

# Understanding Islamic Culture Through Learning Malay as a Foreign Language

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**Keywords:** Malay language, Arabic loan words, reading activity.

**Abstract.** Malay is taught as a foreign language at the Department of Malay-Indonesian Translation and Interpretation, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, South Korea. During the teaching and learning sessions, various words and terms are introduced to students to give them as much knowledge and vocabulary. The words and terms introduced include general and special terms that represent the diverse needs and interests in communicating and interacting using the Malay. Observation showed that many Malay words and terms used either directly or indirectly, such as prayer, fasting, obligatory, halal and scarves have sparked the curiosity of students about Islam and Muslims. Description of the application of foreign influence in the formation of a Malay word, including Arabic, English and Sanskrit has generated many questions related to the phenomenon. The explanation of the historical background and the general information about Malaysia and Malay language open space for students to get a clearer picture about Islam, who had only read in the media or hear the views from the perspective of their community only. This study aims to explore the knowledge of Malay language students in Islamic through linguistic experience. The method used is to distribute reading material in the Malay language that contains words and terms related to Islam, as a part of reading activity (ISP Nation & Stuart Webb, 2011). Few activities are carried out to test the students' awareness about the Islamic relate words contained in the materials they read. This pilot study is a starter for a larger research scale on Malay as a foreign language and its contribution in understanding Islam among learner.