

The Role of Education in the Development of Jawi in Brunei Darussalam

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Abstract

This literary research aims to discuss the role of education in the history and development of the usage of the Jawi script in Brunei. This discussion is divided into six phases. First is the use of Jawi in education after the arrival of Islam. Second is Jawi usage during the early development of education between 1914 and 1941. The third phase is during the Japanese occupation era from 1942 until 1945. The fourth phase is in the pre-independence period between 1943 and 1983. The fifth phase is in the Bilingual Education policy from 1984 until 2007, and finally, during the National Education System for the 21st Century Policy, from 2008 until today. The researcher discovered that the role and importance of Jawi in the field of education remain relevant, especially in preserving it as the heritage and identity of the Malay race.

Keywords: Jawi, education, Brunei, heritage, identity

Introduction

The Jawi script is one of the systems for writing the Malay language using Arabic letters. The appearance of Jawi as a Malay writing system started with the arrival of Islam to the Malay Archipelago around the 14th century. With the arrival of Islam, the usage of Jawi spread widely, and it became the writing system of the Malay Muslim monarchy, missionary work, commerce, and the daily activities of the Malay people. Jawi was a part of life for the Malay people at the time. However, the role and usage of Jawi have been declining over time. Today, the Roman script replaces Jawi as the Malay people's daily writing system, so Jawi is longer the *lingua franca* writing system of the Malay Archipelago as it was in the past.

Despite many countries moving towards the Roman script as their official writing system today, we can observe continuous efforts to preserve Jawi through education in Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, and several other countries with a Malay population.¹ Education is the best incubator to educate people on Jawi. Since the introduction of Jawi, the writing system has continued to grow through education.

We cannot deny the existence and significance of Jawi. The publication and use of Jawi profoundly impact the spread of Islam and the development of the Malay language in the Malay world. Initially, writing activities using Jawi began within the palace before spreading to mosques, houses, or huts. The culture of reading books and stories also encouraged *ulama* (scholars) to produce more written works. For example, in the 10th century, Sultan Iskandar Muda in Aceh encouraged the tradition of reciting *hikayat* at night by scholars in addition to teaching religion. This tradition is recorded in a historical work entitled *Kisah Pelayaran ke Riau* (the Story of the Voyage to Riau) from the 19th century, which depicts the people of Riau's love for reading and listening to the history and the stories of kings. This historical work is religious and literary and aims to facilitate efforts to understand Islam among the Malay community.²

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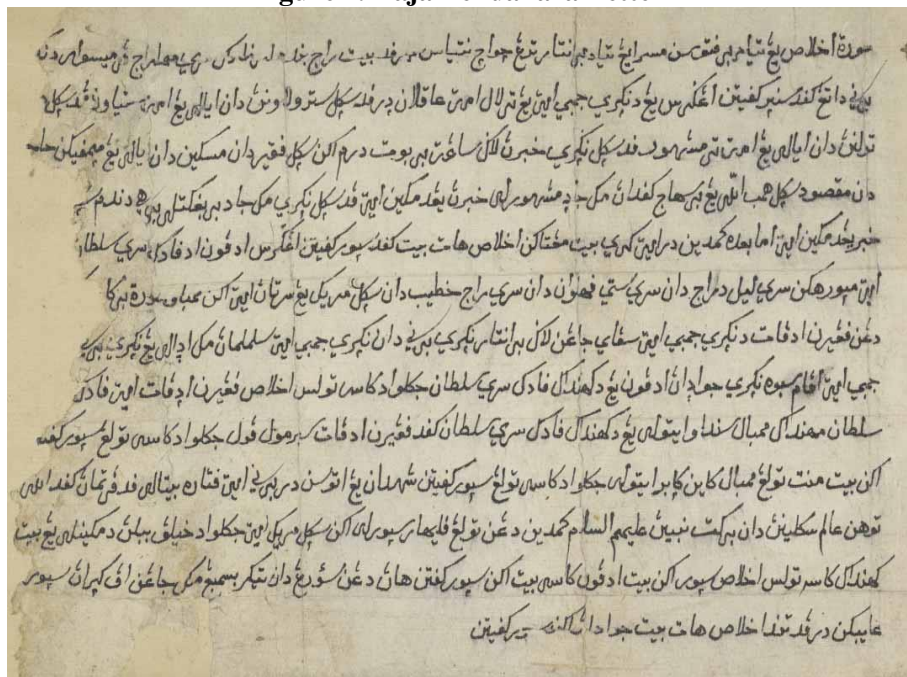
¹ Rasyidah Ibrahim et al. (2019), "Pemeriksaan Tulisan Jawi Dahulu dan Kini," *International Journal of Civilizational Studies and Human Sciences*, Vol. 2, No. 1, pp. 29–37; Teuku Zulkhairi (2019), "Pembelajaran Kitab Arab-Melayu di Aceh Besar sebagai Proses Transfer Ilmu Agama Islam dan Upaya Menjaga Budaya," *Jurnal MUDARRISUNA*, Vol. 9, No. 2, pp. 374–397; Abdulrahman Yamasi (2019), "Hala tuju tulisan Jawi di Selatan Thailand: Kajian di Sekolah Menengah Agama Rakyat," Tesis kedoktoran, Universiti Sains Malaysia, pp. 94–98; M. Husnan Lubis and Mardiah Mawar Kembaren (2018), "Tulisan Jawi: Jambatan Masa ke Masa Silam dan Usaha Pelestariannya," *Jurnal Antarabangsa Persuratan Melayu (RUMPUN)*, Vol. 6, pp. 61–73; Naquiah Nahar and Jimaain Safar (2016), "Pengajaran Jawi Berkesan dalam Usaha Memartabatkan Warisan Budaya Bangsa," Paper presented at the International Conference on Education Towards Global Peace, 30 November–1 December 2016, pp. 1–10; Hirman Mohamed Khamis et al. (2016), "Tahap Kemahiran Tulisan Jawi dalam Kalangan Pelajar Sekolah di Singapura," *MAHAWANGSA* Vol. 3, No. 2, pp. 261–279; Anthony D. Medrano (2007), "Islamic Education in Southern Thailand," *Islam in Southeast Asia* Vol. 7, No. 2, pp. 57–60.

² Arba'iyah Mohd Noor (2011), "Perkembangan pensejarahan Islam di Alam Melayu," *Jurnal Al-Tamaddun*, Vol. 6, pp. 29–50.

The arrival of Islam to Brunei in the 14th century had nurtured an Islamic kingdom. In Brunei, the earliest king of Brunei to convert to Islam was Awang Alak Betatar. After converting to Islam, he was known as Sultan Muhammad Shah (1363–1402 AD). His conversion marked the establishment of the Islamic government in Brunei. The Sultan of Brunei who started the spread of Islam in the sultanate was Sultan Sharif Ali, the third sultan of Brunei (1485 to 1524 AD). He, an Arab scholar from Ta'if, married the daughter of Sultan Ahmad. Sultan Sharif Ali succeeded Sultan Ahmad due to his contribution to spreading Islam in Brunei. During his reign, mosques were constructed, and there was a rapid increase in the number of Islam converts in the country. He also spread the message of Islam outside Brunei. Subsequently, during the reign of the fifth sultan of Brunei, Sultan Bolkiaah (1485–1524 AD), Islam spread to the entire island of Borneo and islands in the Philippines such as Palawan, Suluk, Balabak, Balambangan, Bangi, Mantani, and Seludung. Brunei then became one of the centers of Islam in the Malay region.³

With the establishment of the Islamic government, official documents such as letters (Figure 1), manuscripts, legislation, and administrative matters published in Jawi script. These official documents were produced by the palace writers, Bruneis' *ulama* (religious scholars). For example, Dato Imam Yaakub bin Imam Al-Faqih Abd Rahman who is from Sulawesi. He was appointed *Qadi* in Brunei and also a notable writer of the palace during the reign of Sultan Nasaruddin (1670–1710). Dato Imam Yaakub was also one of the writers of the *Silsilah Raja-Raja Brunei* (genealogy of the rulers of Brunei) during the reign of Sultan Muhammad Aliuddin (1730–1737). Then the *Silsilah Raja-Raja Brunei* was continued by the Sultans of Brunei after him. In addition, he also wrote *Adat Dagang*, *Adat Campur Raja*, and the book *Risalat al-Marhum fi Adat Al-Marhum* in 1737 related to customs in Brunei. Apart from him, Khatib Hj Abd Latif bin Hj Muhammad Taha was also appointed by Sultan Muhammad Tajuddin to complete the *Silsilah Raja-Raja Brunei* in 1807, the same year the *Silsilah Raja-Raja Brunei* was carved on the *Batu Tersilah*⁴ (Figure 2). *Silsilah Raja-Raja Brunei* tells the story of the reign of the sultans of Brunei and also, to some extent, describes the development of Islam in Brunei.⁵

Figure 1. Raja Bendahara Letter⁶



³ Awang Mohd Jamil Al-Sufri bin Begawan Pehin Udana Khatib Dato Seri Paduka Awang Hj Umar. (1989, Jun 1-5). The Coming and Spread of Islam in Brunei Darussalam [Kertas kerja dibentangkan]. International Seminar of Islamic Civilization in the Malay world, Bandar Seri Begawan.

⁴ Abd Karim Abd Rahman. (2001, Ogos 23). Islam dan tulisan Jawi: Sejarah dan hubungannya dengan perkembangan ilmu di Brunei [Kertas kerja dibentangkan]. Seminar Bahan Rujukan Islam Nusantara 2001, Jabatan Mufti Kerajaan, Negara Brunei Darussalam, pp. 9.

⁵ A. T. Gallop (2019), "Silsilah Raja-Raja Brunei: The Manuscript of Pengiran Kesuma Muhammad Hasyim," *Archipel*, Vol. 97, pp. 173-212.

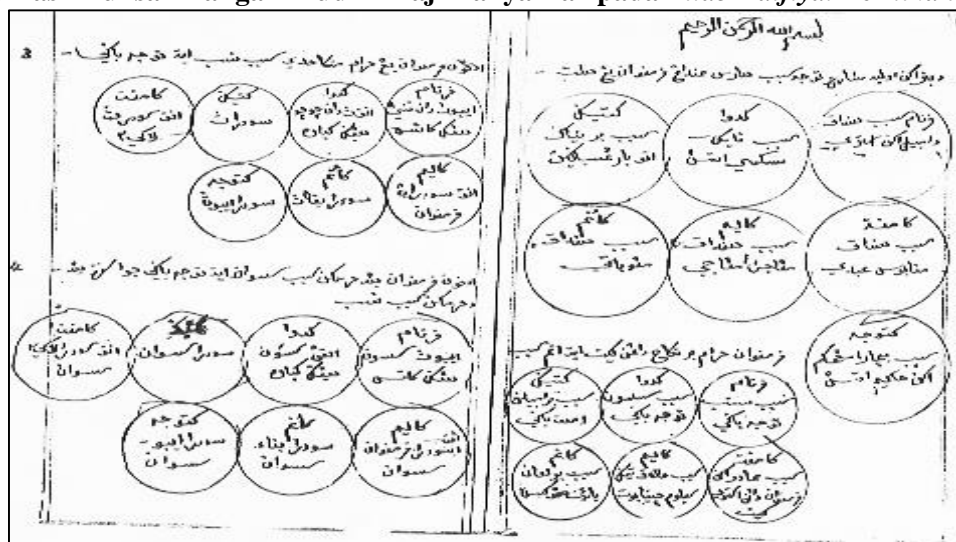
⁶ The letter of Raja Bendahara also shows the politeness of language with Islamic characteristics through the use of the word *hamba Allah* (servant of Allah) in the letter. Even in this letter can be seen clearly the way the letter د is written with three dots which shows the way of writing there is influence from Java. A. T. Gallop et. al. (2015), "A Jawi Sourcebook for the study of Malay Palaeography and Orthography," *Indonesia and the Malay World*, Vol. 43, No. 125, pp. 48-49.

Among the titles of these Islamic religious scholars are *Tuan Guru*, *Kiyai*, *Khatib*, and *Sunan*. They teach the local community religious knowledge such as the *fardu ain*, the pillars of Islam, the pillars of faith, the great days of Islam, and the skill of reading the Quran. Apart from mosques, these scholars also made their homes places of study or built worship halls near their homes known as *balai* to accommodate the number of religious students.⁷ These scholars produced religious and literary works. Among the Brunei scholars who are active in writing poetry is Pehin Siraja Khatib Abdul Razak bin Hassanuddin (1879–1939) from Kampung Burong Pingai Ayer. Among his poems are *Syair Yang Di-Pertuan (Melawat ke Labuan)*, *Syair Yang Di-Pertuan (ke Singapura)* written in 1922, and *Syair Ahmad Tajuddin (ditabalkan)*.⁸ In addition, Mudim Hj Yahya bin Sidek (1890–1942) from Kampung Saba Brunei has produced the book *Kaifiyat Bernikah-nikahan* which contains 29 sections on the law of marriage (example Figure 3). This book was written in Jawi script using Nasakh calligraphy in 1936.⁹ Thus, the passion and desire to write for the sake of *da'wah* and trust in carrying out their duties as palace writers have benefited the spread of Jawi writing in Brunei.

Figure 2. Batu Tersilah di Makam Diraja, Bandar Seri Begawan¹⁰



Figure 3. Hasil Tulisan Tangan Mudim Haji Yahya Daripada *Kitab Kaifiyat Bernikah-nikahan*¹¹



⁷ Simat Angas, Suhaili Hassan and Ismail Ibrahim (1992), *Tokoh-Tokoh Agama Di Brunei Darussalam: Pengenalan ringkas*, Brunei: Muzium Brunei, p. ix; Tassim Abu Bakar (2013), "Pendidikan dari Balai di Kampong Ayer ke Sekolah Moden di Darat, 1906 – 1941: Kajian Sejarah Pendidikan di Negara Brunei Darussalam," *SUSURGALUR: Jurnal Kajian Sejarah & Pendidikan Sejarah*, Vol. 1, No. 2, pp. 113-124.

⁸ Simat, Suhaili and Ismail (1992), *Tokoh-Tokoh Agama Di Brunei Darussalam*, pp. 17-18; Norhayati Abd Karim (2019), "Sumbangan karya ulama prolific Pehin Siraja Khatib Abdul Razak Bin Hasanuddin: Asas pengetahuan Islam bagi masyarakat Brunei," *Jurnal Penyelidikan Islam dan Kontemporari*, Vol. 2, No. 5, pp. 44-52.

⁹ Simat, Suhaili and Ismail (1992), *Tokoh-Tokoh Agama Di Brunei Darussalam*, p. 24.

¹⁰ Simat, Suhaili and Ismail (1992), *Tokoh-Tokoh Agama Di Brunei Darussalam*, p. vii.

¹¹ Simat, Suhaili and Ismail (1992), *Tokoh-Tokoh Agama Di Brunei Darussalam*, p. 24.

Jawi in Education After the Arrival of Islam

After the arrival of Islam in Brunei, teachers taught religious education informally at mosques, the palace, and private homes. The teachers were the *ulama* (scholars) who taught voluntarily. After the first sultan of Brunei embraced Islam, the religious education system was the same as that in Aceh, with no separation of religious and non-religious knowledge.¹² In 1906, during the British Residency era in Brunei, the *balai* (hall) system was practiced to impart Islamic education. The word *balai* carries the same meaning as *pondok* in Malaysia and *pesantren* in Jawa. The teaching method is *halaqah*, where the teachers impart Islamic knowledge using religious books and are surrounded by the students.¹³ Kampong Burung Pingai was the earliest to use the *balai* (hall) system, and other villages soon followed. Both the *ulama* (scholars) and students taught and studied voluntarily. However, this *balai* education was provided solely for male students and was limited to only the Kampong Ayer area. Despite the restricted access, this form of education was substantial because it produced many local *ulama* (scholars), *qadi* (magistrates), religious teachers, and marriage officiants.¹⁴

In terms of reading and writing Jawi, students at a basic level in the study of religion, such as *Zikir* (remembrance of) Brunei, *Ratib Saman*, Quran reading, *hadrah*, and *solah* (formal worship), were not required to master Jawi reading and writing skills. Teachers would give writing materials to students who could write Jawi so they could take notes and do revisions at home. On the other hand, students at higher levels had to master Jawi reading and writing skills because of the lessons on *fiqh* (jurisprudence), *faraid* (property division), *nikah* (marriage), *nahu* and *qawaid* (grammar), *tasawuf* and *akhlak* (morals) required deeper understanding.¹⁵ Jawi started to be taught in 1912, and the *khat* (calligraphy) writers at the time used wooden blade-shaped tools, from *bangkala* (a type of wood), bamboo, and *resam* or *batang saling kawang* (a type of fern) to write.¹⁶

Even today, there are no clear records of the method of teaching and learning of reading and writing Jawi used at the time. However, based on the depiction above, the *ulama* must master Jawi reading and writing skills. Students learn to read and write by themselves because, based on the description above, teachers gave students who knew how to read papers to write notes. Therefore, if students wanted to continue to higher levels, they had to master Jawi reading and writing skills independently. If the students desire to pursue further studies, the best motivator is to learn to read and write Jawi.

Jawi in Education 1914–1941

The first Malay school was established in Brunei's capital city, Bandar Seri Begawan, in 1914. Then, the following Malay schools were established in Kuala Belait in 1917, Tutong in 1918, and Bangar in 1926.¹⁷ Jawi education started to be taught in Malay schools in 1915, as a subject on its own, for 30–45 minutes a week. Malay was the language, and Jawi was the script of instruction in teaching discipline, punctuality, and personal hygiene.¹⁸ However, several sources state that during the early stages of the establishment of the Malay schools, its curriculum only included reading and writing in Roman and Jawi scripts.¹⁹ Some sources claim that the contents of Jawi lessons at the time were reading, writing, spelling, and writing composition. Writing skills using *Nasakh khat* (calligraphy) were also taught in school.²⁰

In 1918, the British Residency established Malay schools to provide basic education and teach discipline, punctuality, and hygiene. The Malay school curriculum was designed similarly to the school curriculum in Malaya and ended after completing Standard 5 or 6. They were not intended for higher education. Subjects taught included Composition, Numeracy, Natural Science, *Tawarikh* (history),

¹² Mahayuddin Yahaya (2017), *Teori Kedatangan Islam Dan Penyebaran Mazhab Shafi'e Dan Pelaksanaan Sistem Pendidikan Islam Di Negara Brunei Darussalam*, Brunei: UNISSA Press, p. 5.

¹³ Mahayuddin (2017), *Teori Kedatangan Islam*, p. 50.

¹⁴ Mohamad Yusop et al. (2014), *Evolusi dan Transformasi: Kecemerlangan 100 Tahun Pendidikan Negara Brunei Darussalam, 1914-2014*, Bandar Seri Begawan: Kementerian Pendidikan Negara Brunei Darussalam, pp. 9-10.

¹⁵ Mohamad Yusop et al. (2014), *Evolusi dan Transformasi*, pp. 7-8.

¹⁶ Sabtu Muhammad (2000), "Sejarah Perkembangan Jawi di Sekolah-Sekolah," in *Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, Bahasa Jiwa Bangsa Jilid 2*, Brunei Darussalam: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, p. 346.

¹⁷ Mohamad Yusop et al. (2014), *Evolusi dan Transformasi*, p. xxii.

¹⁸ Awang Mohd. Jamil Al-Sufri (2015), *Rampai Sejarah II: Melirik Sejarah Silam*, Brunei: Pusat Sejarah Brunei, p. 133.

¹⁹ Mohamad Yusop et al. (2014), *Evolusi dan Transformasi*, p. 17.

²⁰ Sabtu (2000), "Sejarah Perkembangan Jawi di Sekolah-Sekolah," p. 346.

Health Education, Weaving, Gardening, and Physical Education. Textbooks were also imported from Malaya.²¹ In 1928, students were taught Jawi Reading, Jawi *Rencana* (Composition), and Jawi Writing in the Malay schools.²²

Teacher shortage was an issue faced by the Malay schools. Brunei recruited Malay teachers from abroad to overcome this issue. At the beginning of 1918, locals trained at the Teacher Training College Malacca and the Sultan Idris Tanjong Malim College, Perak, Malaysia. After completing their training, they served as qualified teachers and taught the graduates of the Malay schools in Brunei.²³ In the 1930s, the graduates of Sultan Idris Tanjong Malim College taught Jawi *khat* (calligraphy) *Ruqah* writing, which they learned while studying at the college; these lessons were held every Saturday at the Pekan Brunei Malay school until after World War II.²⁴

In 1931, religious education was taught at the Bandar Brunei Malay school after Friday prayers. The religious education taught at that time was merely a supplemental subject and was not even included in the daily school subject timetable, and the teachers taught using Jawi.²⁵ However, in 1936, Islamic Education was added to the Malay school curriculum and was taught using Malay and Jawi as the media of instruction. Islamic Education was taught twice a week in the afternoon. More local children could read the Quran and write using Jawi through this religious education.²⁶

Dato Paduka Haji Othman stated that before 1930, in the Malay schools, some lessons were taught using Jawi, alternating with the Roman script. Only subjects such as “Pelajaran Kira2, Ilmu Alam, Kesihatan dan Sejarah terpaksa menggunakan tulisan Rumi” (Numeracy, Natural Science, Health and History were required to use the Roman script). In the early 1930s, trained teachers who graduated from Sultan Idris Tanjong Malim College taught Jawi lessons every day alongside the Roman script. This education system continued until the late 1940s.²⁷

In 1940, Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin established a private Arabic school and provided full funding for his initiative. One of the teachers for the school was from Egypt named Syed Abdul Aziz al-Hashimi. However, the school was closed after Brunei fell to Japan in 1941. The school no longer opened after World War II ended in mid-1945.²⁸

Jawi In Education 1942–1945

During the Japanese occupation of Brunei, the field of education less attention because they focused on war preparations against the Allied Forces by building planes, ports, and roads. In 1942, the Japanese ordered all Malay schools to implement the Japanese education system. In this education system, Malay was the medium of instruction, but Jawi was not used, and it was replaced with the Roman script. The subjects taught were Reading, Writing, Numeracy, Gardening, and the Japanese language. Islamic Education in the Malay school continued. In 1943, the Japanese language was used as the medium of instruction. In the Japanese education system, local teachers had to learn Japanese, and students had to learn positive Japanese values, such as strict discipline, rule compliance, and diligence. Furthermore, teachers and students also had to memorise the Japanese national anthem and patriotic songs. Education was a means to change the Bruneian people’s mindset, so they respected the Japanese administration and hated the Western conquerors.

On 6 August 1945, the Japanese army surrendered after the American Airforce dropped an atomic bomb on Japan. Brunei was placed under the British military administration after being freed from Japanese occupation and later handed over to the British Resident in 1946. The Roman script became the preferred choice in reading, writing, and mathematics during this era. Despite this, Jawi was still possibly used in Islamic Education lessons. However, education development was a bit slow at the time

²¹ Awang (2015), *Rampai Sejarah II*, pp. 133-134; Mohamad Yusop et al. (2014), *Evolusi dan Transformasi*, p. 17.

²² Awang (2015), *Rampai Sejarah II*, p. 134.

²³ Mohamad Yusop et al. (2014), *Evolusi dan Transformasi*, p. 165.

²⁴ Sabtu (2000), “Sejarah Perkembangan Jawi di Sekolah-Sekolah,” p. 347.

²⁵ Mohamad Yusop et al. (2014), *Evolusi dan Transformasi*, p. 10.

²⁶ Awang (2015), *Rampai Sejarah II*, p. 134.

²⁷ Dato Paduka Haji Othman bin Bidin was a former national educational leader who interviewed by Md Zain. Md Zain Serudin (1982), *Ucapan Pembukaan Seminar Peningkatan dan Penyebaran Tulisan Jawi*, Brunei: STP Star Trading & Printing LTD, p. 2.

²⁸ Awang (2015), *Rampai Sejarah II*, p. 134.

and it did not attract children to school. Furthermore, parents did not encourage their children to attend school due to safety concerns and hardships. Many people fled inland to hide and fend for their livelihoods.²⁹

Jawi in Education 1946–1983

In 1946, Brunei was under the British Resident's administration. In 1949, Mr. James Pearce was appointed Brunei's first State Education Officer. With his appointment, he abolished Jawi lessons and replaced them with lessons on the Roman script, which was implemented in schools in full force. The reason was to reduce the subjects the schoolchildren had to learn.³⁰ Md Zain (1982) recorded this matter from his interview with a national educational leader, Dato Paduka Haji Othman bin Bidin. Dato Paduka Haji Othman stated that in the early 1950s, the age for students to enter school was six and seven, when it was nine and ten previously. Due to the change in age, teachers and the State Education Officer decided to teach the Latin script to pupils in Standard One until the end of the second term and to teach Jawi only from the third term. According to Dato Paduka Haji Othman, "This rule continues until today [1982] (because there have never been any orders issued by any Education Officers to nullify Jawi being taught in the Malay schools)."³¹

However, trainee teachers were still given *khat* lessons, according to a statement by Sabtu Muhammad (2000). Delivered in the Pekan Brunei Malay School in 1949, these *khat* lessons include *Diwani*, *Kufi*, and intricate *khat*. After the completion of the Sultan Muhammad Jamalul Alam Malay School building, *khat* writing activities were continued there and spread to the other schools in the country, including Arabic schools.³²

In 1950, Sultan 'Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien's reign began. Many changes occurred during this era, including the establishment of the religious and educational institutions in Brunei. These establishments started after Sultan 'Omar 'Ali Saifuddien commissioned a study on the effectiveness of religious education in Brunei by bringing in two experts on religious education from Johor from 1945 to 1955. These experts were Haji Ismail bin Omar Abdul Aziz and Tuan Haji Othman.³³ From their observation, the weaknesses in the religious education in Brunei were: insufficient time allocated for its teaching and learning, the majority of the pupils could not recite the *syahadah* (declaration of faith), and they did not know the pillars of Islam or how to perform the ablution.³⁴

According to the report, the experts made several recommendations: to use the Malay school buildings throughout Brunei to run systemised religious schools in the afternoon session with religious teachers from Johor, Malaysia. In 1956, the systemised religious primary school started in the afternoon, and it had three sessions: the first session was from 2.00 until 3.00 p.m. for pupils in Standard 1 and 2; the second session was from 3.30 until 5.00 p.m. for pupils in Standard 3, 4, and 5; and the third session was from 2.00 until 5.00 p.m. for Standard 6 pupils. Standard 6 was the highest and last level for the religious primary school. The religious primary schools were specialised schools that taught knowledge on religious subjects, such as *Ibadah* (worship), *Adab* (morals), Quran reading, *Tauhid* (faith in the oneness of Allah), *Muamalah* (commerce), and Islamic history. Malay remained the language of instruction, with Jawi fully used for the written form. The system and curriculum of these schools were the same as those implemented in the religious schools in Johor, Malaysia. The primary religious schools continue until today, under the authority of the Ministry of Religious Affairs.³⁵

In addition to the religious primary schools, the Hassanal Bolkiah Boys' Arabic Secondary School was established in 1966, the Raja Isteri Pengiran Anak Damit Girls' Secondary School in 1967, and the Seri Begawan Religious Teachers' Training College in 1972. These schools used Jawi to teach all subjects except for the English Language and Malay Language. When the government implemented the Sultan 'Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien's religious education initiative, they started seeing the detrimental effect of abolishing Jawi lessons in the Malay school curriculum in 1949. Most pupils could

²⁹ Mohamad Yusop et al. (2014), *Evolusi dan Transformasi*, pp. 34-40.

³⁰ Awang (2015), *Rampai Sejarah II*, p. 134.

³¹ Md Zain (1982), *Ucapan Pembukaan Seminar Peningkatan dan Penyebaran Tulisan Jawi*, p. 3.

³² Sabtu (2000), "Sejarah Perkembangan Jawi di Sekolah-Sekolah," p. 347

³³ Awang (2015), *Rampai Sejarah II*, pp. 136-137.

³⁴ Mohamad Yusop et al. (2014), *Evolusi dan Transformasi*, p. 108.

³⁵ Awang (2015), *Rampai Sejarah II*, p. 137; Mohamad Yusop et al. (2014), *Evolusi dan Transformasi*, p. 115.

not read and write Jawi well and faced difficulties during their studies in the primary religious schools in the afternoon. Therefore, the Education Department, now known as the Ministry of Education, took the initiative to re-establish Jawi lessons in the Malay schools. However, it was not an easy task because most teachers were also unable to read and write Jawi.³⁶

In 1951, the English Language subject was taught to Standard 4 pupils in the Malay school, and at the same time, the first government English school, known as the English Preparatory School, was established in the same year. This implementation was to prevent more parents from sending their children to private English schools run by Christian missionary bodies. Parents preferred the English Preparatory School as their children would have a competitive edge through English proficiency in gaining better employment opportunities.³⁷

Following that, the Teacher Training Centre was established in 1956. In 1962, it was renamed the Brunei Teaching College. In 1963, many Malaysian Malay teachers who had been loaned to Brunei returned to their country when Brunei did not join the Malaysian Federation. Brunei was forced to employ teachers from Britain, Australia, India, Sri Lanka, and the Philippines to overcome the teacher shortage at the time. Jawi was not taught at the Brunei Teaching College due to a lack of teachers who were good at writing and reading Jawi. Sabtu Muhammad speculated that the lack of Jawi proficiency was due to the return of Malaysian Malay teachers to their home country during the Brunei-Malaysia conflict of 1963. In 1980, Jawi writing courses were held again at the Brunei Teaching College.³⁸ In 1973, Malaysia started to use the Roman script for the Islamic Education textbooks at the secondary school level, published by Dewan Bahasa and Pustaka Malaysia. The decision was possibly influenced by the conclusion from the *Angkatan Sasterawan 50 Singapura* (the Singaporean 50 Writers' Guild) in the 1950s, who decided for the Roman script to be officially used for Malay writing but did not altogether eliminate Jawi until time decided so.³⁹

As previously stated, many religious schools and institutions were established in Brunei due to the sultan's efforts at the time. As a result, the students from these religious institutions could read and write Jawi. Therefore, the existence of these religious education institutions could uphold Jawi education and directly has a role in continuing to sustain the relevance of Jawi in Brunei. However, the necessity for English continues to rise because employment opportunities require people to master the language.

Jawi in Education 1984–2007

Negara Brunei Darussalam attained independence on 1 January 1984. From that day forward, Brunei was entirely ruled by the Bruneian government, with the sultan as the head of state. At the same time, Brunei launched the Bilingual Education Policy under the Ministry of Education, followed by its implementation in 1985. Bilingual here means that there were two mediums of instruction, Malay and English. The main reason for the policy was for the nation to keep up with the current demands and to fulfill the people's wish for their children to attend English schools that will enable them to gain higher positions. From the perspective of professional workforce demand, English was necessary for students who had the chance to continue their studies abroad. According to this policy, pupils at the primary school level, Standard 1 until Standard 3, would learn the school subjects in Malay, except for the English Language subject. For pupils in Standard 4 at the primary school level, up until the end of secondary level, which was Form 6, a majority of the subjects were in English, except for the Malay Language subject, Religious Education, Art, and Physical Education, which were all delivered in Malay. All government schools were required to comply with the same system and curriculum. The government later extended the policy to all private schools in 1992.⁴⁰

The Ministry of Education launched further initiatives to ensure that the use of Jawi could expand. Among these initiatives was the *Jawi Rencana* (Composition), which was introduced in 1985 to pupils at the pre-primary level, and Jawi lessons were included as one of the syllabi of the Malay Language

³⁶ Awang (2015), *Rampai Sejarah II*, pp. 136-137.

³⁷ Mohamad Yusop et al. (2014), *Evolusi dan Transformasi*, p. 48-49.

³⁸ Sabtu (2000), "Sejarah Perkembangan Jawi di Sekolah-Sekolah," p. 348.

³⁹ Md Zain (1982), *Ucapan Pembukaan Seminar Peningkatan dan Penyebaran Tulisan Jawi*, p. 11.

⁴⁰ Mohamad Yusop et al. (2014), *Evolusi dan Transformasi*, p. 74.

subject at primary and secondary schools, alongside oral exercises, reading and comprehension, and writing exercises. Because Jawi is one of the syllabi of the Malay Language subject and the Malay Language is a compulsory subject, all students were required to learn Jawi, irrespective of their school level, race, or religion. The time allotment for the Malay Language subject was ten periods (5 hours a week).

In 1989, the Malay Language syllabus for Primary Schools Standard 1 to 6 was updated to include four main aspects: oral exercises, reading and comprehension, writing exercises, and Jawi lessons.⁴¹ The objectives of the Jawi lessons were (1) to achieve mastery of Jawi; (2) to recognise the Jawi script, read and spell correctly, and read and write well; and (3) to transcribe from Roman script to Jawi and vice versa entirely and well.⁴² The main themes of the Jawi lessons for pupils in Standard 1, 2, and 3 were (1) reading and spelling Jawi and (2) Jawi writing.⁴³ For pupils in Standard 4, 5, and 6, the main themes were (1) reading, spelling, and composition, and (2) Jawi writing.⁴⁴

Other initiatives ensued the 1989 memorandum from the Department of Curriculum Development. From 1990, Jawi lessons were specially allocated two periods (1 hour a week) from the ten periods allocated for the Malay Language subject. The change was to ensure teachers spent dedicated time for Jawi lessons. In 1991, Jawi was included in the Malay Language test paper for the *Ujian Penyelarasan Darjah Tiga* (Standard Three Standardised Test), carrying 10% of the total marks for the paper. The *Ujian Penyelarasan Darjah Tiga* was the test taken before entering Standard 4.⁴⁵

In 1994, the Ministry of Education published the book *Sukatan Bahasa Melayu bagi Darjah 1–6* (Malay Language Syllabus for Standard 1-6). This book contained six teaching aspects: language knowledge, listening skills, speaking skills, reading and comprehension skills, writing skills, and Jawi lessons. The main themes of the Jawi lessons for Standard 1 until Standard 6 were (1) reading and spelling and (2) writing. The contents for the 1989 and 1994 syllabi were not significantly different. The contents of the Jawi lessons remained: reading and writing Jawi alphabet, syllables, words, and phrases, Jawi spelling for words with prefixes, suffixes, and *apitan* (both prefix and suffix), diphthong, *hamzah* (◌), and particle word usage, and Jawi spelling of foreign words. The most apparent change was in terms of the explanation. The 1994 Syllabus was easier to understand, clearer, and had examples of using the current spelling methods to recognise Jawi alphabets by order and with the corresponding Roman letters within the Standard 1 syllabus. Aside from the syllabus, Jawi questions were also included in the Malay Language question paper of the *Sijil Rendah Pelajaran* (PCE) (Lower Certificate of Education) for Standard 6 pupils before they continued further in secondary school. The mark allocated was only 15%.⁴⁶

In 1995, Jawi lessons were taught at the lower secondary school level: Forms 1, 2, and 3 in government and non-government schools⁴⁷ following the *Silibus Bahasa Melayu Sekolah Menengah Bawah* (Lower Secondary School Malay Language Syllabus) (*Secondary I, II and III*) in 1994. This lower secondary syllabus also had five main teaching aspects: language knowledge, listening and speaking skills, reading and comprehension skills, writing skills, and Jawi lessons. Among the themes for the Jawi lesson for lower secondary were writing skills and reading short Jawi texts, excerpts from books, newspapers, and magazines.⁴⁸ In 1994, the *Silibus Bahasa Melayu Sekolah Menengah Atas* (Upper Secondary School Malay Language Syllabus) (*Secondary IV and V*) was published. In this syllabus, Jawi was only taught by exposing students to full Jawi texts, accompanied by texts in Roman script for reading and comprehension skills. The 1994 Syllabus did not state specific themes or the contents for Jawi lessons for Form 4 and 5.⁴⁹ Later in 1997, the *Penilaian Sekolah Rendah* (PSR) (the Lower Secondary

⁴¹ Kementerian Pendidikan (1989), *Sukatan Pelajaran Bahasa Melayu Sekolah-Sekolah Rendah Darjah 1-6*, Brunei: Kementerian Pendidikan, p. VI.

⁴² Kementerian Pendidikan (1989), *Sukatan Pelajaran Bahasa Melayu Sekolah-Sekolah Rendah Darjah 1-6*, pp. 1-2.

⁴³ Kementerian Pendidikan (1989), *Sukatan Pelajaran Bahasa Melayu Sekolah-Sekolah Rendah Darjah 1-6*, pp. 4-24.

⁴⁴ Kementerian Pendidikan (1989), *Sukatan Pelajaran Bahasa Melayu Sekolah-Sekolah Rendah Darjah 1-6*, pp. 25-54.

⁴⁵ T. Tamam (2014), "Langkah-Langkah Memperkasa Ejaan Jawi di Negara Brunei Darussalam," in L. Salleh, A. Yusof, O. Mazne, and R. Hurul 'Ain Nukbah (eds.), *Memperkasa Ejaan Jawi: Isu, Cabaran dan Penyelarasan*, Brunei: Pusat Penerbitan KUPU SB, p. 56.

⁴⁶ Kementerian Pendidikan (1994), *Sukatan Pelajaran Bahasa Melayu Sekolah-Sekolah Rendah Darjah 1-6*, Brunei: Kementerian Pendidikan, p. 3.

⁴⁷ Tamam (2014), "Langkah-Langkah Memperkasa Ejaan Jawi di Negara Brunei Darussalam," pp. 56-57.

⁴⁸ Kementerian Pendidikan (1994b), *Sukatan Pelajaran Bahasa Melayu Sekolah Menengah Bawah (Menengah I, II dan III)*, Brunei: Kementerian Pendidikan, pp. 11-13.

⁴⁹ Kementerian Pendidikan (1994c), *Sukatan Pelajaran Bahasa Melayu Sekolah Menengah Bawah (Menengah IV dan V)*, Brunei: Kementerian Pendidikan, p. 14.

Assessment) replaced the Peperiksaan Sijil Rendah Pelajaran (PCE) (Lower Certificate of Education). Questions on Jawi continued to be included in the Malay Language test paper, but only as an elective question, and were no longer compulsory in the examination.⁵⁰

Jawi in Education After 2008

Currently, the education system in Brunei is the National Education System for the 21st Century (SPN21). This education system was introduced in 2008 to replace its predecessor. According to Ministry of Education, SPN21 is deemed more suitable and fulfilled the needs and challenges in the globalisation era, and because it is considered able to cultivate skills for the 21st century, such as communication, calculation, information technology, thinking and problem solving, and self-management and competitiveness so that students can enter various job fields. In SPN21, Years 1 to 6 are the Standard 1 to 6 of primary school from the previous system, whereas Years 7 to 11 refers to Form 1 until Form 5 of the secondary school.⁵¹

In this education system, Jawi lessons continue to be taught as a Malay language subject component. The syllabus focuses on mastering language skills, including listening, speaking, reading and comprehension, writing, and Jawi. The objective of the Jawi lessons here is to enable the students to spell, read and write Jawi. Emphasis is given to proficiency in reading, comprehension, and rationalising various materials in Jawi to acquire knowledge and information. Students are also encouraged to present their opinions and ideas through various forms of Jawi writing, which inspires creativity by producing *khat* (calligraphy).⁵² The time allocation for the teaching and learning Jawi within the Malay Language subject in primary school is 60 minutes every two weeks. Jawi lessons are also included in the Malay Language subject for students in Years 7 and 8. Jawi component in the Malay Language examination paper for the *Student Progress Assessment* (SPA) is a compulsory question. This examination assesses Year 8 students before they continue onto Year 9. However, Jawi is not included in the Malay Language examination paper at the “O” level, but Jawi still is taught in the Malay Language subject for Years 9 to 11.⁵³

The Ministry of Education has organised a wide range of initiatives to increase the usage of Jawi, such as the Jawi Teaching Workshop, Jawi Writing and Reading Comprehension for Upper Primary School Teachers by the Schools Department in February 2013. The ministry also organised the Complete Jawi Spelling System Course for all primary school Malay Language teachers by the Lower Education Unit Department of Schools in August 2013.⁵⁴

Jawi has remained the primary medium of instruction since the establishment of the systematic religious school, which the Ministry of Religious Affairs manages. The *Akta Perintah Pelajaran Ugama Wajib 2012* (Compulsory Religious Education Order Act 2012) opened an avenue to introduce Jawi through religious education to all Muslim children in Brunei aged seven and above. The scope of the religious school curriculum include the fundamentals of religion, such as the *fardu ain* (obligatory worship and prayer); the religious practices of the Malay-Islam Bruneian community, such as *tahlil* (prayers for the dead), *doa selamat* (invocation for safety) and *Dikir Syarafil Anam*, Arabic language, as well as writing and reading Jawi.⁵⁵ According to the Religious School Syllabus 2012, currently, the separately conducted Jawi subject is only taught to pupils at the pre-school level (Jawi subject), Standard 1 (Rencana Jawi subject), and Standard 1, 2, and 3 (Jawi Reading and Jawi Writing subject). The time allocated for Jawi lessons for pre-primary pupils is between 100–120 minutes a week and around 25–30 minutes a week for pupils in Standard 1, 2, and 3.⁵⁶

⁵⁰ Tamam (2014), “Langkah-Langkah Memperkasa Ejaan Jawi di Negara Brunei Darussalam,” pp. 56-57.

⁵¹ Kementerian Pendidikan (2009), *Sistem Pendidikan Negara Brunei Abad ke-21: SPN21*, Brunei: Kementerian Pendidikan, pp. 20-21.

⁵² Jabatan Perkembangan Kurikulum (2008), *Kerangka dan Panduan bagi Kurikulum dan Penilaian Bahasa Melayu SPN-21*, Brunei: Kementerian Pendidikan, pp. 4-5.

⁵³ Tamam (2014), “Langkah-Langkah Memperkasa Ejaan Jawi di Negara Brunei Darussalam,” p. 57.

⁵⁴ Kementerian Pendidikan, UBD & ITB (2014), *Laporan Penyelidikan Guru dan Pengajaran Bahasa Melayu di Sekolah Rendah di Negara Brunei Darussalam*, pp. 6.

⁵⁵ Norarfan Zainal (2015), *Melestarikan Pendidikan Islam di Negara Brunei Darussalam*, Brunei: UNISSA Press, pp. 70-71.

⁵⁶ Jabatan Pengajian Islam (2015), *Sukatan Pelajaran Persekolahan Agama Negara Brunei Darussalam*, Kementerian Hal Ehwal Ugama, pp. i-iii.

Aside from Jawi lessons in school, the Ministry of Religious Affairs also provides Jawi lessons for the general public by organising various activities to increase Jawi usage. Among the programs are Jawi writing workshops related to reading and writing Jawi in general and introducing Jawi *khat* (calligraphy) writing through the Da'wah Islamiah Centre.⁵⁷

However, there are still issues related to school education, whether at the primary, secondary, or religious school levels. Among the prevalent issues that are often raised in recent studies related to Jawi education in Brunei schools are the Jawi spelling proficiency⁵⁸ and students' and teachers' perceptions of Jawi education. Based on a study, teachers' Jawi spelling proficiency is at a good and moderate level, and overall, teachers can read Jawi sentences correctly.⁵⁹ The Jawi spelling proficiency of secondary school students is at the very good and good levels compared to the Jawi spelling proficiency of students at the primary school level.⁶⁰ In terms of students' and teachers' perceptions of Jawi education, they know it is compulsory in school, and Jawi should be preserved as a Malay heritage in Brunei.⁶¹ However, teachers think the importance of Jawi in the future is still unclear.⁶² Another study found that the younger generation, consisting of prospective graduates of various majors at one of the universities in Brunei, feel less confident about the importance of Jawi writing in the future.⁶³ However, His Royal Highness the Sultan of Brunei decreed⁶⁴ in 1991 and 2019 that Jawi is the nation's identity, which is essential in life, making Jawi comparable to the writing of Rumi.

Conclusion

In general, Jawi retains its special status in Brunei's education field. After the arrival of Islam, the importance of Jawi as a medium for official historical documents and in acquiring religious knowledge is undeniable. The abolishment of Jawi lessons and their replacement with Roman scripts in 1949 negatively affected the students from continuing their studies effectively in the primary religious school in the 1950s. Therefore, the Ministry of Education at the time restored Jawi lessons to ensure that students could spell, read and write Jawi. This matter remains the main objective of Jawi lessons till today. The Bruneian believe that Jawi has a strong relationship with Islamic and Malay elements in an identity that must be preserved. It is crucial to review the Jawi education objectives to make them proactive in upholding the status of Jawi as a symbol of the nation's identity and as a heritage writing system. Education is a vital incubator to grow the understanding of individuals and their confidence in Jawi so that learners can sustain the existence of Jawi in Brunei.

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⁵⁷ Awang (2015), *Rampai Sejarah II*, p. 139.

⁵⁸ The study on the level of Jawi spelling proficiency aims to measure descriptively the total marks obtained in the Jawi spelling test given to teachers and/or students.

⁵⁹ Ahmad Busyra, M. Z. (2013), "Tulisan Jawi di Brunei Darussalam: Persepsi dan penguasaannya dalam kalangan guru-guru sekolah rendah kawasan Brunei III," Master's thesis, Universiti Brunei Darussalam.

⁶⁰ Vivi Nor'Haffizah (2013), "Penguasaan ejaan Jawi murid tahun 8 dalam pembelajaran Bahasa Melayu di Negara Brunei Darussalam," Master's dissertation, Fakulti Pendidikan, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia; Zaliha, H. A. R. (2010), "Penguasaan pelajar terhadap EJYTD dipengaruhi oleh sikap dan motivasi: Satu kajian kes di beberapa buah sekolah rendah atas (Tahun 5)," Undergraduate dissertation, Universiti Brunei Darussalam; Zamayah (2008), "Penggunaan Ejaan Jawi di Sekolah Kerajaan dan Sekolah Swasta: Satu perbandingan," Undergraduate dissertation, Universiti Brunei Darussalam.

⁶¹ Ahmad Busyra (2013), "Tulisan Jawi di Brunei Darussalam.,"; Vivi (2013), "Penguasaan ejaan Jawi murid tahun 8.,"; Zamayah (2008), "Penggunaan Ejaan Jawi di Sekolah Kerajaan dan Sekolah Swasta."

⁶² Ahmad Busyra (2013), "Tulisan Jawi di Brunei Darussalam."

⁶³ Siti Badriyah Mohamad Yusof and Exzayrani Sulaiman (2015), "Sikap generasi muda terhadap tulisan Jawi: Kajian kes pelajar Universiti Brunei Darussalam," *Southeast Asia: A Multidisciplinary Journal*, Vol. 15, pp. 8-16.

⁶⁴ In Brunei, the decree is a reminder, advice, vision, encouragement, and encouragement from His Majesty the Sultan to the people and residents of this country to continue to strive in religious, social, and national life in accordance with the policies of His Majesty's government. Pusat Da'wah Islamiah (2006), *Himpunan Titah Kebawah Duli Yang Maha Mulia Paduka seri Baginda Sultan Yang di Pertuan Negara Brunei Darussalam di Majlis-Majlis Keagamaan dan Titah-titah yang berunsurkan keagamaan* (1997-2005), Pusat Da'wah Islamiah, p. ix.

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