



## **Unraveling the Riddle of President Joko Widodo's Speech Abbreviations and Its Translation into Arabic.**

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### **Article Info**

History Articles

Received:

5 September 2024

Accepted:

10 October 2024

Published:

30 December 2024

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Keywords:

Abbreviation,  
translation, speech,  
Arabic, Joko Widodo

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### **Abstract**

The use of abbreviations and acronyms is a common phenomenon in the Indonesian language that has developed since the 1960s, particularly in military contexts. This usage has spread to various fields such as social, political, economic, cultural, and religious areas, making it an essential part of everyday communication in Indonesia. However, excessive and inconsistent abbreviation often leads to confusion. The Arabic language also has abbreviations and acronyms, but their number is far from fewer compared to Indonesian. The main challenge in translating abbreviations from Indonesian to Arabic lies in the differing characteristics of abbreviation formation between the two languages. Abbreviations in Arabic are generally based on root words or specific prefixes, which makes them different from the more flexible abbreviations in Indonesian. This study examines the challenges of translating abbreviations and acronyms in the official speeches of Indonesian President Joko Widodo from Indonesian to Arabic. Data shows that around 40% of translation errors in official speeches are due to incorrect translation of abbreviations and acronyms. A survey of specialized translators reveals that approximately 78% of them face difficulties in translating abbreviations and acronyms from Indonesian to Arabic. This study employs a qualitative method with a descriptive approach to understand and address the challenges in translating abbreviations and acronyms from Indonesian to Arabic.

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## INTRODUCTION

Language is highly flexible and manipulative. We can always manipulate language for specific purposes and goals. Just look at how skillfully people use language in politics. To manipulate language, we need to understand its functions.

In daily life, we or the public often shorten phrases to make them quicker and easier to read. However, these abbreviations sometimes do not follow existing rules. Usually, people abbreviate words based on their perceived ease of pronunciation, regardless of the rules (Astuti 2014). These abbreviations are not only spoken but also written, especially in newspapers.

Researchers are interested in studying abbreviations and acronyms in speeches. In Indonesian, the use of acronyms began to develop around the 1960s, especially within the Department of Defense. The military has its own list of acronyms known as codes. These codes are used for security purposes and are only understood by those involved. It is expected that the public can understand acronyms in various fields such as social, political, economic, cultural, ideological, and religious contexts.

Indonesian is known for its frequent use of abbreviations and acronyms in daily life across the country (Prasetya & Fasya 2021). These are used in various media, including advertisements, to promote products, institutions' names, and even campaign tools for presidential candidates. This can be seen in campaign materials like billboards placed in public locations. There are spelling rules for abbreviations and acronyms to ensure public understanding.

However, some abbreviations and acronyms are not understood by the public because each field has its own set of abbreviations and acronyms, such as in advertising, politics, sports, education, and other areas. In 2019, Indonesia held a significant event, including the election of the president and vice president. During the election process, candidates actively distributed campaign materials because the election was conducted simultaneously in different regions. In these materials, excessive

and incorrect use of acronyms in Indonesian caused ambiguity in writing.

The evolution of abbreviations covers a wide range of aspects. For example, in law enforcement, abbreviations are commonly used. Similarly, election periods contribute many new linguistic terms, driven by individual needs and creativity. The widespread use of abbreviations and acronyms is frequently seen in mass media, which also plays a role in introducing various acronyms and abbreviations (Rochiyati, 2006). As such, it is crucial to delve deeper into the types, origins, and processes of abbreviation formation in the Indonesian language, particularly in official speeches.

In Arabic, the phenomenon of word shortening like abbreviations and acronyms also exists, however it is more limited compared to Indonesian (Hadi, 2000). Thus, understanding abbreviations in translating official speeches from Indonesian to Arabic is very important (Winarta, Tustiawati, & Sudramini 2021). The number of abbreviations and acronyms in Arabic is much smaller compared to Indonesian. In Indonesian, there are at least 28,000-word shortenings, a significant number compared to the 62,100 entries in the Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI). There are at least 13 books discussing abbreviations and acronyms in Indonesian (Martasari 2014).

The exact number of Arabic abbreviations and acronyms is unknown, but according to the author's observations, it is nearly 900. This number is very small compared to the vocabulary or terms found in various Arabic dictionaries (Gazali, 2012). According to a bibliography titled "Al-Mu'jamatul-Arabiyyah Bibliyujrafiyah Syamilah Masyrufah" compiled by Wajdi Rizki Ghaly and published by Hatiatul Misriyyah Al-Ammah Li't-Talifi wa'n-Nasyr, Cairo (1071), there are 707 dictionaries. Additionally, there are no less than 200 dictionaries of terms in Arabic, indicating the vast number of words and terms they contain. Therefore, the number of abbreviations and acronyms in Arabic is very small (Hadi, 2017).

The main problem faced by translators is that when these abbreviations are translated into

Arabic, the meaning or concept contained in them may not always be easily understood by Arabic-speaking audiences or even the translators themselves.

First, Arabic has its own characteristics in using abbreviations and acronyms. Most Arabic abbreviations are based on root words or specific prefixes. This can result in very different abbreviations in Arabic compared to Indonesian. For instance, the abbreviation "TNI" (Tentara Nasional Indonesia) might not be immediately clear in Arabic. In Arabic, the speechwriter must decide whether to describe TNI as "القوات المسلحة" (Al-Quwwat al-Musallaha) or "الوطنية الإندونيسية" (Wataniyah al-Indunisiyah) or use the abbreviation "TNI" itself.

Second, problems arise when the same abbreviation can have different meanings in different contexts. For example, "BKPM" might refer to the "Investment Coordinating Board" in one context, but in another, it could refer to the "Central Personnel Management Agency" or something entirely different (Kata, 1970). In this case, the translator must understand the context and intention of the speechwriter carefully to ensure the correct word choice in Arabic.

Furthermore, in Arabic, some abbreviations or acronyms may be less common or even unused. This can lead to mismatches in translation. For example, some Indonesian abbreviations might contain cultural or organizational elements unique to Indonesia, so the translator must find appropriate ways to convey the meaning in Arabic.

The challenge of translating arises when Indonesian abbreviations must be translated into Arabic. The limited number of abbreviations in Arabic can cause difficulty in finding the right equivalents or even making Arabic readers struggle to understand the meaning of those abbreviations.

This challenge is more pronounced when translating the speeches of Indonesian President Joko Widodo from Indonesian to Arabic. Many presidential speeches contain abbreviations and acronyms reflecting policies, programs, or specific terms used in the Indonesian government and society, especially during the 2021-2024

period. Understanding abbreviations and acronyms is crucial to ensure accurate translation and correct comprehension by Arabic-speaking audiences.

Empirical data shows that around 40% of translation errors in official speeches are due to mistakes in translating abbreviations and acronyms (Gloriani & Listiani, 2015). This highlights the importance of this research to develop effective strategies for translating abbreviations and acronyms.

Additionally, a survey conducted on 50 professional translators revealed that 78% experienced difficulties translating abbreviations and acronyms from Indonesian to Arabic, with most indicating that they often had to make significant contextual adjustments to maintain clarity and accuracy in translation.

## METHODOLOGY

This research employs a qualitative method with a descriptive approach to understand and address the challenges in translating abbreviations and acronyms from Indonesian to Arabic. The study involves text analysis of speeches, interviews with professional translators, and the development of a specialized glossary.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Arabic language has different rules for forming abbreviations and acronyms. Unlike Indonesian, Arabic typically does not use abbreviations, instead relying on full explanations or adaptations of words that approximate the original meaning. For example, the abbreviation "KPK" which stands for (Komisi Pemberantasan Korupsi) cannot be directly translated as an abbreviation in Arabic, Instead, it must be explained as "هيئة مكافحة الفساد" (Hay'at Mukafahat Alfasaad), and cannot just simply be shortened to (هـ.مـ.) (Hadi, 2000).

Here is an example related to this:

### A. Kepanjangan Berarti Langsung (Directly Meaningful Abbreviations)

Typically, audiences can become frequent usage, to the point where these accustomed to hearing an acronym or acronyms or abbreviations can be memorized and abbreviation in presidential speeches due to understood. For example,

Singkatan	Kepanjangan	Arti Bahasa Arab
Capres	Calon Presiden	مرشح للرئاسة
Cawapres	Calon Wakil Presiden	مرشح لرئاسة الوزراء
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations	رابطة أمم جنوب شرق آسيا
HAM	Hak Asasi Manusia	حقوق الإنسان
SDM	sumber daya manusia	الموارد البشرية
SDA	sumber daya alam	الموارد الطبيعية
UMKM	usaha mikro, kecil, dan menengah	المؤسسات الصغيرة والمتوسطة متناهية الصغر
CPO	crude palm oil	زيت النخيل الخام
RUU	rancangan undang-undang	مشروع الدستور
KKT	konferensi tingkat tinggi	مؤتمر رفيع المستوى
Musrenbangnas	Musyawarah Perencanaan Pembangunan Nasional	مؤتمر تحضير التنمية الوطنية
RKP	rencana kerja pemerintah	خطة عمل الحكومة
RPJP	rencana pembangunan jangka panjang	خطة التنمية طويلة المدى
RPJM	rencana pembangunan jangka menengah	خطة التنمية متوسطة المدى
Ombudsman RI	Ombudsman Republik Indonesia	أمين المظالم في جمهورية إندونيسيا
PDB	Produk Domestik Bruto	إجمالي الناتج المحلي
APBN	anggaran pendapatan dan belanja negara	الموازنة العامة للدولة
RAPBN	Rencana anggaran pendapatan dan belanja negara	خطة الموازنة العامة للدولة
JKN	Jaminan Kesehatan Nasional	التأمين الصحي الوطني
IKN	Ibu Kota Negara	عاصمة البلاد
KBLBB	Kendaraan Bermotor Listrik Berbasis Baterai	المركبات ذات المحركات الكهربائية التي تعمل بالبطارية
PNBP	Penerimaan Negara Bukan Pajak	الإيرادات غير الضريبية

ASN	Aparatur Sipil Negara	الخدمة المدنية للدولة
BUMN	Badan Usaha Milik Negara	مشاريع مملوكة للدولة
BLU	Badan Layanan Umum	وكالة الخدمة العامة
NTP	Nilai Tukar Petani	سعر صرف المزارعين
NTN	Nilai Tukar Nelayan	سعر صرف الصيادين
UUD	Undang-Undang Dasar	الدستور
BPK	Badan Pemeriksa Keuangan	مجلس التدقيق المالي
PPKM	Pemberlakuan Pembatasan Kegiatan Masyarakat	تقيد الأنشطة المجتمعية
KPK	Komisi Pemberantasan Korupsi	هيئة القضاء على الفساد
BKN	Badan Kepegawaian Negara	وكالة الخدمة المدنية الحكومية
DKPP	Dewan Kehormatan Penyelenggara Pemilu	المجلس الفوري لمنظم الانتخابات
KPU	Komisi Pemilihan Umum	لجان الانتخابات العامة
KRIS	Kelas Rawat Inap Standar	غرف المرضى القياسية
PPN	Pajak Pertambahan Nilai	ضريبة القيمة المضافة
PSBB	Pembatasan sosial berskala besar	قيود اجتماعية واسعة النطاق
BPJS	Badan Penyelenggara Jaminan Sosial	هيئة الضمان الاجتماعي
NKRI	Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia	دولة جمهورية إندونيسيا الموحدة
NIB	Nomor Induk Berusaha	رقم السجل التجاري
BKPM	Badan Koordinasi Penanaman Modal	مجلس تنسيق الاستثمار الرأسمالي
BLT	Bantuan Langsung Tunai	الدعم النقدي المباشر
MRT	Moda Raya Terpadu	خط السكة الحديد الموحد
Kodim	Komando Distrik Militer	قائد المنطقة العسكرية
Luber jurdil	Asas pemilu di Indonesia; yaitu Langsung, Umum, Bebas, Rahasia, Jujur dan Adil.	قواعد الانتخاب في إندونيسيا، وهي: مباشر عام حر سري صادق عادل

HURRI	Hari Ulang Tahun Republik Indonesia	يوم ميلاد الجمهورية الإندونيسية
PT INKA	Perseroan Terbatas Kereta Api Indonesia	هيئة السكك الحديدية الإندونيسية المحدودة
Menkominfo	Menteri Komunikasi dan Informasi	وزير الإتصالات والمعلومات
BLUD	Badan Layanan Umum Daerah	هيئة الخدمة العامة الإقليمية

Based on the table of abbreviations and acronyms above, we observe that Arabic is unlikely to use abbreviations in the same way as Indonesian or other Latin-alphabet languages (Gloriani & Listiani, 2015). This is due to the fact that Arabic natives, translators, or even speakers rarely use abbreviations or acronyms in either daily conversation or formal language. If abbreviations and acronyms were frequently used in a context, Arabic speakers would struggle to understand what other Arabic speakers are saying.

#### **B. Kepanjangan Berarti Tidak Langsung (Indirectly Meaningful Abbreviations):**

In Indonesian, there are several abbreviations that may have one or more meanings depending on the context. When an abbreviation or acronym that the entire audience is accustomed to hearing and understands its usual meaning is used in a speech or conversation, but the president intends a different meaning than the commonly understood one, it causes significant confusion among the audience in understanding President Joko Widodo's intentions.

For instance, during the speech of (Penghargaan Penanganan Covid-19, Jakarta) on March 20, 2023, despite President Joko Widodo often disliking lengthy abbreviations or terms, he admitted being confused by the abbreviation for social distancing measures during the Covid-19 pandemic in the past.

*"Sampai kadang saya bingung ini ada singkatan PSBB (Pembatasan Sosial Berskala Besar*

*seperti pak Menko Perekonomian sampaikan, belum PSBB apa singkatannya muncul PPKM (Pemberlakuan Pembatasan Kegiatan Masyarakat) ini apa lagi," kata Jokowi dalam sambutan.*

Moreover, many other terms that were previously unheard of are now widely known due to the Covid-19 pandemic. During the event, he even asked one of the guests to explain the abbreviations PSBB and PPKM.

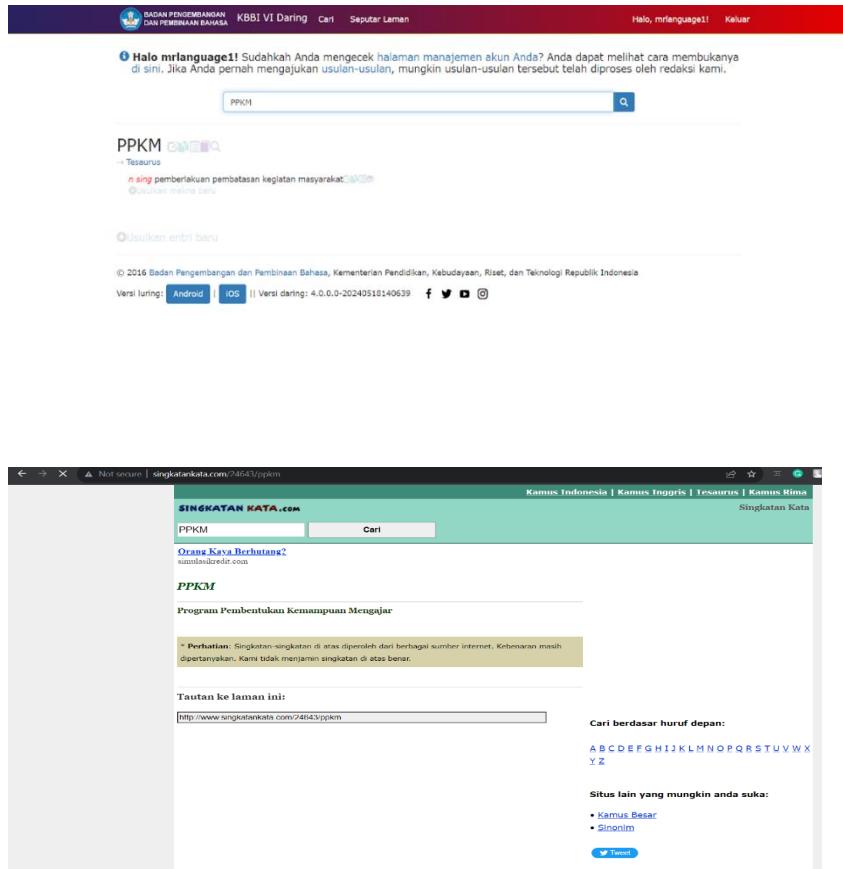
*"Ada yang tahu singkatan PPKM saya tunjuk mungkin satu orang, mungkin dia nggak tau. Berani taruhan saya, termasuk ibu-ibu yang tertawa belum tentu tahu kepanjangan PPKM. Coba maju ibu," kata Jokowi.*

A guest from Kalimantan came forward at Jokowi's request. The woman, who works as the head of a community health center, accurately explained the meaning of PSBB.

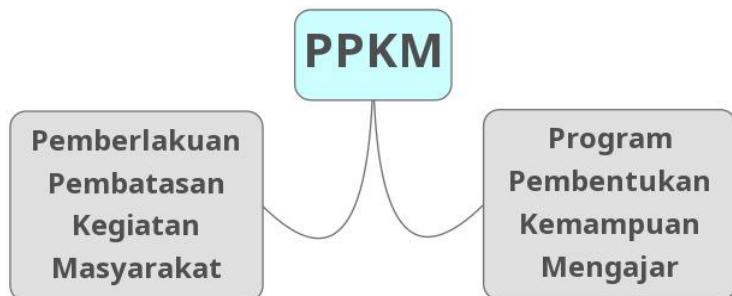
*"Pembatasan Sosial Berskala Besar," kata Ibu itu yang juga meminta sepeda dari Jokowi.*

*"Oke betul makasih ibu. Nanti sepedanya saya kirim," jawab Presiden sambil tertawa.*

In this regard, the researcher has also encountered confusion regarding the meaning of an abbreviation used by President Joko Widodo, specifically "PPKM". The researcher had previously sought the definition of this abbreviation through various websites such as KBBI and Singkatankata.com. Despite the same abbreviation being queried, the full forms discovered were found to be different, as illustrated in the following images:



As seen in the above images, the abbreviation 'PPKM' is given in two extensions or two different meanings.



### C. Kepanjangan yang tidak diketahui (Unknown Abbreviations & Acronyms):

Due to the widespread use of abbreviations and acronyms in the Indonesian society, both in the daily conversations and formal language, there is a possibility that the full meanings of these abbreviations or acronyms can occasionally become lost or unfamiliar to individuals. This

adds to the challenge of understanding those abbreviations or acronyms for Arabic speakers.

### CONCLUSION

This study examines the flexibility and manipulability of language, particularly focusing on the use of abbreviations and acronyms in Indonesian and their comparison with Arabic. Language is often manipulated for specific

purposes, and abbreviations are one form of this manipulation. Abbreviations and acronyms are widely used across various fields in Indonesia, including politics, economics, social issues, and the media. However, these abbreviations frequently deviate from established rules and can lead to ambiguity.

In this discussion, Hadi (2000) states that acronyms in Arabic have developed significantly in recent years. Further analysis by Kata (1970) reveals common errors in the use of abbreviations and acronyms in print media, as found in the Kendari Pos newspaper edition of March 2, 2012.

**The following key points can be summarized:**

a. Translating abbreviations from Indonesian to Arabic faces several challenges, including differences in the number and characteristics of abbreviation formation, and linguistic structure. Arabic abbreviations often derive from root words, unlike the more flexible nature of Indonesian.

b. Arabic has far fewer abbreviations compared to Indonesian, creating difficulties for translators in finding appropriate equivalents or providing suitable explanations in Arabic.

c. The same abbreviation in Indonesian can have multiple meanings depending on the context, which can lead to ambiguity. Translators must understand the context and the speaker's intent to translate accurately.

**Suggestions/Ideas:**

1. If a speaker is using several abbreviations or acronyms in a speech or if the speech is being listened to via audio, the speaker should first state the full form of each abbreviation or acronym at least once during the speech if it will be used repeatedly.
2. If the formation of an abbreviation or acronym closely resembles a standard word in the KBBI (Indonesian Dictionary), it is advisable to write it with hyphens between each letter in the abbreviation or between every two initial letters in the acronym.

If a TV news segment includes several abbreviations or acronyms, their full forms should be displayed as notes on the side of the screen to assist viewers.

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