

Malay-Indonesian Islamization Perspective of Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas: Language Transformation and Formation of the Islamic Malay Wordview

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Abstract:

This study aims to analyze the method of Islamization of Malay-Nusantara from the perspective of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas by examining the role of language transformation in changing the worldview of Malay society and its implications for the formation of Malay-Islamic culture. Using a qualitative approach based on library research, this study uses al-Attas's primary works as the main source and analyzes the data through content analysis techniques with three stages: data reduction, theme categorization, and conceptual interpretation. Data validity is guaranteed through source triangulation and cross-reading. The results of the study indicate that Islamization according to al-Attas is a process of epistemological transformation that does not merely change religious identity, but changes the structure of human consciousness through four sequential stages: (1) language transformation through the absorption of Arabic-Islamic terms and changes in conceptual meaning, (2) conceptual transformation that changes the understanding of God, humans, knowledge, and life, (3) the formation of an Islamic worldview based on monotheism, and (4) the birth of Malay-Islamic culture reflected in language, Jawi script, literature, education, and value systems. These findings contribute to a broader understanding of the Islamization of the archipelago by placing epistemological and linguistic dimensions at the heart of the civilizational process, differing from conventional Islamization theories that center on trade or political power. Practically, these findings are relevant for the development of Islamic education based on a monotheistic worldview in contemporary Indonesia.

Keywords: Islamization, Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, language transformation, Malay-Islamic culture

Abstrak:

Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis metode Islamisasi Melayu-Nusantara dalam perspektif Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas dengan menelaah peran transformasi bahasa dalam perubahan pandangan hidup (worldview) masyarakat Melayu serta implikasinya terhadap pembentukan kebudayaan Melayu-Islam. Menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif berbasis studi kepustakaan (library research), penelitian ini menggunakan karya-karya primer al-Attas sebagai sumber utama dan menganalisis data melalui teknik content analysis dengan tiga tahapan: reduksi data, kategorisasi tema, dan interpretasi konseptual. Keabsahan data dijamin melalui triangulasi sumber dan pembacaan silang (cross-reading). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Islamisasi menurut al-Attas merupakan proses transformasi epistemologis yang tidak sekadar

mengubah identitas keagamaan, melainkan mengubah struktur kesadaran manusia melalui empat tahapan berurutan: (1) transformasi bahasa melalui penyerapan istilah Arab-Islam dan perubahan makna konseptual, (2) transformasi konsep yang mengubah pemahaman tentang Tuhan, manusia, ilmu, dan kehidupan, (3) pembentukan worldview Islam yang berlandaskan tauhid, dan (4) lahirnya kebudayaan Melayu-Islam yang tercermin dalam bahasa, aksara Jawi, sastra, pendidikan, dan sistem nilai. Temuan ini berkontribusi pada perluasan pemahaman tentang Islamisasi Nusantara dengan menempatkan dimensi epistemologis dan linguistik sebagai inti proses peradaban, berbeda dari teori Islamisasi konvensional yang berpusat pada perdagangan atau kekuasaan politik. Secara praktis, temuan ini relevan untuk pengembangan pendidikan Islam berbasis worldview tauhid di Indonesia kontemporer.

Keywords: Islamisasi, Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, transformasi bahasa, kebudayaan Melayu-Islam.

INTRODUCTION

The spread of Islam in the Malay-Nusantara region is estimated to have occurred from the 7th to 8th centuries AD through maritime trade networks connecting the Middle East, South Asia, and Southeast Asia. The strategic position of the Strait of Malacca as an international trade route made the Malay-Nusantara region a space for intensive interaction between Muslim traders, religious scholars, and local communities. Various historical sources, including Chinese records from the Tang Dynasty, indicate the existence of Muslim communities in the Sumatra region and diplomatic relations between the Nusantara kingdoms and the Islamic world. These conditions paved the way for the gradual development of Islamic influence in the lives of Malay-Nusantara communities (Djaya, Bima, Iqbal, Ibnu, & Gontor, 2026). The process of Islamization in the Malay Archipelago is a significant event in the history of Southeast Asian civilization. Islamization not only transformed the belief systems of the people but also influenced the perspectives, value systems, social structures, intellectual traditions, and cultural expressions of the Malay people. Therefore, studying the methods of Islamization is crucial for understanding how Islam was able to take root and shape a Malay cultural identity that persists to the present day (Al-Attas, 1990).

Various theories have been put forward to explain the process of Islamization in the Malay-Nusantara region. A.H. Johns asserts that Sufis played a central role in the spread of Islam since the 13th century through a *da'wah* approach that emphasized spiritual and moral dimensions. Through Sufism, Islam was introduced peacefully and adaptively, making it more easily accepted by local communities (Boenga, 2020). Similarly, Azyumardi Azra explains that the success of Islamization was also supported by a strategy of *adhesion*, namely the gradual acceptance of Islam without demanding that people immediately abandon all previously developed traditions and cultural practices. Both views indicate that Islamization took place through an accommodating approach to the social and cultural conditions of the Malay-Nusantara community (Boenga, 2020). However, these theories generally emphasize the historical, social and cultural aspects of the spread of Islam. These studies do not fully explain how Islam changed the structure of thought, language and way of life of the Malay people, thereby giving birth to a new civilization with an Islamic style. It is in this context that Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas's thoughts offer a different and more fundamental perspective regarding Islamization (Al-Attas, 2018).

According to Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, Islamization is not merely a process of religious conversion or the geographical spread of Islamic teachings, but rather a transformation of worldview *that* changes the way humans understand reality, knowledge, and life. This transformation occurs through conceptual changes reflected in the language, thought, and culture of society. For al-Attas, the Malay language is the primary instrument in the Islamization process because it is through language that various basic Islamic concepts are introduced, translated, and internalized into the lives of the people. Therefore, Islamization in the Malay-Nusantara not only resulted in religious change, but also gave birth to a unique Malay-Islamic intellectual and cultural tradition (Al-Attas, 1990) .

Al-Attas's thoughts on the Islamization of the Malay-Indonesian Archipelago are systematically explained in several of his works, particularly *his Preliminary Statement on a General Theory of the Islamization of the Malay-Indonesian Archipelago* (Al-Attas, 2018) and *Islam in Malay History and Culture* (Al-Attas, 1990) . In these works, al-Attas explains that linguistic transformation is a fundamental step in Islamization because language functions as a medium for shaping concepts, values, and outlooks on life in society. Through this process, Malay culture underwent fundamental changes that later shaped the identity of Malay-Islamic civilization.

Although al-Attas's thought has become an important reference in the study of Islamization, several gaps remain in previous research. First, most research on the Islamization of the Indonesian Archipelago focuses more on the theory of the arrival of Islam, the routes of its spread, and the role of traders, scholars, and Sufis in the da'wah process (Nasution, 2020; Nujula, 2025; Seprina, 2024) . Second, studies on al-Attas's thought still focus more on aspects of the philosophy of education, the Islamization of knowledge, and the concept of ta'dib rather than the specific method of Islamization of the Malay-Indonesian Archipelago (Kamalia, 2025; Masrufah, Sholihah, & Rahman, 2025; Rachmadiani & Haryanto, 2025; Rahmania & Bakar, 2023) . Third, the transformation of the Malay language as the primary instrument of Islamization and its relationship to the formation of Malay-Islamic culture has yet to be studied in depth and integratively.

Based on this gap, the novelty of this article lies in the analysis of the Islamization method of Malay-Nusantara from the perspective of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, by positioning language transformation as the primary instrument for changing the community's outlook on life and the formation of Malay-Islamic culture. This article attempts to demonstrate that Islamization, according to al-Attas, is a process of epistemological transformation that not only changes community beliefs but also shapes Malay cultural identity as a whole.

Conceptually, this research is based on three interrelated theoretical frameworks. First, al-Attas's Islamic *worldview theory* (ru'yat al-Islam li al-wujud), which places monotheism as a central epistem. Second, the theory of the relationship between language and thought, which asserts that language is not merely a means of communication but a medium for shaping reality. Third, the concept of civilization formation, which views Islamization as a long-term cultural

process involving the transformation of language, thought, and collective identity. These three frameworks serve as analytical lenses to examine al-Attas's Islamization method more deeply and systematically. Based on this background, this research aims to analyze the Malay-Indonesian Islamization method from the perspective of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas by examining the role of language transformation in changing the Malay community's worldview and its implications for the formation of Malay-Islamic culture.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research is a qualitative study with a library research approach. Library research is used to examine, review, and interpret various written sources relevant to the research focus (Zed, 2008). The approach used is a philosophical-conceptual approach to analyze the idea of the Malay-Nusantara Islamization method from the perspective of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, especially those related to language transformation and the formation of Malay culture.

The primary data sources of this research come from the main works of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, namely *Preliminary Statement on a General Theory of the Islamization of the Malay-Indonesian Archipelago* (Al-Attas, 2018), *Islam in Malay History and Culture* (Al-Attas, 1990), *The Mysticism of Hamzah Fansuri* (Al-Attas, 1966), *Islam and Secularism* (Al-Attas, 1978), *The Concept of Education in Islam* (Al-Attas, 1999), and *Prolegomena to the Metaphysics of Islam* (Al-Attas, 1995). The selection of these works was based on their relevance in explaining the concepts of Islamization, language transformation, changes in worldview, and the formation of Malay-Islamic culture. Meanwhile, secondary data sources were obtained from books, scientific journal articles, proceedings, and previous research results that discuss al-Attas's thoughts and studies of Islamization in the Malay-Nusantara region.

Data collection techniques were carried out through documentation studies by means of critical reading, recording, coding, and grouping data based on research themes (Sugiyono, 2020). The collected data were then analyzed using *content analysis techniques*, which is an analytical technique used to systematically identify, classify, and interpret the meaning contained in texts or documents (Krippendorff, 2018). The analysis was carried out in three stages, namely data reduction, theme categorization, and conceptual interpretation (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). At this stage, the data were classified into several main categories, such as the concept of Islamization, the transformation of the Malay language, changes in the outlook on life, and the formation of Malay-Islamic culture. Next, these categories were analyzed to find patterns, conceptual relationships, and characteristics of the Islamization method according to al-Attas.

Data validity was achieved through triangulation of literature sources by comparing various works by al-Attas and studies by scholars who have studied his thought. Furthermore, data interpretation was also tested through cross-reading *between* primary and secondary sources to obtain a more comprehensive and consistent understanding of the method of Islamization of the Malay-Nusantara from al-Attas' perspective (Creswell & Poth, 2016).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Concept of Islamization from the Perspective of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas

Before discussing Islamization methods more specifically, it is important to understand the conceptual framework of Islamization in the thought of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas. According to al-Attas, Islamization cannot be understood simply as a process of religious conversion or formal conversion to Islam, but rather as a comprehensive civilizational transformation. In the book *Islam in Malay History and Culture*, al-Attas explains that Islamization is the process of liberating humans from elements of magical, mythological, animistic thought, as well as various cultural traditions that conflict with Islamic teachings, then replacing them with an Islamic worldview based on the principle of monotheism (Al-Attas, 1990). The concept of liberation in al-Attas's thought is not intended to eliminate all elements of local culture, but rather a process of purifying and restructuring humanity's perspective on reality based on Islamic values. Through this process, humanity is freed from errors in understanding the nature of God, humanity, the universe, science, and the purpose of life. Thus, Islamization is a process of fundamental change that touches on intellectual, spiritual, and cultural dimensions simultaneously (Al-Attas, 1978).

Al-Attas distinguishes between the Islamization that occurred during the early period of Islam's arrival in the Malay Archipelago and Islamization in the modern era. The first stage of Islamization occurred when Malay society underwent a transformation from the influence of Hindu-Buddhist traditions to Islamic civilization. In the modern era, the challenge of Islamization has shifted to an effort to liberate Muslims from the dominance of secular thought and Western worldviews that developed through the process of *westernization*. Therefore, according to al-Attas, Islamization is not only relevant in the historical context of the spread of Islam, but also becomes an ongoing intellectual project to maintain the purity of the Islamic worldview from various influences that conflict with the values of monotheism (Al-Attas, 1978, 1990). The central concept underlying Islamization is the Islamic *worldview*, a way of life that places God as the Absolute Reality and the source of all truth. Within this framework, humans are understood as rational beings with a moral responsibility as servants and caliphs of God on earth. Islamization refers to the process of instilling the Islamic worldview into the consciousness of individuals and society, thereby shaping ways of thinking, value systems, and lifestyles consistent with Islamic teachings (Al-Attas, 1995).

In al-Attas's view, the process of instilling an Islamic *worldview* is inseparable from linguistic transformation. Language is not merely a means of communication, but rather the primary medium for the formation of concepts, meaning, and knowledge. Therefore, Islamization in the Malay-Nusantara archipelago took place through the introduction and internalization of Islamic concepts into the Malay language. The introduction of key terms such as *iman* (faith), *ilmu* (knowledge), *adab* (adab), *hikmah* (wisdom), *shari'a* (law), *hakikat* (truth), and *akhirat* (afterlife) not only enriched the Malay vocabulary but also transformed the structure of societal thought. Through this linguistic transformation, the Islamic *worldview* gradually became embedded in societal life

and became the foundation for the formation of a distinctive Malay-Islamic culture (Al-Attas, 1978, 1999) .

Transformation of Malay as a Method of Islamization

According to Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, the process of Islamization in the Malay-Nusantara archipelago did not occur primarily through political power or formal religious conversion, but rather through linguistic transformation that gradually changed the structure of society's thought. In al-Attas's view, language is not merely a means of communication, but a medium for the formation of concepts, meanings, and worldviews. Therefore, linguistic change is a fundamental step in the process of Islamization because it is through language that people understand reality, knowledge, and life values. In the Malay-Nusantara context, the Islamization of language is the primary instrument enabling the entry of Islamic concepts into the consciousness of Malay society (Kiromil & Auni, 2020)

Al-Attas explains that before the arrival of Islam, the Malay language was heavily influenced by vocabulary and concepts derived from Hindu-Buddhist traditions. The arrival of Islam brought about significant changes through the introduction of Arabic terms containing theological, philosophical, and intellectual meanings previously unknown in Malay tradition. Terms such as iman (faith), Islam (Islam), tauhid (tawhid), ilmu (science), hikmah (wisdom), adab (adab), shari'a (law), hakikat (the hereafter), and adil (justice) then became integral parts of the Malay language and formed a new system of meaning based on Islamic teachings. According to al-Attas, these changes not only enriched the Malay vocabulary but also transformed the way society understood God, humanity, nature, and the purpose of life (Kiromil & Auni, 2020) .

Within this framework, the Islamization of language occurs through two main forms. First, the direct adoption of Arabic vocabulary into Malay (laf ẓ ī), namely the absorption of Islamic terms while maintaining their basic form and meaning. Second, the transformation of meaning (ma'nawī), namely the use of local terms that are then given Islamic conceptual content, resulting in new understandings consistent with the Islamic outlook. Through these two processes, Malay developed into a language of knowledge, a language of da'wah, and a language of civilization capable of expressing Islamic metaphysical, ethical, and epistemological concepts more systematically (Kiromil & Auni, 2020) .

Furthermore, al-Attas emphasized that language transformation is a means of shaping an Islamic worldview. Islamized language not only serves as a means of conveying religious messages but also as a medium for internalizing the values of monotheism in society. Through language, Islamic concepts are embedded in people's ways of thinking, thus forming a new structure of collective consciousness. Therefore, the success of the Islamization of Malay-Nusantara cannot be separated from Islam's success in transforming Malay into a language capable of representing the Islamic worldview (Musa, Rodi, Pondo, & Muhammad, 2013) .

This linguistic transformation ultimately gave birth to a Malay-Islamic intellectual tradition marked by the development of religious works, philosophy, Sufism, law, and literature in Malay. Malay then functioned as the language of

Islamic knowledge and became the primary means of spreading Islamic teachings throughout the Indonesian archipelago. In al-Attas' perspective, the success of the Islamization of Malay-Nusantara was determined not only by the community's acceptance of Islam, but also by the success of the Malay language as a vehicle for the formation of concepts, knowledge, and culture based on Islamic values (Musa et al., 2013) .

An analysis of the works "Preliminary Statement on a General Theory of the Islamization of the Malay-Indonesian Archipelago" and "Islam in Malay History and Culture" shows that al-Attas places linguistic transformation as the most fundamental method of Islamization. This finding is evident in his emphasis on the process of absorbing Arabic-Islamic vocabulary into Malay, which not only changed the linguistic structure but also the way of thinking of Malay society.

The linguistic transformation referred to by al-Attas was not limited to the addition of Arabic vocabulary to Malay, but also encompassed changes in the conceptual structure underlying the community's understanding of reality. Before the arrival of Islam, many Malay concepts of life were influenced by animist and Hindu-Buddhist elements, which placed supernatural powers, gods, and specific cosmological systems as the center of life's orientation. After the arrival of Islam, these concepts were gradually replaced by the concept of tawhid, which affirms the oneness of God as the source of all reality. Thus, terms such as Allah, iman, ilmu, adab, shari'a, and hakikat not only functioned as new vocabulary but also brought new frameworks of thought that transformed the way society understood life.

An analysis of al-Attas's works shows that the Islamization of language was a highly effective strategy because linguistic change was more profound than political change. Political power may shift quickly, but linguistic change will influence the mindset of the people across generations. Therefore, language became a primary instrument in shaping religious awareness and cultural identity in Malay society.

Table 1. Conceptual Transformation of Malay Language According to Al-Attas

Pre-Islamic Traditions	Islamic Concept
The Gods	Almighty God
Mythological cosmology	Monotheism
Supernatural powers	Knowledge
Magical ritual	Worship
social caste	Human equality
Cosmic fate	Qada and Qadar
Honor of descendants	Manners and Piety

Source: Adapted from (Al-Attas, 1990; Kiromil & Auni, 2020)

The table shows that the Islamization of language did not simply introduce new terms, but also transformed the way Malay society understood the relationship between humans and God, nature, and other humans.

Islamization of Concepts and Changes in the Worldview of Malay Society

According to Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, the process of Islamization of Malay-Nusantara did not stop with the introduction of Arabic terms into the Malay language, but continued with conceptual changes that shaped the community's worldview. In al-Attas's perspective, language and concepts are

closely related because every concept accepted by a community will influence how they understand reality. Therefore, Islamization is essentially a process of conceptual transformation that changes the community's outlook on life from a framework of thought influenced by animist, Hindu-Buddhist, and mythological traditions to a worldview based on monotheism (Haidary, Faruqi, MF, & Maafi, 2024).

The central concept in al-Attas's thought is the Islamic worldview (*ru'yat al-Islam li al-wujud*), a worldview that positions God as the Absolute Reality, the source of truth, and the center of all existence. Within this framework, humans are no longer understood as part of the cosmic cycle as in the Hindu-Buddhist tradition, but as servants and vicegerents of God with moral and intellectual responsibilities in the world. This shift in the concept of God and humanity became the primary foundation for the formation of Malayo-Islamic civilization (Haidary et al., 2024). Islamization also brought fundamental changes to the concept of knowledge. Before the arrival of Islam, knowledge was often associated with magical, mythological, and speculative elements. Islam then introduced the concept of knowledge as something derived from revelation and reason, working harmoniously. According to al-Attas, knowledge is not value-free but must be directed toward understanding the essence of God, humanity, and nature, in accordance with the Islamic worldview. Therefore, Islamization not only changed the content of knowledge but also the way knowledge is acquired, understood, and used in society (Haidary et al., 2024).

This shift in worldview is also evident in the concept of *adab*, one of al-Attas's key ideas. *Adab* is not simply understood as politeness, but rather as recognizing and acknowledging the proper position of something according to the hierarchy established by God. Through the concept of *adab*, Malay society gained an ethical framework that governs human relationships with God, fellow humans, nature, and science. Thus, Islamization not only resulted in changes in religious beliefs but also shaped the values and social behavior that became the foundation of Malay-Islamic culture (Setiawan, Nur Rifa Da'i, Fuad, & Alwi Zaim, 2025). Furthermore, al-Attas emphasized that the success of Islamization in the Malay-Nusantara archipelago was marked by the formation of a new collective consciousness based on monotheism. This consciousness was reflected in the emergence of Malay-Islamic intellectual works, the development of educational traditions, the use of Jawi script, and the emergence of a value system that placed religion as the foundation of community life. In other words, linguistic transformation resulted in conceptual transformation, conceptual transformation gave rise to worldview changes, and worldview changes then shaped Malay-Islamic culture as the new identity of Malay society (Razzaq, 2018).

In addition to transforming the concepts of God, humanity, and knowledge, Islamization also gave rise to a new understanding of truth and happiness (*sa'adah*). In al-Attas's view, truth is not determined solely by empirical experience, but stems from revelation understood through sound reason. Likewise, happiness is not defined as material achievement, but rather as a state of mind that finds tranquility through knowing God. These conceptual changes

demonstrate that Islamization is essentially an epistemological transformation that alters the standards of knowledge and life orientation of Malay society.

Based on an analysis of al-Attas's thought, this study finds that language transformation served as a means of shaping an Islamic worldview. Language served as a medium connecting Malay society with fundamental Islamic concepts such as monotheism, knowledge, adab, and justice, thus transforming their perspectives on God, humanity, and the universe. These findings suggest that worldview change was the primary goal of Islamization, while language transformation was the instrument that enabled this change.

Formation of Malay-Islamic Culture as a Result of Islamization

According to Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, Islamization in the Malay-Nusantara region not only resulted in changes in the religious aspect, but also gave birth to a new civilization and culture based on Islamic values. Malay-Islamic culture is the result of a process of transformation of worldview that takes place through language, education, intellectual traditions, and the internalization of Islamic concepts into people's lives. Therefore, Islamization must be understood as a process of civilization formation that changes the thought structure, value system and identity of Malay society as a whole (Al-Attas, 1990; Razzaq, 2018). Al-Attas explains that the arrival of Islam brought fundamental changes to the Malay worldview, which was previously influenced by animism, Hinduism, and Buddhism. Islam introduced the concept of monotheism as the principle of life, which later became the basis for building social, educational, political, and cultural systems. This change gave birth to a new identity known as Malay-Islam, a cultural identity shaped by the acceptance of the Islamic worldview (Al-Attas, 1990; Mulyadi, 2019).

One important manifestation of the Islamization process was the development of Malay as a language of knowledge and civilization. After undergoing the process of Islamization, Malay no longer functioned solely as a means of communication, but also became a medium for the dissemination of knowledge, da'wah, law, Sufism, and Islamic literature. The use of the Jawi script further strengthened Malay's position as a means of transmitting Islamic knowledge throughout the Indonesian archipelago. Through this language and writing, various religious and intellectual works became accessible to the wider community, thus accelerating the formation of a Malay-Islamic intellectual tradition (Musa et al., 2013). The use of the Jawi script was crucial in the Islamization of the Malay-Nusantara archipelago because it served as a means of transmitting Islamic knowledge. Through the Jawi script, various religious, legal, Sufi, and literary works could be written and disseminated to the Malay community. The development of the Jawi script demonstrates that Islamization not only influenced religious aspects but also shaped the literary and intellectual traditions that became the foundation of Malay-Islamic civilization.

Cultural transformation can also be seen in the development of Malay literature. Islam gave birth to various literary works containing the values of monotheism, morals and Sufism, such as saga, poetry and religious books written in Malay. Figures such as Hamzah Fansuri, Nuruddin al-Raniri, and Abdurrauf

al-Singkili played an important role in building an intellectual tradition that connected Islamic thought with Malay culture. Their works show that Islamization does not erase local identity, but rather directs it within the framework of an Islamic worldview (Razzaq, 2018) .

In education, Islamization gave birth to traditional educational institutions such as surau (Islamic prayer houses), dayah (Islamic boarding schools), and pesantren (Islamic boarding schools), which served as centers for the transmission of Islamic knowledge. These institutions not only taught aspects of religious ritual but also shaped the community's morals, ethics, and outlook on life. From al-Attas' perspective, the development of morals is the primary goal of Islamic education, as through morals, a person is able to place everything according to its proper place in the order of life (Al-Attas, 1995) . This study found that the formation of Malay-Islamic culture was the end result of an Islamization process that took place through linguistic transformation and worldview changes. From al-Attas' perspective, Malay-Islamic identity was not born through political domination, but through the internalization of Islamic concepts that then manifested in language, education, literature, Jawi script, and the Malay community's value system.

Based on an analysis of the works of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, this study finds that the Islamization of the Malay-Nusantara archipelago did not occur through a formal conversion approach or political domination alone, but rather through a process of linguistic transformation that resulted in conceptual changes and a shift in the worldview of Malay society. This change in worldview then gave birth to a Malay-Islamic culture reflected in language, education, literature, intellectual traditions, and the community's value system. Thus, linguistic transformation is the primary foundation of the Islamization of the Malay-Nusantara archipelago from al-Attas' perspective.

Unlike Islamization theories that emphasize the role of trade, migration, or the missionary activities of Sufis, al-Attas places the transformation of language and concepts at the heart of the Islamization process. This perspective broadens the understanding of Islamization by demonstrating that the success of Islam's spread is determined not only by formal acceptance of the religion but also by changes in the structure of societal thought. Thus, Islamization, from al-Attas' perspective, can be understood as a process of epistemological transformation that gives birth to a new civilization, not simply a change in religious identity.

Synthesis of Malay-Indonesian Islamization Methods from the Perspective of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas

Based on an analysis of the works of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, this research found that the Malay-Indonesian Islamization method took place through four interrelated stages. The first stage is language transformation through the absorption of Arabic-Islamic terms and changes in conceptual meaning in Malay. The second stage is a conceptual transformation that changes people's understanding of God, humans, science and life. The third stage is the formation of an Islamic worldview based on monotheism as the center of life orientation. The fourth stage is the birth of Malay-Islamic culture which is reflected in language, literature, education, Jawi writing, intellectual traditions and the value system of

Malay society. These findings demonstrate that, according to al-Attas, Islamization was not merely a process of formal conversion or political domination, but rather a process of civilizational transformation that occurred through changes in human consciousness. Thus, linguistic transformation can be seen as the primary foundation of the Islamization of the Malay-Nusantara archipelago, as it served as a means of introducing Islamic concepts that subsequently shaped the Malay-Islamic worldview and culture.

These findings also demonstrate that Islamization, from al-Attas' perspective, differs from historical approaches that emphasize trade, migration, or political power as the primary factors in the spread of Islam. Al-Attas places the transformation of human consciousness at the heart of Islamization. Therefore, the success of Islamization is measured not only by the formal acceptance of Islam, but also by Islam's success in shaping the mindset, value systems, and culture of the Malay people. The findings of this study have significant relevance for the development of Islamic education in Indonesia. First, al-Attas's Islamization approach based on language and worldview transformation can serve as a framework for developing an Islamic religious education curriculum that is oriented not only toward the transfer of normative knowledge but also toward the formation of an Islamic way of thinking and outlook on life. Second, al-Attas's concept of *adab* as an educational goal is relevant for addressing the character crisis in contemporary Islamic education. Third, al-Attas's success in demonstrating how language serves as an instrument of civilizational change inspires the development of more substantive and transformative Islamic literacy in the contemporary Indonesian context.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that the Islamization of the Malay-Nusantara archipelago in al-Attas' perspective is a process of epistemological transformation that occurs through four sequential and interrelated stages: language transformation, conceptual transformation, the formation of an Islamic worldview, and the birth of Malay-Islamic culture. Malay is not merely a means of communication, but a medium that actively shapes the way humans understand God, themselves, and the world. Through the absorption of Islamic concepts into the linguistic structure and thought of Malay society, Islam succeeded in instilling a monotheistic outlook on life that then gave birth to a distinctive Malay-Islamic civilization. Compared to other Islamization theories that emphasize trade, migration, and political power, al-Attas' perspective offers a deeper analytical dimension by placing the transformation of human consciousness as the core of civilization. However, it must be acknowledged that al-Attas' framework requires further dialogue with the reality of the plurality of languages and cultures of the Nusantara archipelago that is more complex than just the domain of Malay. The findings of this study open up several future research agendas that need to be worked on: (1) a comparative study of the role of other local languages (Javanese, Bugis, Sundanese) in the process of Islamization of the Nusantara archipelago from an equal perspective; (2) empirical research on how the Islamic worldview formed through language transformation survives and changes in the context of globalization; and (3) an applied study on the implementation of the Islamization

approach based on al-Attas' worldview in the development of contemporary Indonesian Islamic education curriculum.

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