

Exploring the Meaning of Ramadan from the Perspectives of Islam in America and Indonesia: A Corpus-Based Analysis

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Abstract

The diverse cultural interpretations and expressions of Ramadan across different societies have not been extensively examined through a linguistic perspective, especially comparing Muslim-majority and minority contexts. This study aims to investigate how the word "Ramadan" is used and understood in religious lectures by Indonesian and American Ustaz, focusing on differences influenced by cultural and social environments. The research analyzes a corpus of transcribed lecture videos, processed into .txt format, and examined using AntConc software for word frequency, sentence positioning, distribution, and collocational patterns. The findings reveal that Indonesian lectures emphasize communal worship, ritual practices, and collective spiritual growth. In contrast, American lectures highlight individual faith journeys, personal spiritual struggles, and the challenges of preserving religious identity within a non-Muslim-majority society. These results demonstrate that while both cultures view Ramadan as a time for spiritual purification and seeking forgiveness, the primary distinction lies in the communal versus individual orientation of religious experience.

Kata kunci:

Ramadan; budaya; corpus

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Abstrak

Beragam interpretasi dan ekspresi yang kerap dikaitkan dengan Ramadan di masyarakat belum diteliti secara mendalam melalui perspektif linguistik, khususnya dalam konteks masyarakat yang mayoritas Muslim dan minoritas. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk memahami bagaimana kata "Ramadhan" digunakan dan dipahami dalam ceramah keagamaan oleh Ustad Indonesia dan Amerika, dengan fokus pada perbedaan yang dipengaruhi oleh lingkungan budaya dan sosial. Penelitian ini menganalisis korpus video ceramah yang ditranskripsi, diproses ke dalam format .txt, dan diteliti menggunakan perangkat lunak AntConc untuk frekuensi kata, posisi kalimat, distribusi, dan pola kolokasi. Temuan penelitian mengungkapkan bahwa ceramah Indonesia menekankan ibadah bersama, praktik ritual, dan pertumbuhan spiritual kolektif. Sebaliknya, ceramah Amerika menyoroti perjalanan iman individu, perjuangan spiritual pribadi, dan tantangan dalam mempertahankan identitas agama dalam masyarakat yang mayoritas non-Muslim. Hasil ini menunjukkan bahwa meskipun kedua budaya memandang Ramadan sebagai waktu untuk pemurnian spiritual dan mencari pengampunan, perbedaan utamanya terletak pada orientasi komunal versus individu dalam pengalaman keagamaan.

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INTRODUCTION

Ramadan holds profound religious and cultural significance for Muslims around the world, including those in Indonesia—the country with the largest Muslim population—and in the United States, where Muslims live as a religious minority. Ramadan impacts individual religious practices, such as fasting and nightly prayers, and broader social, cultural, and economic behaviors (Baudrillard, 1990; Berry, 1997). In Indonesia, Ramadan is deeply intertwined with national identity, reflected through mass media, social traditions, and economic patterns. Meanwhile, in America, Muslims must negotiate their religious observances within a secular public sphere, creating unique dynamics of adaptation and identity (Roccas & Brewer, 2002; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). The global and local interactions of Ramadan practices make this phenomenon a critical issue to explore qualitatively and linguistically, especially considering its socio-cultural complexity across different societies.

Although various studies have explored the religious, social, and economic dimensions of Ramadan, research linking Ramadan to the field of semantic preference and semantic prosody remains scarce. Prior works have mainly focused on Ramadan's sociological and anthropological aspects (Khalaf, 2019; Nasser, 2020) without deeply examining how the language around Ramadan is used to construct, convey, and transform cultural meanings. Recent corpus linguistic studies (Wilks & Fass, 1992; Hardiman & Nuraniwati, 2023) have shown that word associations profoundly impact understanding cultural and religious concepts. However, Ramadan has not been systematically analyzed through this lens. Therefore, this study offers a novel contribution by investigating how the word "Ramadan" co-occurs with particular expressions and how these patterns shape its evolving social meaning.

This study aims to explore the semantic preference and prosody of the term "Ramadan" in two different sociocultural contexts—Indonesia and the United States—by analyzing the collocations associated with it. The study highlights how religious language reflects belief and a dynamic cultural construct that interacts with social settings and technological mediation, primarily through mass media and digital platforms (Alrajhi, 2019; Ben Ghazlen, 2022). This research aims to complement previous scholarship by providing a comparative analysis of linguistic and cultural contexts by focusing on both cultural contexts.

Specifically, this study seeks to test the argument that the meaning and emotional connotations of "Ramadan" differ significantly depending on sociocultural context and language community. It hypothesizes that while Ramadan generally carries positive semantic prosody—evoking solidarity, generosity, and spirituality—the specific collocations and emotional nuances vary across different communities. This variation reflects broader social, cultural, and political dynamics influencing how religious identities are expressed and negotiated through language (Isam & Awal, 2012; Hauser & Hillman, 2024).

METHODS

This study was conducted by collecting corpus data from Indonesian and American ustaz (Islamic scholars) on YouTube, using keywords related to the theme of Ramadan. Four Indonesian ustaz were selected based on the highest number of viewers for Ramadan-themed content, and four western ustaz were chosen for their popularity's discussions on Ramadan topics. Each selected video had an equal duration to ensure fair and representative data. The steps in this research are as follows:

Corpus Collection: Videos were selected based on Ramadan themes with equal durations to ensure balanced representation. All their lecturers are from February or March, 2025. *Transcription Process:* The selected videos were transcribed using appropriate transcription software. *After transcription,* the text was cleaned by removing irrelevant sections and correcting errors to enhance the accuracy of analysis. The cleaned text was saved in .txt format for further processing in AntConc.

Data Analysis in AntConc: The cleaned data was entered into AntConc for analysis. Using the "Word List" tab, a list of the most frequently used words in the lectures was generated. In the "Collocates" tab, the keyword "Ramadan" was input to identify words that frequently appear alongside it, with a context window set to include 5-10 words before and after the keyword. *Contextual Analysis:* The context of how "Ramadan" is used in the lectures was analyzed in the "Concordance" tab by inputting the keyword and examining its use in various sentence contexts. This step helped to explore the themes, topics, and the nuances of how Ramadan is discussed by each group of ustaz. *Comparison of Topics:* A detailed comparison of the topics covered by the Indonesian and American ustaz was conducted. The analysis focused on identifying the differences and similarities in how Ramadan is framed and discussed within each context. This comparison involved interpreting recurring themes, key concepts, and distinctive cultural perspectives shared in the lectures.

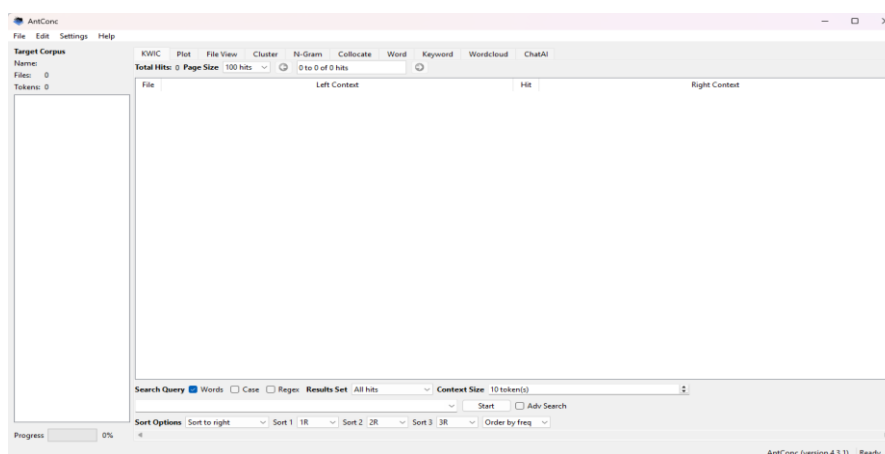


Figure 1. [AntConc Apps Homepage]

AntConc is a powerful and widely used tool in corpus linguistics research, offering various functions to analyze text data (Harahap et al., 2024). A concordance is a list of all occurrences of a word within a corpus. Using AntConc, the keyword-in-context was examined through concordance, and collocates were identified using the left-right collocation feature and log-likelihood (for most frequent occurrences) in the corpus. Discourse analysis was applied to investigate the collocations as an essential part of data collection. The collocations were then analyzed using semantic preference and semantic prosody.

As previously mentioned, semantic preference was employed to uncover meaning associations in the collocations. In this study, it helped identify the meaning of the word Ramadan. After determining the meaning and usage context of the keywords, we analyzed the words using semantic prosody to explore the connotations associated with Ramadan. This analysis reveals how the word Ramadan reflects different perceptions through language.

FINDINGS

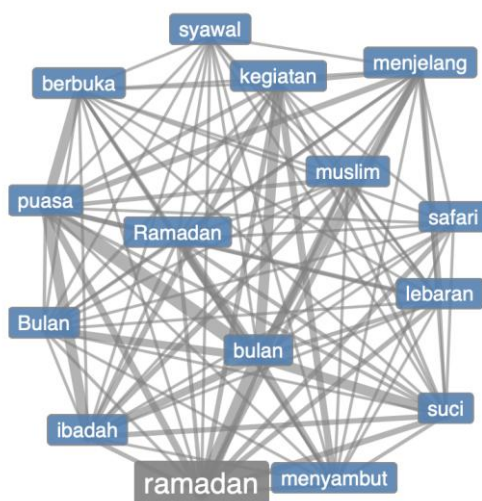


Figure 2. [The Frequencies in the Leipzig Corpora]

From the figure, the word Ramadan is dominantly used in the context of muslim fasting, as it frequently collocates with terms like *bulan* (month), *muslim* (moslem), *puasa* (fasting), *suci* (holy), *lebaran* (ied), *ibadah* (shalat), *kegiatan* (activity).

Table 1. Collocations of Ramadan in Leipzig Corpora

L1	Kata	R1
<i>bulan</i> (4.685)	RAMADAN	<i>ini</i> (206)
<i>safari</i> (1.233)	RAMADAN	<i>tahun</i> (106)
<i>suci</i> (1.104)	RAMADAN	<i>dan</i> (89)
<i>selama</i> (489)	RAMADAN	<i>tiba</i> (59)
<i>puasa</i> (474)	RAMADAN	<i>kali</i> (49)
<i>menjelang</i> (292)	RAMADAN	<i>nanti</i> (47)
<i>awal</i> (148)	RAMADAN	<i>lalu</i> (35)
<i>bazaar</i> (136)	RAMADAN	<i>hingga</i> (25)
<i>momentum</i> (106)	RAMADAN	<i>seperti</i> (19)
<i>pesantren</i> (44)	RAMADAN	<i>sudah</i> (16)

The table presents collocations of the word Ramadan from the Leipzig Corpora, showing how the word frequently appears with other words (L1 = left collocates, R1 = right collocates). By analyzing these collocations, we can derive insights into the semantic associations and cultural significance of Ramadan in the corpus.

Religious context can be seen from the words such as: *bulan* (4.685), *tahun* (106), *awal* (148), *lalu* (35). These collocates emphasize that Ramadan is a time-based event, referring to the Islamic lunar month of fasting. Words like *bulan* (month), *tahun* (year), *awal* (beginning), and *lalu* (last) show how Ramadan is situated in a chronological framework. The words like *tiba* (59), *menjelang* (292) suggest a focus on the anticipation and preparation for Ramadan.

Spiritual context can be seen from the words such as : *suci* (1.104), the word *suci* (holy) reflects the sacred nature of Ramadan in Islam. *Puasa* (474), the strong association with *puasa* (fasting) reinforces the primary religious practice observed during Ramadan. *Pesantren* (44), the collocation with *pesantren* (Islamic boarding school) suggests a connection between Ramadan and religious education, which is common in some Muslim communities.

Social and cultural aspects can be seen from the word : *bazaar* (136), the word *bazaar* indicates the economic and social activities surrounding Ramadan, such as Ramadan bazaars where people buy food for breaking their fast. *Momentum* (106), it suggests that Ramadan is a significant event that carries social, religious, and personal transformation for Muslims. *Safari* (1.233), this likely refers to *safari Ramadan*, a term used for outreach programs or visits to different mosques and communities during the month. *Selama* (489), means during, indicates the duration-based discussions of Ramadan, reinforcing its month-long observance.

Linguistic pattern aspects can be seen from the word : *ini* (206), *dan* (89), *nanti* (47), *seperti* (19), *sudah* (16). These words suggest that Ramadan is commonly used in everyday conversation and text, whether in temporal references (*ini, nanti*), comparisons (*seperti*), or sequencing (*dan*).

From this analysis, Ramadan is primarily associated with its religious (fasting), temporal (month, year, arrival), and social aspects (bazaar, pesantren, safari Ramadan). These collocations confirm that Ramadan is not just a religious observance but also a cultural, economic, and communal phenomenon. The presence of words like *suci, puasa, momentum, bazaar* indicates that Ramadan has both spiritual depth and sociocultural impact in the corpus data.

DISCUSSIONS

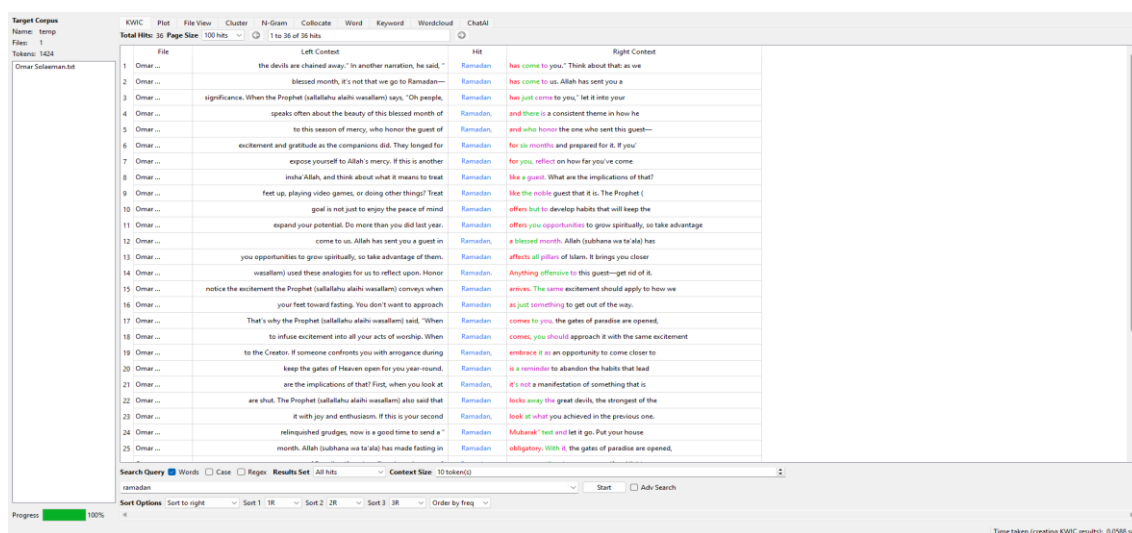


Fig 3. [AntConc Data Analysis for Dr. Omar Suleiman]

The khutbah by Dr. Omar Suleiman provides a rich and multi-faceted understanding of Ramadan, both in its linguistic meaning and its spiritual significance. The word "Ramadan" (رمضان) comes from the Arabic root R-M-D (رمض), which means "scorching heat" or "burning." This indicates purification through intense heat, symbolizing the way fasting burns away sins and purifies the soul. In the khutbah, Dr. Omar Suleiman emphasizes that Ramadan is a divine guest that visits believers annually. This aligns with the linguistic root, as it metaphorically burns away past sins and provides an opportunity for renewal. The connection between fasting and purification is further reinforced by the Prophet Muhammad's (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) teachings that fasting shields a person from Hellfire and that Ramadan is a means of forgiveness. A key theme in the khutbah is treating Ramadan like a guest, which adds layers to its meaning. Unlike other pillars of Islam (Shahada, Salah, Zakat, Hajj), Ramadan is a seasonal obligation that comes and goes rather than being a constant requirement. The act of welcoming and preparing for Ramadan reflects the attitude

believers should have—purifying their hearts, removing distractions, and focusing on spirituality. The khutbah also highlights how Ramadan comes to you, rather than you going to Ramadan, suggesting that it is a divine mercy sent by Allah to uplift believers. The Prophet (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) describes Ramadan as a month when the gates of Paradise are opened. The gates of Hellfire are shut. The devils are chained. These descriptions redefine Ramadan as a divine opportunity, where believers are given a limited time to purify themselves, intensify their worship, and earn forgiveness. Ramadan is not just about abstaining from food and drink, but about spiritual realignment, how we focus on the Afterlife and detaching from worldly distractions. Building better habits – treating Ramadan as a training ground to establish lasting good deeds. Patience and self-control – fasting teaches believers to restrain their desires and practice emotional discipline. Fasting is an obligation, but it is not meant to be difficult. Forgiveness and mercy are at their peak, demonstrating that Ramadan is a season of divine generosity. Ramadan is not just a month, it is an opportunity for transformation, a divine invitation to reconnect with Allah, and a powerful means of achieving spiritual elevation.



Figure 4. [AntConc Data Analysis for Ustaz Khalid Basalamah]

From Ustadz Khalid Basalamah’s khutbah, the meaning of Ramadan can be analyzed as a divine training program, training period for spiritual skill development. It is a time when Allah directly acts as the "trainer," the angels serve as "staff," and the participants are all Muslims who observe fasting and other acts of worship. The khutbah emphasizes that Ramadan is an opportunity for sins to be forgiven. The Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) warned that a person who lets Ramadan pass without their sins being forgiven is truly unfortunate. Everything during Ramadan is described as being blessed: food, rest, prayers, and worship are all made sufficient and meaningful, despite the apparent limitations of fasting. Ramadan is likened to an admission period for paradise, where those who engage in worship are metaphorically "signing up" for eternal reward. On the contrary, the gates of Hell are closed, signaling a reduced influence of evil. The khutbah stresses that Ramadan is not just about fasting but about maximizing all forms of worship, including prayer, Quran recitation, and

charity. The reward for good deeds is multiplied. The sermon explains that during Ramadan, the devils are chained, meaning that Muslims have an advantage in resisting sin and should use this period to build righteous habits. The khutbah warns against treating Ramadan as a temporary period of piety and then returning to sin after Eid. True success is when the spiritual discipline gained in Ramadan continues afterward. In this khutbah, Ramadan is depicted as a divine system for personal and collective spiritual growth, a limited-time opportunity for earning paradise, and a critical period for self-purification. The khutbah urges Muslims to embrace it wholeheartedly and not waste its immense blessings.

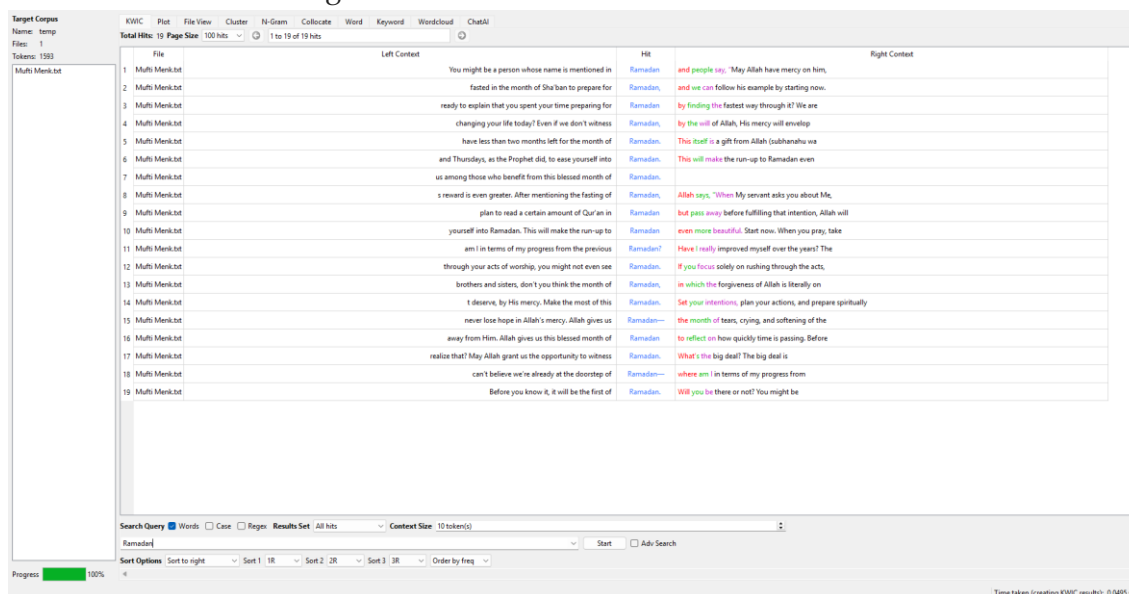


Figure 5. [AntConc Data Analysis for Mufti Menk]

Mufti Menk's khutbah on preparing for Ramadan beautifully illustrates the significance of this blessed month and how we should approach it. His analogy of Ramadan being like a grand sale emphasizes the immense opportunities for forgiveness, mercy, and spiritual elevation. But beyond the analogy, his words highlight the deeper essence of Ramadan : reflection, purification, and reconnection with Allah. Ramadan is described as a period when Allah's forgiveness is readily available. The Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) mentioned that the gates of mercy are opened, the devils are chained, and the doors of Hell are closed. This signifies a divine invitation to return to Allah and seek His pardon for past mistakes. Mufti Menk reminds us that no one is sinless, and the month of Ramadan offers a chance for sincere repentance and a fresh start. The khutbah emphasizes how fast time passes, making each Ramadan feel closer than the last. This rapid passing of time is a prophetic sign and a reminder of life's fleeting nature. It prompts self-reflection—where were we in our faith last Ramadan, and how have we progressed? Have we improved spiritually, even if just an inch at a time? This self-assessment allows us to set new goals for growth in our relationship with Allah. A key takeaway from the khutbah is the importance of setting intentions early. Mufti Menk explains that if a person intends to perform good deeds but passes away

before carrying them out, Allah still rewards them based on their sincere intention. This highlights the importance of planning our acts of worship before Ramadan arrives – whether it's increasing Qur'an recitation, giving charity, or praying additional voluntary prayers. Additionally, the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) would fast in Sha'ban to prepare for Ramadan. By engaging in fasting on Mondays and Thursdays, as well as increasing our prayers now, we ease ourselves into the spiritual intensity of Ramadan, ensuring we make the most of it. Mufti Menk urges us to start engaging with the Qur'an before Ramadan. The Qur'an is described as a source of healing – not just physically but spiritually and emotionally. Even reading one verse a day can create a habit that strengthens our connection to Allah's words. This is especially important in Ramadan, as it is the month in which the Qur'an was revealed. Another key element of Ramadan is charity. The khutbah reminds us that Allah promises to increase our wealth when we give. But beyond financial charity, Ramadan teaches us to show kindness, mend relationships, and treat people with respect, even in disagreements.

The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) exemplified this in his interactions, and we should follow his lead in spreading love and understanding. Mufti Menk ends with a powerful reminder of our mortality. He mentions that many people who were alive last Ramadan are no longer with us. What makes us certain we will see the next one? Preparing for Ramadan is not just about fasting and prayer; it's about preparing for the day we meet Allah. The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said that whoever's last words are "Laillahailallah" will enter Jannah. Thus, Ramadan is not just about spiritual gains for this life but about securing our eternal home in the Hereafter. Ramadan is much more than a month of fasting. It is an opportunity for transformation, renewal, and deep connection with Allah. Mufti Menk's khutbah reminds us that we should start preparing now, through prayer, fasting, Qur'an recitation, charity, and self-improvement. By doing so, we ensure that we fully benefit from this blessed month, whether we live to see it or not. May Allah grant us the ability to witness Ramadan and make the most of its countless blessings.

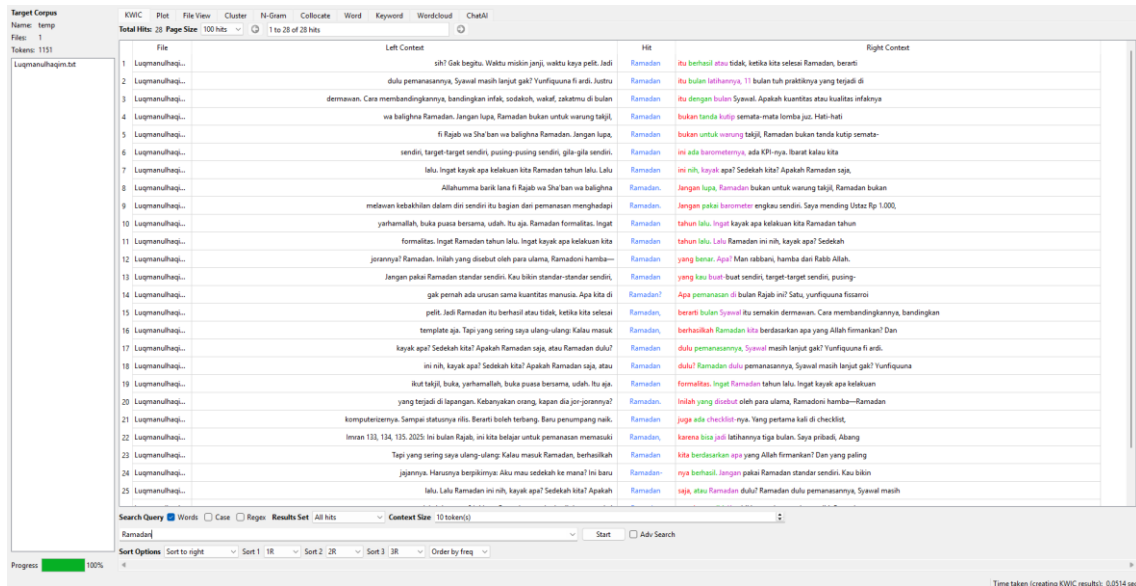


Figure 6. [AntConc Data Analysis for Ust. Luqmanulhakim]

Ustadz Luqmanulhakim presents a deep reflection on the true essence of Ramadan. It challenges conventional perspectives, urging believers to move beyond ritualistic practices and assess whether their Ramadan truly brings them closer to taqwa (God-consciousness)—the ultimate goal of fasting as stated in *Surah Al-Baqarah 2:183*. Ustadz Luqmanulhakim emphasizes that taqwa is the foundation of success and wealth, referencing *Surah Ali Imran 3:133-135*. This ties back to the Quranic command of fasting, which is meant to cultivate taqwa. However, rather than focusing on surface-level acts like completing a juz or participating in communal rituals, the khutbah stresses that true taqwa is measured by character transformation. He highlights *kadzimina al-ghaidh* (restraining anger), which is a major aspect of taqwa. Ramadan is not just about abstaining from food but about developing patience, generosity, and humility. Preparing for Ramadan requires a three-month training period (starting from Rajab and Sha'ban). Habits like waking up for Fajr, reading the Qur'an, and controlling speech require consistency, not last-minute efforts. One of the khutbah's main themes is the connection between wealth, generosity, and spirituality. The speaker critiques the tendency of people to spend extravagantly on personal luxuries while remaining stingy in charity. The contrast between spending on dunya (worldly desires) vs. akhirah (hereafter) is a central critique. True success in Ramadan is not measured by outward religious acts but by an increase in charitable giving. The speaker warns against "bakhil berbalut dalil", using religious justifications to mask stinginess.

Many people give charity only in Ramadan but fail to maintain generosity in Syawal and beyond. Ramadan is the training ground, and the rest of the year is the real test. The key question: "Are we more generous and disciplined after Ramadan?" If not, Ramadan was just a ritual, not a transformation. Ustadz Luqmanulhakim's message is a wake-up call against turning Ramadan into a cultural event rather than a transformative experience. He challenges us to prepare for Ramadan with sincere spiritual training.

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Measure Ramadan's success by its impact on their generosity and character. Ensure Ramadan is not a seasonal boost but a permanent shift towards taqwa. The khutbah reminds us that Ramadan's goal is not just fasting but becoming a better servant of Allah year-round.

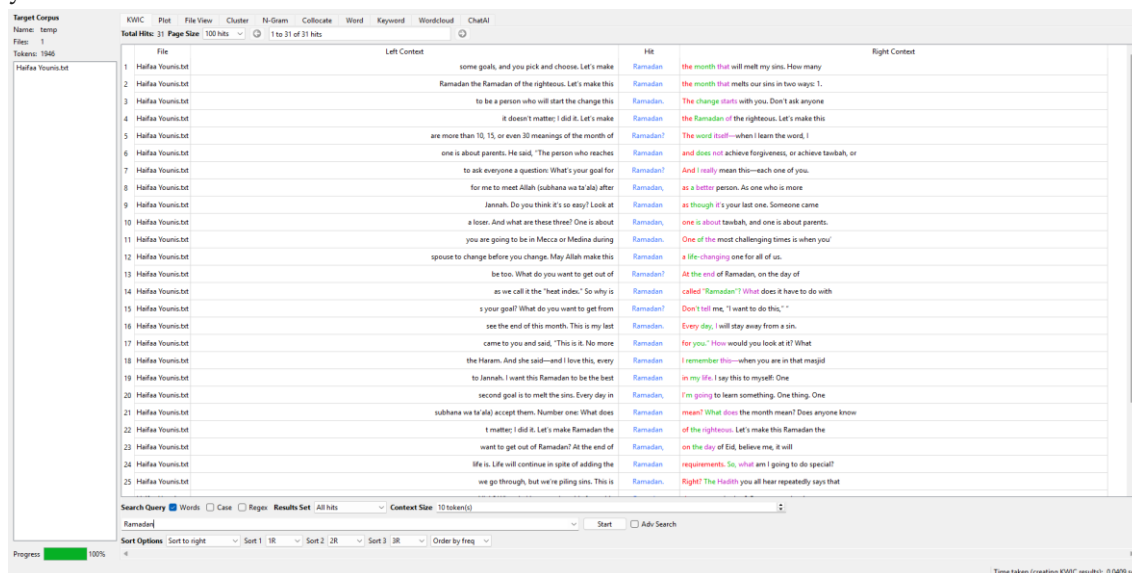


Figure. 7 [AntConc Data Analysis for Dr. Haifaa Younis]

Dr. Haifaa Younis' powerful khutbah presents a deep and thought-provoking perspective on Ramadan, urging believers to reflect on their personal spiritual goals. The speech emphasizes self-accountability, sincerity in worship, and transformation. Below is an analysis based on her key messages. One of the most striking ideas from the khutbah is that Ramadan should not be a passive experience but an active transformation. Fasting, praying, and continuing daily responsibilities are common to millions of Muslims worldwide, but what unique effort is each individual making? The khutbah challenges listeners to reflect on what they are bringing to Allah (SWT) that is truly special. Dr. Haifaa highlights the individual accountability of every believer. When we meet Allah, we will stand alone, and our actions will be weighed.

This forces a shift in focus from community-based rituals to personal sincerity and dedication. The linguistic meaning of *Ramadan*—linked to extreme heat—is symbolic of purification. Dr. Haifaa uses this metaphor to illustrate how Ramadan can “melt” our sins, much like heat melts substances. The two main aspects of this purification are : seeking forgiveness for past sins and avoiding accumulating new sins. This means that Ramadan is not just about increasing worship but also about eliminating sinful habits. Many believers unknowingly pile up sins even in sacred spaces (e.g., gossiping in the masjid, being distracted during Qur'an recitation). The khutbah calls for awareness and restraint, ensuring that worship is not merely mechanical but transformative.

Dr. Haifaa reminds listeners that one of the primary objectives of Ramadan should be true repentance (tawbah). She warns that failing to attain forgiveness during Ramadan is a sign of spiritual loss. Tawbah is not just about verbal repentance but includes turning away from habitual sins. Making a commitment to permanent change. Seeking knowledge to differentiate between halal and haram. Dr. Haifaa critiques the way many people approach Ramadan, focusing too much on food preparation, social gatherings, and worldly concerns rather than worship. She encourages believers to minimize distractions and maximize Qur’anic recitation and reflection. Seeking knowledge, even if it is just one new lesson per day. Sincere dua (supplication) for spiritual elevation.

A particularly emotional point in the khutbah is the reminder of mortality. Dr. Haifaa speaks about feeling anxious as Ramadan approaches, not knowing if she will live to witness it. This creates a sense of urgency : what if this is our last Ramadan? how would we treat it differently?. This thought forces believers to maximize every moment of Ramadan as though it were their final chance to seek Allah’s mercy. The khutbah concludes with an important self-reflection lesson: before expecting change in others – spouses, children, or friends – we must first change ourselves. This is a reminder that true transformation begins internally and then influences those around us.

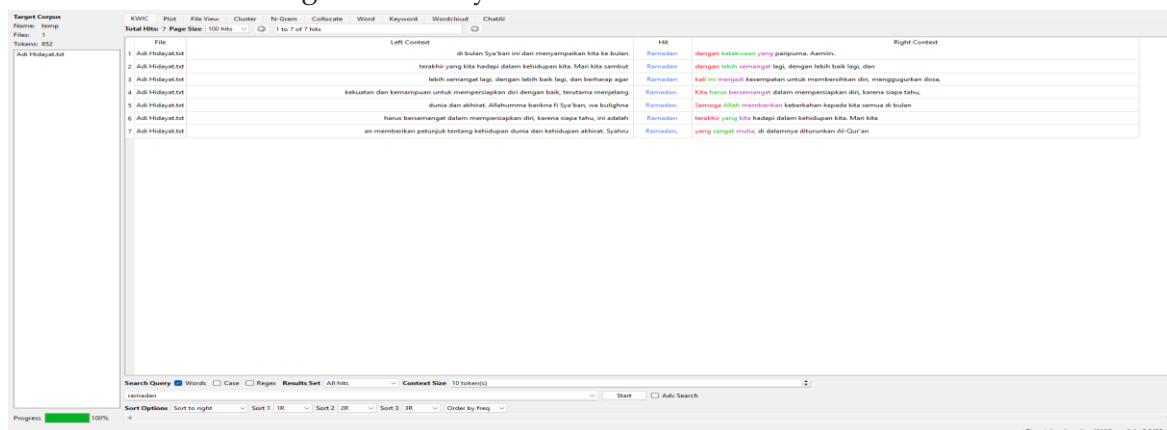


Figure. 7 [AntConc Data Analysis for Ust. Adi Hidayat]

The khutbah by Ustadz Adi Hidayat offers a spiritual analysis of the meaning of Ramadan, emphasizing its unique status, divine rewards, and transformative power for believers. The Prophet Muhammad describes Ramadan as different from other months and fasting within it as extraordinary. Those who fast with faith (imanan) and sincerity (ihtisaban) will have all past sins forgiven. The use of "ma" and "min" in the Quranic interpretation signifies complete forgiveness – covering all sins, whether minor or major. Ramadan is a time for believers to reset their spiritual state and seek total forgiveness. It’s not just about abstaining from food but about cleansing the soul. Some people focus only on worldly success (wealth, career, luxury) without considering the hereafter. The correct approach, as taught in Al-Baqarah 201, is to seek goodness (hasanah) in both worlds: *“Ya Allah, jika saya bekerja, jadikan kerja saya berpahala.”*

Every action eating, drinking, working, can be transformed into worship if done with the right intention. Ramadan reminds us to align our daily activities with divine purpose. It's a training period to ensure that every action contributes to both dunya (world) and akhirah (hereafter). Fasting in the day brings forgiveness. Qiyam (night prayers) brings forgiveness. Dua and seeking pardon are heavily emphasized, particularly the dua: "*Allahumma innaka 'afuwun tuhibbul 'afwa fa'fu 'anni.*" (O Allah, You are the Most Forgiving, You love to forgive, so forgive me.).

Allah loves those who repent more than those who feel flawless. Ramadan is a 24/7 forgiveness cycle it's nearly impossible to remain sinful if one sincerely engages in its spiritual opportunities. Reciting the Quran in Ramadan is incredibly rewarding. Each letter recited grants 10 rewards. This month is a spiritual investment opportunity where every act of worship, recitation, and charity brings exponential rewards. A true Ramadan transformation means carrying its lessons beyond the month—turning everyday activities into acts of worship, maintaining spiritual discipline, and continuously seeking Allah's forgiveness.

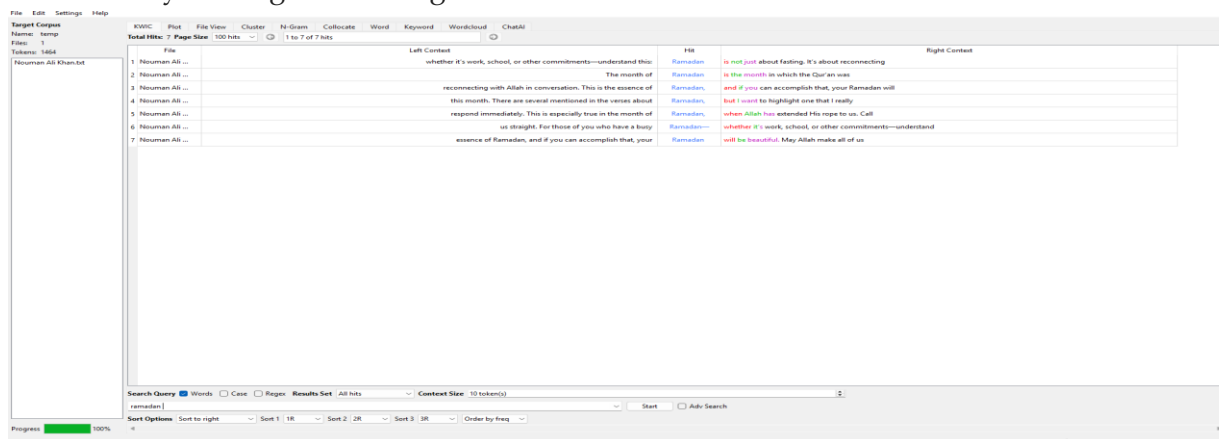


Figure. 8 [AntConc Data Analysis for Nouman Ali Khan]

The khutbah by Nouman Ali Khan presents Ramadan as much more than a time of fasting, it is an opportunity to reconnect with Allah and restore hope in His mercy. The central theme of the speech revolves around hope, renewal, and divine communication. The khutbah emphasizes that Ramadan is primarily the month when the Qur'an was revealed, signifying Allah's ultimate gift to humanity. This gift serves as a rope of guidance to help humanity find its way back to Allah, much like how Prophet Adam (AS) received divine words to guide him after being sent to Earth. The Qur'an is not meant to condemn people but to reignite their connection with Allah. Even if a person has fallen far from Allah, they can return just like Adam (AS) did. This highlights Ramadan as a month of reflection and rediscovery, where believers should focus on engaging with the Qur'an deeply reciting it, understanding it, and allowing it to transform their lives. A strong theme in the khutbah is the concept of hope and second chances. Many people feel distant from Allah due to their sins, believing they are beyond redemption. However, Nouman Ali Khan reassures that no matter how far one has fallen, they can always return to Allah. Unlike Iblis (whose name means "to lose hope"), humans are designed to repent and improve. Making mistakes is part of human nature,

but the best of us are those who keep returning to Allah. This reinforces the idea that Ramadan is a month of renewal, a time to shed self-doubt and reconnect with Allah with a fresh heart.

One of the most powerful aspects of the khutbah is the reminder that Allah is always near and immediately responds to those who call upon Him. Unlike human relationships, where distance and time can create gaps, Allah is always ready to listen. The only condition for making Dua is sincerity, it doesn't matter where or how a person prays. Allah's promise is immediate, He responds as soon as a person turns to Him with sincerity.

This frames Ramadan as an unmissable opportunity, a period when believers can redefine their spiritual lives. The khutbah teaches that Ramadan is a month of renewal, hope, and divine connection. Celebrating the Qur'an as a means of guidance, renewing hope, regardless of past mistakes. Ramadan is about transformation, a time when every believer can reset their relationship with Allah and strengthen their faith.

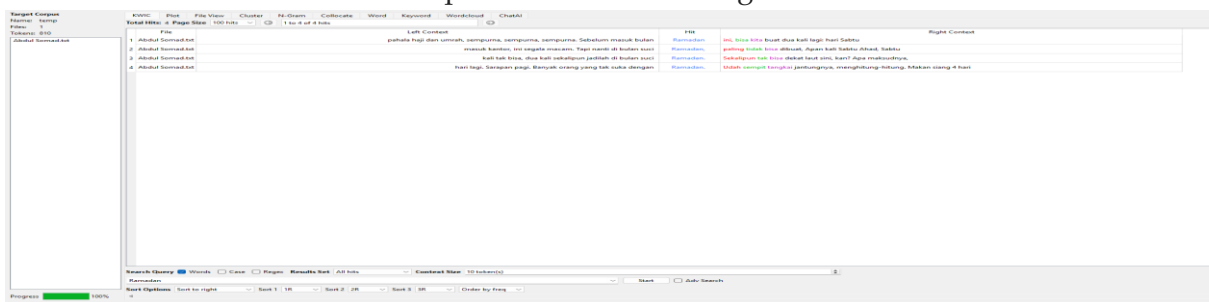


Figure. 8 [AntConc Data Analysis for Ust. Abdul Somad]

Ustadz Abdul Somad's lecture on the best preparation for Ramadan offers humor, and practical guidance for Muslims as they approach the holy month. The khutbah emphasizes that waking up early, particularly for tahajjud and Fajr prayers, brings immense blessings. The Prophet Muhammad stated that Allah grants blessings in the early hours of the day. This aligns with the idea that Ramadan is a time to cultivate discipline, wake up early for suhoor, and maximize opportunities for divine rewards. Ustadz Abdul Somad humorously highlights how gathering in Allah's house and listening to the Quran brings tranquility. He extends this idea to families, suggesting that learning and practicing Islam together can create harmony. This underlines the role of the masjid in Ramadan, where increased congregational prayers and Quran recitation foster a peaceful heart and community. The importance of maintaining spiritual habits beyond Ramadan is stressed. The Prophet encouraged continuity in worship, even if done in small amounts. The Ustadz humorously acknowledges the struggle of long religious gatherings but reassures the audience that even enduring difficulty for the sake of worship brings rewards. This highlights the spirit of endurance and consistency in faith. A recurring theme in the khutbah is death's unpredictability. Through anecdotes, Ustadz Abdul Somad reminds listeners that life is short and should be used for good deeds. Ramadan serves as a critical time for reflection on mortality, encouraging Muslims to repent and prepare for the afterlife. The speaker emphasizes that Ramadan should not be seen as a burden but as a golden opportunity to accumulate rewards. He

humorously contrasts the attitude of those who count down to Ramadan with dread versus those who see it as a spiritual investment. This perspective shift is crucial for making the most of the month. Ustadz Abdul Somad's engaging storytelling and humor make profound spiritual lessons accessible, encouraging Muslims to enter Ramadan with excitement, dedication, and sincerity.

CONCLUSION

This study uncovers a significant contrast between how Indonesian and Western scholars approach the observance of Ramadan. Indonesian lecturers emphasize the communal and ritualistic aspects, focusing on fasting, prayer, charity, and cultivating spiritual discipline through consistent worship. They highlight collective practices, such as group prayers and charity, to strengthen one's faith and foster a long-term commitment to spiritual growth. Conversely, Western lecturers focus on Ramadan's personal and introspective elements, emphasizing individual reflection, repentance, and spiritual renewal. They recognize the unique challenges faced by Muslims in non-Muslim societies, where Ramadan becomes an opportunity for personal transformation and reconnecting with Allah despite societal obstacles. This divergence in emphasis challenges the assumption that Ramadan is universally observed in the same manner, highlighting how cultural and social contexts shape the spiritual experience.

This study enriches the existing literature on Ramadan by introducing a comparative perspective between Indonesian and Western views. It confirms previous findings on the spiritual significance of Ramadan and introduces the concept that cultural and societal contexts deeply influence the observance of Ramadan. The study challenges previous assumptions that Ramadan is uniformly experienced, revealing that the practices and interpretations surrounding this sacred month vary significantly depending on one's environment. By incorporating communal and individual dimensions of Ramadan, this research adds a new layer of understanding to this month's spiritual and social implications.

While this study offers valuable insights, it is limited by a small sample size, primarily focusing on prominent scholars from Indonesia and the West, which may not represent the broader range of perspectives within the Muslim world. Additionally, the research methodology, which relies heavily on scholarly discourses, may not fully capture the lived experiences of everyday Muslims. Further research with a more diverse sample, including Muslims from various cultural, geographical, and sectarian backgrounds, is necessary to develop a more comprehensive understanding of how Ramadan is practiced globally. A larger sample would allow for more accurate comparisons and contribute to more nuanced policy recommendations that consider both community-based and individual experiences of Ramadan.

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