

Heuristic and Hermeneutic Reading of 75 Kufic Towards Ramadan FOKS Indonesia: a Study in Riffaterre's Semiotics

Adib Alfalah^{1*}, Asep Sopian¹

¹ Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Indonesia

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Abstract

In the current era of digital development, Muslim societies have unique and impactful ways of welcoming Ramadan; for instance, "75 Kufic Towards Ramadan" was initiated by the Friends of Kufic Square Indonesia (FOKS Indonesia) community. This welcome enhances the daily posting of Kufic works on social media for 75 days leading up to Ramadan. However, sometimes ordinary people find reading and understanding posts difficult, even though they contain meaning. Therefore, based on this issue, this research aims to describe the heuristic and hermeneutic reading of the collection of calligraphic works, "75 Kufic Towards Ramadan". This study adopts a qualitative descriptive approach, employing content analysis techniques, with data collected through observation, interviews, and documentation, focusing on Kufic texts shared in the "75 Kufic Towards Ramadan" series on FOKS Indonesia's official Instagram account (@foksindonesia). Subsequently, this data was analyzed using the heuristic and hermeneutic analysis techniques in Michael Riffaterre's semiotics. This study's findings are presented as an explanation of the heuristic and hermeneutic reading of the "75 Kufic Towards Ramadan" Kufic texts. Among these Kufic texts created by Kufiers are pieces of verse from the Quran, Hadith, and Mahfudzat in Arabic. These Kufic texts essentially represented deep feelings of joy for the Muslim community in welcoming Ramadan, which is full of glory and forgiveness. Consequently, people could receive positive messages and impressions when welcoming the month of Ramadan.

Keywords *Heuristic, Hermeneutic, Ramadan, FOKS Indonesia, Riffaterre's Semiotics*

INTRODUCTION

When Ramadan arrives, Muslims worldwide often hear or read the phrase "*Marhaban ya Ramadan*". In today's digital age, expressions are usually contained in print media like banners or online media like posters on social media. This is a form of expressing the joy and longing associated with welcoming the arrival of the month of Ramadan. According to Shihab (2007), the earlier scholars chose the expression *Marhaban ya Ramadan* rather than *Ahlan wa Sahlan* because the sentence gives the picture that Ramadan is like a guest received with open breasts, joyful, and welcomed in as spacious and cozy a room as possible.

Based on this, it can be seen that the way people express their joy in celebrating the month of Ramadan is transformed from time to time and from stamp to place. Hamzani (2020) stated that religious expressions, such as celebrating the month of Ramadan, are constantly changing, so they need to get more attention. According to Radwan (2019), the Muslim community's positive response and great attention to the holy month of Ramadan have given rise to an interesting tradition in the socio-cultural landscape. This can be reflected in the activities and practices of communities in celebrating or ending the month of Ramadan all over the world (Fauzi & Regina, 2022; Humaeni et al., 2016) without exception in Indonesia. According to Anjaeni (2019) and Yanti and Prasetya (2021), Muslims worldwide welcome the holy month of Ramadan with various unique celebrations in their respective regions. These include,

1. The *Midfa Al Iftar* tradition from Lebanon, where a cannon is fired to mark the beginning and end of Ramadan



2. The *Haq Al Laila* tradition from the United Arab Emirates, where children celebrate Ramadan by roaming their neighborhoods wearing bright clothing and singing traditional local songs
3. The *Chaand Raat* tradition from Pakistan, where women beautify themselves at the end of Ramadan by visiting markets to buy colorful bangles and henna for nail art
4. The *Roma* tradition, where people parade through the streets daily during Ramadan, playing the *lodra*, a homemade drum covered with sheepskin
5. The *Mhebibes* tradition from Iraq, a traditional game played by men during Ramadan
6. The Egyptian tradition, people hang traditional lantern decorations (*Fanoos*) on the walls of their homes and workplaces, and the lanterns are also played with by children; and
7. The Moroccan tradition, where a *nafar* or town crier dressed in traditional gandora, slipper, and a cap walks through the area during Ramadan.

Meanwhile, in Indonesia, traditional practices for welcoming Ramadan are still widely observed in various regions. *Nyorog* is a tradition in Jakarta where people give food hampers to elders and local community leaders. In Yogyakarta, the *Padusan* tradition involves bathing in rivers as a form of self-purification to welcome Ramadan. Another tradition, *Mattunu Solong*, is practiced in West Sulawesi, where residents light traditional torches and place them on fences, yards, entrances, and even kitchens. Additionally, some regions celebrate Ramadan by gathering with family to enjoy traditional dishes, such as in West Java, Bali, Aceh, North Sumatra, and West Sumatra. These Ramadan traditions have been passed down through generations as a way to preserve culture and customs. The activities carried out also hold profound meanings, aiming to purify oneself, pray for and forgive one another, as well as strengthen social bonds in welcoming the holy month of Ramadan (Kemenparekraf RI, 2024).

The difference in places makes one of the diversity of communities in celebrating and glorifying the month of Ramadan (Bertoli & Grembi, 2021; Kurniadi & Putri, 2021). In line with what Khalil puts forward, invented traditions lead to interpretations that vary according to the context of each locality regarding the relationship of religion with tradition or culture itself (Siregar, 2020). Arifin also affirmed that Islamic patterns in spiritual unity and cultural diversity are due to the creativity of the dialectics of universal religious values with local culture (Ridho, 2019). In achieving the development of Indonesia, the growing cultural and religious practices in Indonesian society must play a significant role (Fadillah, 2022; Hamisu & Kumo, 2024).

Friends of Kufi Square Indonesia (FOKSI) as one of the contemporary kufi discipline streams in the world, has a role in preserving the creation of Islamic culture in Indonesia. The ethical origins of contemporary calligraphy can be traced back to the Quran and Hadith, serving as a medium of appreciation for art. On the other hand, it also contains a function of religious ethics as a guideline or medium of worship (Ahmad, 2021). FOKS Indonesia has a mission, one of which is to help and strengthen cooperation between parties and institutions in the preservation of kufi murabba's calligraphy'. Meanwhile, FOKS Indonesia is also determined to make a contribution to the art and culture of Islam through kufi murabba's calligraphy in Indonesia.

75 Kufic Towards Ramadan is here to welcome the coming of the month of love and forgiveness, Ramadan. The event also provides a platform for FOKS Indonesian kufiers to showcase their creativity and innovation, thereby enhancing their qualifications. The text is usually square, but sometimes it can be in other forms like triangles, love, or even 3D. While the content of the text can be a fragment of the Quran, Hadith, or mahfudzat. The creator posted the results of their work on the official account @foksindonesia, transforming it into an engaging pamphlet. Therefore, to spread the work to the wider public, the work was also disseminated through the personal social media accounts of FOKS Indonesia members, such as WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, etc.

However, the public sometimes struggles to understand the meaning and message of borderline texts, despite the availability of translations. While the art of Islamic calligraphy is based on the holy verses of the Qur'an, al-Hadist or Arabic poems reflect the meaning behind the verses (Alashari et al., 2020). According to Anshory (2021), Arab calligraphy is an important decorative heritage in Islamic art, because its texts allow for the revealing of aesthetic values. Moreover, it plays a crucial role in conveying the text's meaning and message.

For example, Allowaydhi (2020) stated in the study that the clarity of the relationship between letters, inclination, smoothness, length, and shortness in a calligraphy text, as well as how to explain the text's content, should be given attention. To avoid creating ambiguity in the meaning of the sentence text, ensure that the work is clear. Particularly considering that the modern calligraphic style represents a "rebellion" against the unwavering principles of classical calligraphy, it is actually an exploration of the technique and freedom of calligraphy in expression, like the tendency to choose the theme of a two- or three-dimensional work (Ahmad, 2021). Similar to FOKS Indonesia, it consistently upholds the rights of each hijaiyah letter in accordance with the principles outlined in each of its publications.

According to Ustadz Yasin (Founder of FOKS Indonesia), in addition to highlighting its aesthetic side, 75 Kufic Towards Ramadan also seeks to display meaning and a message that the general public can take to celebrate the month of Ramadan. Therefore, we cannot separate aesthetic value from meaning. Given this, semiotic science can serve as a theoretical framework for analysis. Semiotic analysis has become increasingly relevant and of significant interest to researchers due to its applicability in analyzing data from social media platforms (Kravchenko, 2024; Mikhaeil & Baskerville, 2019; Turano & Saludadez, 2024). Michael Riffaterre's semiotic theory is one of the interesting semiotic works to be used as a framework for analysis. Riffaterre's semiotics offers two readings, namely heuristic readings and hermeneutic readings. Through these two readings, we holistically reveal a text's deepest meaning and message. Besides, the design of a sign is becoming more complex, because of the structural model embedded in the Riffaterre (Maulana, 2019).

According to Pradopo (1994), heuristic readings are mimesis readings based on language systems and conventions. Therefore, we consider this reading to be the first stage, with the aspect of literacy serving as its primary focus. The interpretation of the first phase produces a series of meanings that are still generic and heterogeneous (Alfalah et al., 2021). The second reading is a hermeneutic or retroactive interpretation that draws from literary aspects. At this stage, reading develops in the process of displaying meaning, not as an exposition of meaning but as a reference to meaning acquired at the previous stage (Hizkil, 2021).

Through heuristic and hermeneutic readings, this approach becomes significant as it not only focuses on the visual aesthetics of Kufic calligraphy but also integrates an in-depth analysis of the spiritual, social, and cultural messages embedded within it. In the context of Ramadan and contemporary cultural practices in Indonesia, this theory has not been widely applied in previous studies, offering a new perspective on understanding the role of Islamic calligraphy in preserving Islamic traditions and culture in Indonesia. This highlights that this research makes a positive contribution to the development of semiotic studies in Islamic art, which have predominantly been applied to literary texts and poetry.

This study aims to delineate the meaning and message contained in the 75 kufic calligraphic texts for Ramadan in the form of Quran, Hadith, and Mahfudzat so that they can be communicated to the wider public. In line with this, the researcher put forward two problem formulations related to the meaning and message contained in 75 Kufic Towards Ramadan:

1. What is the meaning and message of the Kufic text in 75 Kufic Towards Ramadan through heuristic reading?
2. What is the meaning and message of the Kufic text in 75 Kufic Towards Ramadan through

hermeneutic reading?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Michael Riffaterre's semiotic theory offers a robust framework for interpreting texts by emphasizing the interplay between surface structures and underlying meanings. Central to his approach are two sequential reading stages, heuristic and hermeneutic. Heuristic Reading involves an initial, surface-level engagement with the text, focusing on its literal meaning and linguistic conventions. This stage allows readers to identify the basic narrative or descriptive elements without delving into deeper interpretations. Hermeneutic Reading follows, encouraging readers to explore the text's deeper, often symbolic meanings. This interpretative phase considers cultural, historical, and intertextual contexts, uncovering the nuances and complexities that lie beneath the surface (Riffaterre, 1978).

Applying Riffaterre's semiotic theory to contemporary Kufic calligraphy, particularly posters on digital platforms like Instagram, provides valuable insights (Mikhaeil & Baskerville, 2019). Kufic calligraphy, with its square forms and distinctive style, functions not only as an artistic expression but also as a medium conveying spiritual and cultural messages. A heuristic reading of such calligraphy involves analyzing the forms and styles of Kufic calligraphy, including translating it into textual meaning. Meanwhile, a hermeneutic reading explores the symbolic meanings, cultural significance, and the context in which the artwork is presented. This dual-layered analysis can reveal how modern digital platforms are utilized to preserve and innovate within the tradition of Islamic art. The study on the visual semiotics in the structure of Kufic calligraphy emphasizes the importance of semiotic interpretation in deciphering the hidden meanings of aesthetic achievements, highlighting the intellectual approach required to understand such artworks.

Research employing the heuristic and hermeneutic reading model of Riffaterre's semiotic analysis has been extensively conducted by academics. Most of these studies use literary texts, such as the Qur'an and poetry, as their corpus. For instance, Maulana (2019) examined fragments of Qur'anic verses in Surah Ali-Imran verse 14, and Fajrin (2019) analyzed Surah Al-Baqarah verse 223. Meanwhile, studies on poetry include Akastangga's (2020) research on *Syair al-Hikmah wa al-Mauidzoh Fi Diwan Mahmud al-Warraaq* and Alfalah et al. (2023) work on the lyrics of *Rahmatun Lil'alamin* by Maher Zain. These studies begin by positioning the Qur'an and poetry as texts (*nash*), where the text is seen as a manifestation of signs composed of linguistic and cultural elements combined in a particular way to produce specific meanings.

In contrast, most studies on the meaning of calligraphy focus on its visual interpretation using semiotic theories. Examples include Alhail's (2024) study of the ideology behind contemporary calligraphy by Pamela's (2021) research on the interpretation of meanings in wedding invitation designs, both analyzed through Roland Barthes' semiotics. Similarly, Rorong's et al. (2020) research explored the understanding and aesthetic interpretation of *Lar batik* motifs using Charles Sanders Pierce's semiotics, while Anfa and Susanti's (2020) study analyzed the meaning of ornaments in An-Nur Grand Mosque in Riau through Danesi's semiotics.

Based on this literature review, this study specifically focuses on analyzing the meanings embedded in Kufic Square calligraphy through Riffaterre's semiotics. This approach emphasizes the interpretation of textual elements in addition to the visual aspects of calligraphy. Thus, the study offers a new and unique perspective in interpreting Islamic calligraphy, particularly in welcoming Ramadan in the digital era. The application of Riffaterre's semiotics in this study provides a significant contribution to the development of Islamic art studies, especially by expanding the theory's application from the realm of literature and poetry to art forms such as Kufic Square calligraphy. Furthermore, this study bridges the understanding between the aesthetics and rhetoric of calligraphy, potentially serving as a methodological model for other Islamic art studies that

integrate visual and textual analysis. By focusing on the preservation of Islamic traditions and culture through this semiotic approach, the research highlights the relevance of Riffaterre's theory in enriching Islamic art studies in the modern era.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design, which describes, displays, and decomposes the object being studied, utilizing Riffaterre's semiotic analysis approach to analyze the Kufic text in "75 Kufic Towards Ramadan" (Arikunto, 2013). The research data source consists of primary data in the form of Kufic texts from "75 Kufic Towards Ramadan" on the Instagram account @foksindonesia, as well as secondary data, including the Qur'an, hadith, and relevant research to support the data interpretation.

Data collection was conducted using triangulation techniques through observation, interviews, and documentation. The initial observation involved examining the Kufic posts from 75 Kufic Towards Ramadan 1443H/2022M by FOKS Indonesia. Subsequently, through documentation, the researcher selected several Kufic post samples from the @foksindonesia account based on the appeal of their form, visuals, and textual content. Meanwhile, semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected Kufiers (kufic creator) to identify their intended messages based on their perspectives.

The data analysis techniques used in this study were based on Michael Riffaterre's semiotic analysis (Riffaterre, 1978), which has six stages: 1) categorizing Kufic text posts based on text form; (Quran, Hadith, and Mahfudzah); 2) selecting 3 interesting Kufic works from each category; 3) finding indirectness of expression; 4) heuristic reading; 5) hermeneutic reading; and 6) conclusion.

The heuristic and hermeneutic readings in this study will complement each other to interpret the visual texts of kufic calligraphy. In heuristic reading, the text is read based on the language conventions or the language system according to its position as a first-level semiotic system, meaning the text is interpreted according to the normative structure of the language. Heuristic work results in an understanding of the literal meaning, explicit meaning, and actual meaning. To achieve a deeper and more comprehensive interpretation, a reading of the literary conventions or the second-level language system is required, which is hermeneutic reading. The hermeneutic approach works by understanding the whole based on its elements, and vice versa. Considering their cultural and spiritual context, this reading will delve deeper into the meanings of texts such as Quranic verses, Hadiths, or Mahfudzah. Together, these approaches provide a comprehensive understanding of the moral and spiritual messages contained in the calligraphy.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

75 Kufic Towards Ramadan FOKS Indonesia

75 Kufic Towards Ramadhan is a series of activities to welcome the arrival of the month filled with love and forgiveness, Ramadan. These activities also serve as a platform for members of FOKS Indonesia to showcase their creativity and innovation in enhancing their kufic skills. Typically, kufic text is in square (*murabba'*) form, but sometimes it can also take other shapes such as triangles, hearts, or even 3D designs. The content of the kufic text can consist of excerpts from the Qur'an, Hadith, or aphorisms. The kufic artworks created by these creators are posted on the official @foksindonesia account in attractive pamphlet formats. Furthermore, to reach a wider audience, these works are also disseminated through personal social media accounts of FOKS Indonesia members such as WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and others.

According to Muhammad Yasin, the head of FOKS Indonesia, explains the purpose of this event as follows:

1. To foster friendship (*silaturahmi*) among FOKS Indonesia members

2. Islamic brotherhood symbolism (*ukhuwah islamiyah*)
3. Provide a space for expression when welcoming Ramadan
4. Serve as a means of spreading goodness (*dakwah*)
5. Besides providing aesthetic value, it aims to convey meanings and messages that can be embraced by the wider community in welcoming Ramadan
6. Preserve the heritage of Islamic calligraphy art
7. Examining Kufi Murabba's calligraphy in Indonesia

Based on the results of observations on 75 kufic posts towards Ramadan @foksindonesia, there were 75 kufic text posts.

Table 1. 75 kufic post towards Ramadan

Qur'an	Hadith	Mahfudzat
27 posts	21 posts	27 posts

Heuristic Reading

In the first step, the Kufic text will be examined based on the understanding of its linguistic meaning, which is straightforward or based on the denotative meaning of a language. To clarify the meaning, if necessary, insert additional words or synonyms in parentheses.

1. Kufic texts formed Quran verse



Figure 1. Poster of Quran Text Kufic

The Kufic, featuring the square layout above, was created by @alma.kufi over the course of 26 days towards Ramadan 1443H. Here's a heuristic analysis of Q.S. An-Nisa's verse 99:

وكان الله غفورا

Wa kāna Allāh 'afuwwan ghafūrā.

Dan (adalah) Allah maha pemaaf (lagi) maha pengampun.

And *Allāh* is ever pardoning and forgiving.



Figure 2. Poster of Quran Text Kufic

The stacked diamond-shaped kufic above was created by @akhwat_akhiruzzaman in 14 days towards Ramadan 1443H. Here's a heuristic analysis of Q.S. Al-Isra's (26–27):

وَلَا تُبَذِّرْ تَبْذِيرًا إِنَّ الْمُبَذِّرِينَ كَانُوا إِخْوَانَ الشَّيَاطِينِ

Wa lā tubadzdzir tabdzīrā innal mubadzdzirīna kānū ikhwānasysyayāthīn.

Dan janganlah (kamu) menghambur-hamburkan (hartamu) secara boros. Sesungguhnya orang-orang (yang) pemboros itu (adalah) saudara setan.

And do not spend wastefully. Indeed, the wasteful are brothers of the devils.



Figure 3. Poster of Quran Text Kufic

Kufic's double diamond layout was created by @kufidenay. This Kufic with the title “Good Sustenance” is present in 50 days towards Ramadan 1433H. Here's a heuristic analysis of Q.S. al-Baqarah verse 172:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُلُوا مِن طَيِّبَاتِ مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ وَاشْكُرُوا لِلَّهِ إِن كُنتُمْ إِيَّاهُ تَعْبُدُونَ

Yā ayyuha alladzīna āmanū kulū min tayyibāti mā razaqnākum wasykurū lillāhi in kuntum iyyāhu ta'budūn.

Wahai orang-orang yang beriman, makanlah diantara rezeki (yang) baik-baik (yang) kami berikan

kepadamu dan bersyukur-lah kepada Allah, jika benar-benar kepada-Nya kamu menyembah.

O you have believed, eat from the good things which we have provided for you and be grateful to Allah if it is (indeed) him that you worship.

2. Kufic texts formed Hadith



Figure 4. Poster of Hadith Text Kufic

The Kufic, featuring the square layout above, was created by @nur_design._ over the course of 12 days towards Ramadan 1443H. The kufic is entitled “World Jewellery” with the letters Java Pegon. Here is a heuristic analysis of H.R Muslim 1467:

فرهياسن دنيا

Perhiyāsān dunyā

Perhiasan dunia

Word jewellery



Figure 5. Poster of Hadith Text Kufic

Kufic's square layout was created by @ocyed with the title “Lisan Milenial” is present in 31 days towards Ramadan 1433H. Here is a heuristic analysis of Bukhori's hadist:

سلامة الإنسان في حفظ اللسان

Salāmatul insān fī hifzil lisān.

Keselamatan seseorang (itu terdapat) dalam menjaga lisan-nya.
The person's safety lies in keeping his mouth closed.



Figure 6. Poster of Hadith Text Kufic

Kufic's square layout with Lego design was created by @kufiverse with the title "thankfulness" and is present in 61 days towards Ramadan 1433H. Here is a heuristic analysis of the text (HR. Ahmad, 4/278):

من لم يشكر القليل لم يشكر الكثير

Man lam yasykuril qalil lam yasykuril katsir

Barang siapa tidak mensyukuri (yang) sedikit, maka ia tidak akan mampu mensyukuri sesuatu (yang) banyak.

Whoever is not grateful for a little will not be able to be grateful for a lot.

3. Kufic texts formed mahfudzat (quotes)

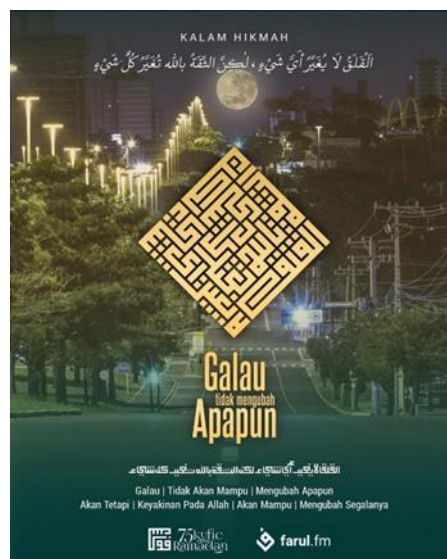


Figure 7. Poster of Mahfudzat Text Kufic

The work of @farul.fm serves as a kufic square of wisdom in 38 days towards Ramadan 1443H. Here is the heuristic analysis:

القلق لا يغير أي شيء، لكن الثقة بالله تغير كل شيء

Alqulaqu lā yughayyiru ay syaiin lākinnatstsqaqatu billāhi tughayyiru kullun syaiin.

Galau tidak (akan mampu) mengubah apapun, akan tetapi keyakinan pada Allah (akan mampu) mengubah segalanya.

Feeling blue cannot change anything, but faith in God can change everything.



Figure 8. Poster of Mahfudzat Text Kufic

This long square-shaped kufi is the result of @kofiekufie's work on the theme of lust. This work was completed in 57 days towards Ramadan 1443H. Here is the heuristic analysis of the given expression:

أعظم البلاء كثرة العلم مع الهوى

A'zamul balāi katsratul 'ilmi ma'al hawā.

Musibah terbesar (adalah) banyaknya ilmu (yang masih disertai) dengan hawa nafsu.

The greatest disaster is the abundance of knowledge accompanied by lust.



Figure 9. Poster of Mahfudzat Text Kufic

Kufic square by @kufidenay appears elegantly with the title "*La taghdab*". This mahfudzat expression was present in Kufi for 67 days towards Ramadan in 1443 H. Here is the heuristic analysis:

لا تغضب ولك الجنة

Lā taghdab wa lakal jannah

Jangan-lah (kamu) marah, (maka) bagimu surga

Don't be angry, for you heaven.

Hermeneutic Reading

At this step, the author attempts to review and compare the interpretation of the text as outlined in the heuristic reading stage. In this way, the meaning of the words may undergo modifications in terms of Connotative meaning.

1. Kufic texts formed Quran verse

In Figure 1, Kufic murabba' Q.S An-Nisa', the meaning is "*And Allāh is ever pardoning and forgiving*" through the heuristic reading stage. <الغفور> is the 34th name among the 99 Asma'ul Husna (the Beautiful Names of Allah), while <العفو> is the 82nd. That is why in the verse, the name <الغفور> is mentioned before <العفو>. Hermeneutically, this verse emphasizes that Allah is the most forgiving of all kinds of sins committed by his servants due to forced circumstances and valid reasons. Allah will not punish them. Indeed, Allah is merciful to their mistakes and will not reveal those mistakes in the future. This verse confirms the previous verse, which condemns people who are reluctant to emigrate, and the verse after, which contains Allah's promise (reward) for those who emigrate.

According to the Kufier on this poster, one of the key steps in welcoming Ramadan is engaging in deep self-reflection, manifested through repentance, frequent recitation of *istighfar* (seeking forgiveness), and asking Allah for pardon. This preparation reflects the understanding that Ramadan is not merely a month of worship but also a period of profound spiritual transformation. For a Muslim, this holy month serves as an opportunity to improve oneself by abandoning negative behaviours of the past and replacing them with better and more beneficial actions. This process not only reinforces the importance of a personal relationship with Allah but also fosters an awareness of moral and ethical values that should be practised daily during and after Ramadan. Therefore, Ramadan becomes a space for self-reconciliation, strengthening faith, and renewing one's commitment to living in accordance with Islamic principles.

Furthermore, the verse serves as a reminder to the Muslim community that Ramadan is a month imbued with divine mercy, forgiveness, and opportunities for spiritual renewal. During this sacred period, Muslims are encouraged to earnestly seek Allah's pleasure by striving for His forgiveness and embracing sincere repentance. The verse also emphasizes the importance of continuous self-improvement and the commitment to avoiding past transgressions. It highlights the centrality of remorse and genuine transformation as core principles in Islamic teachings, reflecting the broader spiritual goal of aligning one's actions with divine guidance.

In Figure 2, the literal meaning is "*And do not spend wastefully. Indeed, the wasteful are brothers of the devils*". This means that Allah forbids Muslims from being wasteful, that is, to spend their wealth without careful calculation so that it becomes wasteful. This prohibition aims to ensure that Muslims manage their expenses carefully, so that what they spend is in accordance with their needs and income. Muslims are also not allowed to give away their wealth to people who do not have the right to receive it, or to give more wealth than they should. This means that they are neither excessive nor stingy. At the hermeneutical level, we can interpret the content of this verse as a strict prohibition against wasting things that do not bring benefit and instead cause harm. Therefore, it is enough to use it as needed, and of course, it will bring benefits.

Kufier, on this poster, conveys that the theme was designed as a reminder and advice against spending wealth on unnecessary or non-essential items. This statement aligns with Indonesian cultural practices, where, prior to Ramadan and in preparation for Eid al-Fitr, it is customary for people to visit markets or malls to purchase various goods needed for the holy month and the festivities. This tradition reflects the community's enthusiasm in welcoming and preparing for Ramadan and Eid. However, Kufier's message specifically addresses individuals who engage in these activities excessively, treating them as an opportunity for extravagance and wastefulness. These are individuals who spend their money on items that are not genuinely required for Ramadan and lack meaningful value or benefit. The poster's message critiques such consumerist tendencies, advocating instead for mindful and purposeful spending in alignment with Islamic principles.

The core message conveyed in welcoming the month of Ramadan is the importance of utilizing one's resources in accordance with religious principles, such as through acts of *shodaqah* (charity) and the fulfillment of *zakat* (obligatory almsgiving). Islamic teachings emphasize directing these acts of generosity towards close relatives, the poor, and travellers in need. This practice aligns with the cultural traditions of Indonesian society, such as the widespread custom of "giving takjil," where food is shared with those fasting or less fortunate. Through this Kufi pamphlet, it is hoped that individuals will gain a deeper understanding of the ethical use of wealth, moving away from tendencies of misuse or excess, and instead fostering generosity that reflects the spirit of Ramadan.

In Figure 3, the Kufic text conveys the lexical meaning: "*O you have believed, eat from the good things which we have provided for you and be grateful to Allāh if it is (indeed) him that you worship*". From a hermeneutic perspective, this verse underscores a directive to the believers to consume wholesome and beneficial provisions granted by Allah, which must be met with gratitude. The term "good" implies food that is healthy, safe, and consumed in moderation, without excess. Additionally, the means of acquiring such provisions must align with halal principles, ensuring they are obtained through lawful and ethical methods as prescribed in Islamic teachings. This interpretation highlights the intertwining of physical nourishment with spiritual responsibility, reflecting gratitude as an essential aspect of worship and faith.

Moreover, this verse conveys a profound message to consistently express gratitude to Allah by acknowledging that all sustenance originates from Him and must be utilized in accordance with His divine guidance. It emphasizes the principle that provisions should not only fulfill physical needs but also reflect spiritual mindfulness. In the context of Ramadan, this verse inspires a sense of appreciation for the blessings of sahur (pre-dawn meal) and iftar (breaking the fast) as acts of worship. These moments are opportunities to consume good, wholesome, and halal food in moderation, embodying both self-discipline and gratitude. Through Kufier's message, this interpretation reinforces the idea that Ramadan is not merely a time of abstention but also a period to cultivate awareness of Allah's blessings, channelling them towards meaningful acts of devotion and moderation that enhance both physical well-being and spiritual growth.

2. Kufic texts formed Hadith

In Figure 4, Kufic murabba' hadith narrated by Muslim 1467, the lexical meaning is "*Perhiasan dunia*" in Arabic writing pegon. Literally, "*perhiasan*" (jewellery) is like gold, silver, diamond jewellery, etc. However, the pamphlet is contextualized with a hadith from Muslim history number 1467, which reads, "*Dunia adalah perhiasan, dan sebaik-baik perhiasan dunia adalah wanita*". Through hermeneutical reading, there is a connection between the two texts. The word that is highlighted is "*perhiasan dunia*", but behind that, the word woman is a

reference to the word that was highlighted previously. The hadith's explanation asserts that women are the world's finest jewels. In this pamphlet, it aims to show that the world is beautiful and captivating like jewelry. Among all the beauty of the world, women are considered one of the most beautiful and captivating.

Hermeneutically, this work conveys a significant message about the value and dignity of women. The comparison to jewellery emphasizes the idea that, like valuable objects that attract theft and harm when displayed, a woman's dignity, too, must be protected and safeguarded from unnecessary exposure. This protection extends beyond physical appearance to encompass her actions, behavior, and personal relationships. The analogy underscores the importance of maintaining modesty, particularly in regard to one's private parts, as an expression of respect for both oneself and others. Through the lens of Ramadan, Kufier's message encourages women to increase their piety by upholding modesty, which is central to Islamic values. This can be manifested by steadfastly practicing *istiqomah* (consistency) in modesty, ensuring that their conduct aligns with Islamic principles, and thus fostering an environment of dignity, respect, and spiritual growth. The call is not only to protect one's outward appearance but to cultivate inner strength and righteousness, contributing to a holistic approach to piety that includes both external and internal dimensions.

In Figure 5 of the kufic square with the title "*Lisan Milenial*" we get the lexical meaning, namely, "*The person's safety lies in keeping his mouth closed*". According to hermeneutical reading, the Prophet Muhammad SAW emphasized how important it is to protect your mouth because it is like a knife, which, if used incorrectly, can injure someone. In this modern era, verbal sharpness is sometimes also manifested in activities on social media, such as through uploaded stories. In another analogy, it is said that "your mouth is your tiger", when words that we cannot control can at any time turn back on ourselves.

The moral message that can be drawn in this modern era is the importance of exercising wisdom in using social media. With the arrival of Ramadan, it serves as an opportunity to train oneself in controlling speech and less beneficial actions. Kufier suggests that this poster serves as a reminder to maintain ethical conduct in the digital realm, emphasizing that even written words or posts shared on social media should reflect respect and mindfulness. In the context of Ramadan, this message encourages individuals to practice restraint, ensuring that their online interactions are aligned with Islamic values of kindness, respect, and integrity. Just as Ramadan is a time for self-discipline and reflection, it is also a time to cultivate responsible use of social media, where every post or comment contributes positively to one's character and to the well-being of the wider community. This call to maintain decorum online not only helps in fostering a more respectful and compassionate digital environment but also reinforces the broader spiritual goals of Ramadan, encouraging Muslims to be mindful of their words both in the real and virtual worlds.

Figure 6 shows the lexical meaning: "*Whoever is not grateful for a little will not be able to be grateful for a lot*". Hermeneutically, this hadith contains a parable of portion ratios in gratitude. This hadith contains deep meaning about the importance of being grateful for Allah's blessings in all circumstances, whether few or many. This hadith teaches that having a grateful attitude is very important in everyday life. By being grateful for small blessings, a person will be better able to appreciate and be grateful for the greater blessings that Allah bestows on them. Consistently giving thanks for Allah's blessings is also a form of strengthening one's faith and drawing closer to Allah in the month of Ramadan.

Kufier invites readers to consistently express gratitude for all that they have received and experienced. This call to gratitude is especially relevant in the context of Ramadan, as it emphasizes thankfulness for the opportunity to witness this sacred month, enabling one to

fulfill the obligation of fasting and engage in acts of worship that are highly esteemed by Allah. While such opportunities may seem modest at first glance, they carry profound wisdom and invaluable lessons that, when reflected upon, can deeply enrich one's spiritual journey. Kufier's message encourages an awareness of the blessings in everyday life, urging individuals to recognize the significance of seemingly ordinary moments and to cultivate a sense of gratitude for the spiritual opportunities provided by Ramadan. By reflecting on these blessings, believers can grow in their faith, enhance their self-discipline, and draw closer to Allah, ultimately fostering a deeper appreciation for the divine wisdom embedded in every aspect of their lives.

3. Kufic texts formed Mahfudzat

In Figure 7, we get the lexical meaning that "*Feeling blue cannot change anything, but faith in God can change everything*". In this sentence, there is a conflict between confusion and belief. Confusion carries a negative connotation and should be avoided. It has become the culture of the modern era, the word confusion has become a word that reflects a person's unease or anguish over something that he thinks is difficult to achieve because of his inability. However, humans forget that there is a God for them. Hermeneutically, this text conveys a profound message about the power of faith and how belief in Allah can be a source of change and solutions, encouraging readers not to be trapped in confusion but to direct their hearts and minds towards Allah. In this Kufic work, there is a message that in welcoming the month of Ramadan, one should increase their faith in Allah.

In this Kufic work, Kufier conveys the message that in welcoming the month of Ramadan, one should strengthen their faith and trust in Allah. The text emphasizes the importance of cultivating a deep and unwavering relationship with Allah, recognizing Him as the ultimate source of strength and guidance in navigating life's challenges. This connection with the divine is seen as essential in fostering spiritual resilience and clarity, particularly during the sacred month of Ramadan. Rather than succumbing to prolonged feelings of uncertainty or anxiety, the message encourages believers to embrace a sense of joy and anticipation in welcoming Ramadan, understanding it as an opportunity for renewal and spiritual growth. By focusing on the blessings and opportunities that Ramadan brings, individuals can shift their mindset towards gratitude, optimism, and devotion, thereby enhancing their faith and strengthening their commitment to Allah's guidance. This positive outlook not only enriches the spiritual experience of Ramadan but also fosters inner peace and a more profound sense of purpose in life.

In Figure 8, the lexical meaning conveyed is, "*The greatest disaster is the abundance of knowledge, which is still accompanied by lust*". From a hermeneutic perspective, this expression highlights the distinction between the creation of humans, angels, and animals. Allah created angels with reason devoid of passion, while animals were endowed with lust without reason. In contrast, humans were created with both reason and lust simultaneously. This duality means that when one's knowledge governs their desires, they surpass the angels in virtue; however, when one's desires dominate their knowledge, they fall below the animals in moral standing. The angels' obedience is inherent, as they were created without conflicting desires, while humans, who possess the ability to control their desires through knowledge, are considered unique in their capacity for spiritual and moral choice. Similarly, it is natural for animals to follow their desires without restraint, as they were created without reason. However, humans, who are endowed with reason, and yet allow their desires to lead, fall short of their potential, with animals, in this context, being more virtuous by acting according to their nature.

Kufier's message underscores the moral responsibility of individuals to utilize their intellect to control their desires, emphasizing that true nobility lies in the ability to align one's

actions with knowledge and divine guidance. This message is in harmony with the arrival of Ramadan, which serves as an opportunity to train and restrain one's desires. During Ramadan, knowledge is not only a tool for worship but also a means to avoid actions that invoke one's base desires. The month of Ramadan becomes a critical time for spiritual development, where individuals are encouraged to exercise self-discipline, purifying both body and soul. Through fasting and other acts of worship, Muslims are reminded of their ability to control worldly desires and focus on cultivating a deeper connection with Allah. Kufier's message reflects this spiritual practice, urging individuals to apply their knowledge to enhance their piety, strengthen their self-control, and align their actions with ethical and moral standards in accordance to divine teachings. Thus, Ramadan becomes more than a ritual of abstention; it is a process of spiritual refinement, where the mind and body work in unison to elevate the individual toward greater moral and spiritual excellence.

In Figure 9, the lexical meaning conveyed is, "*Do not be angry, heaven is for you*". From a hermeneutic perspective, this text highlights the significance of self-discipline, particularly in managing anger. When left unchecked, anger can severely damage relationships, ignite conflicts, and lead to later regretted actions. In Islamic teachings, the ability to control one's anger is regarded as a mark of moral maturity and spiritual strength. Allah promises paradise as a reward for those who, despite being provoked, exercise patience and refrain from letting anger dictate their actions. This reflects the high value placed on emotional regulation in Islam, not merely as a tool for personal peace, but as a means of fostering harmony within society. By controlling anger, individuals align themselves with divine teachings, demonstrating their commitment to maintaining peace and upholding ethical conduct. This text, therefore, underscores that emotional control is not just a personal virtue but a spiritual discipline that brings believers closer to Allah's mercy and rewards.

Overall, the text "*Do not be angry, heaven is for you*" carries a profound message about the importance of self-control and the spiritual reward awaiting those who manage to control their anger. In welcoming the month of Ramadan, Kufier encourages readers to take this opportunity as a moment to practice self-discipline, particularly in managing anger, in order to attain spiritual tranquillity. Ramadan is the perfect time to cultivate patience, improve social relationships, and deepen one's connection with Allah. Through emotional control, individuals can not only enhance the quality of their worship but also lead a more harmonious and meaningful life, ultimately drawing them closer to Allah's mercy and paradise.

CONCLUSIONS

This study analyzes Kufic texts from the "75 Kufic Towards Ramadan" series by the FOKS Indonesia community using Michael Riffaterre's semiotic approach. The findings reveal that these Kufic texts, which incorporate Quranic verses, hadiths, and mahfudzats, serve not only as aesthetically pleasing works of art but also as profound conveyors of spiritual messages. Through heuristic and hermeneutic readings, the texts are shown to express joy, hope, and religious values such as gratitude, patience, and prudent resource management in welcoming Ramadan. These messages highlight the role of Kufic calligraphy as a relevant medium of Islamic cultural expression in contemporary contexts.

This research carries significant theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, it extends the application of semiotics to the analysis of calligraphy, demonstrating that Kufic art can act as a meaningful symbol of communication. Practically, the findings offer guidance for artistic and religious communities to use Kufic calligraphy as a creative medium for education and da'wah, particularly in the digital era. The study also underscores the importance of providing additional interpretations for Kufic artworks to ensure that their moral and spiritual messages are accessible

to the broader public while preserving the heritage of Islamic art.

LIMITATION & FURTHER RESEARCH

This research has limitations regarding the object of study, namely that not all of the content of the 75 kufic towards Ramadan posts was analyzed. Researchers categorize Kufi texts based on text form, so that they obtain Kufi texts in the form of Al-Qur'an, Al-Hadith and Mahfudzat for each of 3 Kufi works. Furthermore, to find the meaning of a text, according to Riffaterre in his book "Semiotics of Poetry", there are four main points that must be considered, namely (1) indirectness of expression, (2) heuristic and hermeneutic reading (3) matrix, models, and variants. variants, and (4) hypograms. However, the object of this research study is not a complete unified text, so the researcher is limited by applying steps 1 and 2. In line with that, this paper suggests further studies on meaning analysis at events welcoming the month of Ramadan by FOKS Indonesia, such as 75 kufic towards Ramadan through posts on Instagram @foksindonesia. The researcher recommends using larger samples for future research. This is intended to improve data accuracy and detect and assess any changes to existing analysis.

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