and minds of the Malay-Muslim voter base, which ultimately culminated in the recent so-called 'green tsunami' in the 15th General Election, a term coined by political pundits to describe the party's sweeping victory in vast swathes of the country's Malay-Muslim conservative seats in Parliament.

Another example of a politician that heavily uses Arabic loanwords is the 10th Malaysian Prime Minister, Dato' Seri Anwar Ibrahim. Even though he does not helm an Islamic party like PAS, he himself had an Islamic background that influenced his ideology and thought. In the 1970's, he was at the head of an Islamic revival movement in Malaysia who combined social concerns and care for the poor and dispossessed with an explicit vision of Islam. His worldview was partly shaped by the writings of Islamist thinkers, such as the Muslim Brotherhood founder Hassan al-Banna, the Egyptian writer Sayyid Qutb, the South Asian theologian Abu al-A'la al-Mawdudi, and the Iranian jurist and revolutionary leader Ayatollah Khomeini. Anwar was also a founding member of the Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia (ABIM), whose broader goals were rooted in the belief that social justice could best be achieved through an Islamic moral and political framework. Anwar's solutions were considered as a moderate Islamist alternative to the hardline Islamist agenda of the PAS, which focused on creating an Islamic state based on the Shariah (Ibrahim, 2022). Anwar's Islamic worldview reflects not only in his ideology, but also in the manner in which he expresses his ideas, which, in the case of Malaysian political discourse, is displayed in the form of the use of Arabic loanwords and terms which are considered more Islamic. As we observe the interrelation between Islamic ideology and use of Arabic, we are able to discern the tendency to use Arabic loanwords among those with Islamic background or influenced by Islamic ideology.

Conclusion:-

Vocabulary borrowing from Arabic has tremendously influenced the Malay language. Words in Malay borrowed from Arabic either retain their original meanings and pronunciation in Arabic, or undergo expansion, constriction or alteration of meaning, apart from a change in pronunciation. Phonological and morphological changes are also discerned in certain loanwords. From a sociolinguistic perspective, Arabic loanwords play a crucial part in enriching the Malay vocabulary, specifically in the field of politics. Most Arabic loanwords in Malay related to politics retain their meaning, whilst others undergo expansion, contraction or alteration of meaning. Even though certain Arabic loanwords are indispensable and may not be replaced by other terminologies to indicate a similar meaning, such as *kerusi*, *rasuah*, *adil* and *rakyat*, there is a propensity amongst politicians and political parties to favor Arabic loanwords over native words, or pure Arabic loanwords over those that have been phonologically adapted to the Malay language, or English loanwords, such as *musyawarah* instead of *mesyuarat*, *islah* instead of *reformasi*, *siasah* instead of *politik* and *ummah* instead of *umat*. It may be concluded that the interrelation between religion and politics is a primary factor which leads to such trend in the use of Arabic loanwords and terms in the Malaysian political discourse.

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