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Plurals in Al-Munawwir Dictionary: Presentation and Critique

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ABSTRACT

The "Al-Munawwir Dictionary" is one of the most prominent bilingual dictionaries (Arabic-Indonesian) widely used among Indonesian students, researchers, and in Islamic boarding schools. Despite its widespread usage and esteemed reputation among Indonesians learning Arabic as a foreign language, there is an urgent need to reassess its treatment of linguistic topics, particularly in regard to the handling of plural forms. This study aims to analyze the dictionary's approach to plural forms, critically evaluate them, and refine them to address its shortcomings. The study employed a comprehensive analytical and statistical approach, examining the entire dictionary and extracting entries that include specified plural forms. The statistical analysis revealed that the number of entries containing plural forms amounted to 3,164 words distributed across 1,354 pages. Furthermore, the total number of plural forms reached 4,055, with an increase of 891 plural forms due to the occurrence of multiple plural forms for certain words. Despite the positive aspects of the dictionary, the study found several morphological, Orthographical, typographical, and pluralization-related errors that could negatively affect the process of learning Arabic as a foreign language for Indonesian speakers. The study concludes that the dictionary requires a thorough revision and update to enhance its effectiveness in teaching Arabic to non-native speakers. This would contribute to more efficient and sustainable language learning, promote linguistic diversity, and encourage multilingualism, aligning with the goals of sustainable development (DSGs).

Keywords: Al-Munawwir Dictionary; Arabic Language Teaching; Lexicography; Plurals; Quality Education

1. Introduction

Dictionaries play an important role in language learning. Many studies in applied linguistics show a positive link between using dictionaries and successful language acquisition [1]. However, this link does not explain clearly how dictionaries help during the learning process. Even so, researchers agree that learners who use dictionaries often achieve better results than those who do not [3].

Statistics also support the frequent use of dictionaries. In Britain, for example, over 90% of households have at least one dictionary. This number is higher than cookbook ownership, which appears in about 70% of homes, and even higher than Bible ownership, found in around 80% of households, according to the Bible Society [4]. These numbers show that dictionaries serve not only as language tools but also as important references in daily life.

Lexicographers and language learners often agree on the value of dictionaries. In contrast, language teachers express mixed opinions. Some teachers believe that dictionaries help learners, while others think they may confuse students or take their focus away from deeper understanding.

Linguists often express concern about bilingual dictionaries. Some believe that using them too much can slow down language development. These dictionaries usually give only basic meanings and may encourage learners to rely on direct translation. Without context, synonyms, or opposites, learners may avoid the deeper thinking needed to understand words fully. For this reason, many experts suggest using bilingual dictionaries as an extra resource alongside monolingual ones, not as a full replacement [5].

Some linguists encourage language learners to use monolingual dictionaries. They believe this method helps learners immerse themselves in the second language and avoid misunderstandings about word meanings [6]. Monolingual dictionaries also help learners stay focused on the target language and develop their thinking while learning.

Language learners use different types of dictionaries—monolingual, bilingual, and multilingual. However, most learners prefer bilingual dictionaries, especially in the early stages of learning. They choose this option because it saves time and helps them understand words through their native language. Several studies confirm this trend and show that many learners regularly use bilingual dictionaries, whether printed or digital, as a common strategy for learning vocabulary [8].

Other studies also highlight the benefit of using bilingual dictionaries when learners try to understand texts in the target language [15].

Some researchers compare monolingual and bilingual dictionaries in terms of learning outcomes. They study the link between the time spent looking up a word and how well learners remember it. These researchers believe that longer search time leads to better memory retention. Learners often experience this effect when using monolingual dictionaries [16].

Despite some concerns, bilingual dictionaries do not harm language learning. On the contrary, many learners say they gain more from bilingual dictionaries than from monolingual ones, which require more mental effort and concentration.

In the case of Arabic, many learners use dictionaries—especially bilingual ones—to learn vocabulary and expressions. Studies in applied linguistics confirm this trend [17]. This shows the need to create dictionaries that meet learners' specific needs. Whether the dictionary is monolingual, bilingual, or mixed, its value depends on how well it supports learning goals [19].

Researchers agree that Arabic monolingual dictionaries provide more detailed information than bilingual ones. However, most of these dictionaries are not yet suitable for teaching Arabic to non-native speakers. For this reason, many learners avoid monolingual dictionaries and choose bilingual ones instead. One study shows that the number of specialized Arabic bilingual digital dictionaries in different fields is much higher than that of Arabic monolingual or multilingual digital dictionaries [20].

Arabic-Indonesian and Indonesian-Arabic bilingual dictionaries have increased sharply in recent decades. By 2018, publishers had produced 29 of these dictionaries since Indonesia's independence [21]. This development grew from the need of local speakers to understand Islamic texts such as the Quran and Hadith, written in Arabic [22]. Other reasons include work, education, and living in Arab countries [23]. As a result, Arabic has become one of the most popular foreign languages in Indonesia [24].

Among the most notable bilingual dictionaries in this context are:

- Kamus Arab-Indonesia: Mahmud Yunus (1972)
- Kamus Arab-Indonesia al-Kautsar: Husen al-Habsyi (1977)
- Kamus Arab-Indonesia: Ahmad Warson Munawwir (1984)
- Kamus Kontemporer al-Ashri Arab-Indonesia: Atabik Ali and Ahmad Muhdlor (1996)
- Kamus al-Bisri Indonesian-Arab Arab-Indonesia: Adib Bisri and Munawwir (1999)
- Kamus Arab-Indonesia: Abu Rifqi alhanif and Nur Kholis Hasin (2000)
- Kamus alAkmal Arab-Indonesia: Syarif al-Qusyairi (2012)
- Kamus at-Taufiq Arab-Jawa-Indonesia: Taufiqul Hakim (2013)
- Kamus al-Wafi Arab-Indonesia: Thoha Husein al-Mujahid and Atho'ilah alKhalil (2016)

The Al-Munawwir dictionary remains one of the most widely used and popular dictionaries in Indonesia [25]. It holds a special status, as several surveys confirm its

extensive use and recognition among Indonesian researchers and students at universities, institutes, and Islamic boarding schools [26]. Many studies further support this, focusing on its significance in academic contexts.

Therefore, this study seeks to analyze and evaluate the plural forms in the Al-Munawwir dictionary. As one of the most frequently used Arabic dictionaries in Indonesia, it plays a crucial role in supporting Arabic language learning and improving learners' proficiency in using the dictionary effectively.

2. Previous Studies

The Al-Munawwir dictionary has attracted significant academic attention and serves as the central subject of many scientific studies, especially within the Indonesian context. A brief search on web engines and Indonesian university library databases reveals numerous studies. Three studies appear most relevant to the topic of this research.

Rohman aimed to investigate the *broken plurals of abundance jamʿ al-taksīr li-l-kathra* جَمْع التَّكْسِير للكَثْرَة "*broken plurals of abundance*", their morphological patterns, and their features in the *Al-Munawwir* dictionary [28]. The study adopted a descriptive-analytical method, relying on the plural forms categorized as *broken plurals of abundance* in the dictionary, in addition to secondary sources, including grammar and morphology references, especially those focused on *broken plural* studies. The findings revealed that the number of such forms reached 230 entries, distributed across sixteen morphological patterns, with *ṣīghat muntahā al-jumūʿ* صيغَة مُنْتَهى الجُموع "ultimate plural forms" excluded from the main analysis.

Abdul Ghafoor sought to investigate the various morphological patterns of *ṣīghat muntahā al-jumūʿ* صيغَة مُنْتَهى الجُموع "ultimate plural forms" in *al-Munawwir* dictionary and to identify their morphological characteristics [29]. The study was guided by two main research questions: what are the morphological patterns of the ultimate plural forms in the dictionary, and what are their features? The researcher employed a descriptive-deductive approach, collecting lexical items categorized under the ultimate plural and analyzing them based on their morphological patterns and related characteristics. The findings revealed 838 entries falling under the ultimate plural, distributed across 19 distinct morphological patterns. The most frequent pattern was *mafāʿil* مَفَاعِل with 183 entries, whereas no entries followed the pattern *tafāʿil* تَفَاعِل.

Firmansyah focused on broken plurals in the Al-Munawwir dictionary [30], specifically on entries beginning with the letter خ (Kh). The study used a qualitative descriptive approach and found 152 plurals classified as broken plurals.

A closer reading of these studies shows that the authors wrote them as graduation projects, fulfilling requirements for a bachelor's degree (Sarjana S1) in Indonesia. Therefore, it is not surprising that the three studies lack analytical depth, since students at an early academic stage prepared them to focus primarily on developing basic research skills rather than conducting deep analytical or critical work.

This study differs from the previous ones in both methodology and purpose. It provides a comprehensive survey of all plural forms listed in the Al-Munawwir dictionary, regardless of their specific classification or pattern. The goal is to evaluate how the dictionary handles plural forms and assess their treatment, aiming to improve the dictionary's quality. Ultimately, this will positively support Arabic language learning for Indonesian speakers.

3. Importance of Learning Plurals for Arabic Language Learners

In the Arabic language, plural is a formula used to denote more than one, and is divided into three main types:

- Sound Masculine Plural *jamaʿ al-mudhakkar al-sālim* جَمْع المُذَكَّر السّالِم: This plural is formed by adding "*ūn* ون" in the nominative case or "*īn* ين" in the accusative and genitive cases to the singular noun. For example: *muʾallim* مُعلِّم "teacher" becomes *muʾallimūn* مُعَلِّمونَ or *muʾallimīn* مُعَلِّمينَ "teachers".
- Sound Feminine Plural *jamaʿ al-muʾannath al-sālim* جَمْع المُؤَنَّث السّالِم: The plural is formed by adding "*āt* ات" to the singular form. For example: *muʾallima* مُعَلِّمَة "female teacher" becomes *muʾallimāt* مُعَلِّمات "female teachers".
- Broken Plural *jamaʿ at-taksīr* جَمْع التَّكْسِير: This type does not follow a fixed rule. The form of the word itself changes, and there is no single pattern. For example: *kitāb* كِتاب "book" becomes *kutub* كُتُب "books".

These three types of plurals are fundamental for understanding the structure of Arabic sentences and expressing multiplicity. They require knowledge of the grammatical and morphological rules that govern each type.

Learning plurals is very important for Arabic language learners, as it enables them to express plurality clearly and accurately. Mastery of plurals depends on understanding the relevant grammatical and morphological rules, which helps learners construct correct and meaningful sentences.

Moreover, plurals are essential for understanding texts because they appear frequently in various contexts. Mastering plurals also improves learners' writing and speaking skills. It enhances their ability to communicate effectively in Arabic, whether in academic or social settings.

If the dictionary contains grammatical or spelling errors in plurals, it causes confusion for learners. This confusion negatively affects their progress. Errors in pluralization or word formation may lead learners to rely on incorrect information, resulting in inaccurate word usage. Spelling mistakes can weaken writing skills and cause learners to believe that incorrect forms are correct. This may lead to

frustration and loss of confidence, hindering learners' ability to master Arabic grammar properly [31].

4. Lexicographic Orientation: Between Tradition and User Focus

Modern lexicography has undergone a significant shift. The dictionary is no longer seen as a neutral repository of linguistic knowledge but as a functional tool designed to meet the actual needs of users. This shift has led to two main approaches in dictionary-making: the tradition-oriented model and the user-oriented model.

The first approach reflects older methods. It builds entries based on inherited linguistic structures and rigid rules, with limited focus on real-world usage or the needs of contemporary users. In contrast, the user-oriented model focuses on accessibility, adapting content and structure to help learners and meet the demands of modern communication.

This shift marks a move from dictionaries that impose fixed knowledge to those that respond to user behavior and needs. It emphasizes the importance of considering communicative practices and the diverse backgrounds of users [32]. Some studies support this view, arguing that many learner dictionaries remain ineffective because they rely on outdated approaches that fail to represent actual language use [33].

From this perspective, the dictionary under review clearly follows a traditional model. Its structure, lexical selection, and explanatory style are rooted in classical norms. It includes many outdated words that are no longer common in contemporary Arabic, while overlooking widely used terms. This suggests a limited view of the dictionary as a practical tool for real usage, rather than just a static record of linguistic heritage [34].

This critique is based on current lexicographic perspectives rather than subjective judgment. It highlights not only the dictionary's limitations but also contributes to a broader rethink of Arabic lexicography in favor of models that prioritize actual user needs over rigid tradition.

5. Al-Munawwir Dictionary and Plurals

5.1. About Dictionary

The Al-Munawwir dictionary, authored by Ahmad Warson Munawwir, is considered one of the earliest Arabic-Indonesian bilingual dictionaries. Its first edition was published in 1984, followed by a second edition in 1997. Due to high demand, the dictionary has been reprinted numerous times, totaling 22 printings, with 22,000 copies sold in a single year [35].

The dictionary comprises 1,634 pages [27], divided into several sections: an introduction, an index, a list of symbols used, usage guidelines, the main text, and illustrations. As expected, the main text occupies the majority of the pages, spanning 1,591 pages, while the remaining pages cover the introduction, illustrations, abbreviations, and other sections.

It contains 7,648 lexical entries, arranged in two columns per page. The dictionary includes commonly used Arabic words; however, many entries consist of archaic terms that are no longer in circulation.

The dictionary is organized according to the roots of words rather than whole words, as is typical in dictionaries of other languages. The author followed the root-based approach, which is characteristic of most classical Arabic dictionaries. However, Indonesian learners of Arabic—who are the main users of this dictionary—often lack prior knowledge of the root system at the early stages of language learning.

Regarding the lexical entries, the dictionary employs various interpretive approaches, such as providing synonyms, antonyms, and illustrative images, the latter numbering nearly 160.

5.2. Treatment of Plurals in the Dictionary

There is no doubt that plural forms are among the important morphological details sought by learners of Arabic in dictionaries. Therefore, dictionary authors usually make sure to include them, especially broken plurals, due to their diversity compared to the two types of sound plurals: masculine and feminine.

This emphasis stems not only from the diversity and abundance of their rules but also from their significant role in the structure of Arabic texts. Statistical studies based on text corpora have shown that broken plurals constitute about 10% of all Arabic texts and around 41% of the three types of plural forms [36]. Moreover, plurals represent one of the major challenges faced by learners of Arabic as a foreign language [38].

As a result, some studies have sought to develop simplified teaching methods and strategies to help learners understand plurals. For example, Alhroot and Alhroot analyzed these forms in modern functional Arabic [39], while Hadi created specialized dictionaries focused on this type of plural [40].

The author of the Al-Munawwir dictionary was aware of this issue and included many examples of all three types of plurals. However, he generally preferred broken plurals over sound plurals, whether singular or multiple. This preference is natural given the complexity of broken plurals.

Examining the dictionary reveals that the masculine sound plural appears alongside broken plurals in 15 instances and with the feminine sound plural in only one instance. The feminine sound plural appears alone in 69 entries and together with other plural forms in 104 entries, while it occurs with the masculine sound plural in just one case.

The author consistently followed the same pattern when indicating plurals. He listed the singular form, followed by

the letter (ج) as an abbreviation for the word jamʿ (plural), and then the plural of the singular. Both the abbreviation and the plural appear in parentheses, as in madrasa مَدْرَسَة "school" pl. madāris مَدارس [41]. The abbreviation (ج) used to mark the plural reflects the approach the author describes in the dictionary's introduction. [41]

5.3. Distribution of Singular and Plural Words Across Dictionary's Sections and Pages

The dictionary contains 3,164 words with clearly indicated plurals. These entries are spread over 1,354 pages, which make up 85.1% of the total 1,591 pages of the dictionary's main text. Meanwhile, 237 pages, or 14.9%, do not mention any plural forms. A reader may find many consecutive pages without encountering any plural forms, as seen on pages 75–76, 113–114, 161–162, 476–477, 485–486, 697–699, 817–818, 832–833, 860–861, 889–893, 912–914, 1026–1028, 1044–1058, 1140–1142, and 1383–1385 [41].

Some singular words and their plurals appear twice in the dictionary. This repetition may occur for two reasons:

- Root overlap: this refers to cases where the roots are similar or even identical, which leads to confusion or repetition. By way of explanation, the singular word and its plural might appear in one place based on the first letter of one root, and then the same word and its plural could appear in a different place based on a different root.
- Typographical error: this refers to simple mistakes in the text, such as repeated entries.

Due to the first reason, twelve words are repeated, and due to the latter, five are repeated, as shown in **Table 1**.

Pertaining to this, the researchers excluded all repeated words from the survey, as well as examples that appeared incorrectly due to the use of the symbol (ج) for other purposes than indicating the plural form, for example, when it is mistakenly used instead of the symbol (م), which the author employs as an abbreviation for the word "synonym".

The plural words were distributed across all sections of the dictionary, starting from the section on *(Hamza* هَمْزَة*)* to the section on *(y* ي*)*, as shown in **Table 2**.

Table 1. Vocabulary and Their Plurals Repeated in the Dictionary.

Reason	Vocabulary	Page	Repetition Page
Root Overlap	إبْريق *ibrīq* "Pitcher"	2	78
	إبْليس *iblīs* "Devil"	4	105
	أُسْطورَة *usṭūra* "Legend"	24	631
	أسْطُوانَة *usṭuwāna* "Column"	24	632
	مَلاك, مَلَك *malak, malāk* "Angel"	35	1245
	بَرِيَّة: *bariyya* "Creation"	70	80
	باسور *bāsūr* "Hemorrhoids"	83	119
	تِمْساح *timsāḥ* "Crocodile"	139	1334
	جَوْرَب *jawrab* "Stocking, Sock"	179	223
	دُكّان *dukkān* "Bench, store, shop"	414	415
	سِياج *siyāj* "Hedge, fencing, fence"	675	683
	هَوْدَج *hawdaj* "camel litter, howdah; sedan chair"	1493	1523
Typographical Error	حُمّى *ḥummā* "Sting"	299	300
	خِيْفَة *khīfa*, "Scared"	376	376
	دَيْر *dayr* "Monastery, convent, cloister"	431	436
	شابّ *shābb* "Young"	688	689
	نَقِي *naqī* "Pure man"	1459	1459

Table 2. The Distribution of the Plural Words Throughout the Dictionary Sections.

Section	Words number	%	Section	Words number	%
س	257	8.1%	ل	109	3.4%
ن	227	**7.2%**	ص	104	3.4%
ق	209	6.6%	أ	102	3.2%
ر	207	6.5%	ف	98	3.1%
ح	198	6.3%	ز	91	2.9%
ع	164	5.2%	ط	66	2.1%

Table 2. *Cont.*

Section	Words number	%	Section	Words number	%
خ	162	5.1%	هـ	60	1.9%
ج	141	4.5%	غ	42	1.3%
م	140	4.4%	ذ	39	1.2%
ش	135	4.3%	ت	38	1.2%
د	121	3.8%	ض	36	1.1%
و	121	3.8%	ث	31	1%
ب	119	3.8%	ظ	19	0.6%
ك	118	3.7%	ي	10	0.3%

Readers of the dictionary will notice a discrepancy in the number of words with plurals on a single page. For instance, page 636 contains 10 words with plurals, page 479 includes 9 words [41], and pages 653 and 1103 each include 8 words [41], totaling 16 across both pages. This number gradually decreases until some pages contain only one word with its plural, which is common in the dictionary; there are 455 such pages, representing 28.6% of the total, as shown in **Table 3**.

Table 3. Number of Plurals on Each Page of the Dictionary.

Number of plurals on each page	Total Page	%
1	455	28.6%
2	393	24.7%
3	263	16.5%
None	237	14.9%
4	143	9%
5	60	3.8%
6	25	1.6%
7	11	0.7%
8	2	0.1%
9	1	0.1%
10	1	0.1%
Total	1591	100%

5.4. The Phenomenon of Multiple Plural Forms for a Single Noun

Without a doubt, the phenomenon of "multiple plural forms for a single noun" is one of the most prominent linguistic features in Arabic, particularly within the system of broken plurals. This phenomenon is scarcely found in other Semitic languages, with the exception of Old South Arabian and certain Ethiopian varieties. However, the Arabic language has seen significant expansion in its use of broken plurals [42].

Instances of this phenomenon are often found in Arabic heritage sources such as dictionaries and linguistic references. For example, the word *shaikh* شَيْخ "venerable gentleman; elder" is listed with twelve plural forms by Al-

Zabidi: *shuyūkh* شُيُوخ, *shiyūkh* شِيُوخ, *ashyākh* أشياخ, *shiyakha* شِيَخَة, *shīkha* شِيْخَة, *shīkhān* شِيْخَان, *mashyakha* مَشْيَخَة, *mishyakha* مِشْيَخَة, *mashyūkhā* ˈ مَشْيُوخاء, *mashyakhā* ˈ مَشْيَخاء, *mashāyikh* مَشايِخ, and *ashāyīkh* أشاييخ [43].

A close look at these examples shows a clear difference between theory and actual use. It is rare to find these plural forms, whether singular or multiple, in Classical Arabic texts, even in later periods. For example, the noun *abad* (أَبَد), meaning "eternity," has two recorded plural forms: *ābād* آباد and *ubūd* أبود [43]. However, the plural *ābād* is the only form commonly found in classical Arabic texts. The form *ubūd* is not attested in the Doha Historical Dictionary of Arabic.

Therefore, this phenomenon requires urgent re-evaluation in the context of contemporary Arabic, where many of its historical examples have clearly declined in usage. In response, modern Arabic dictionaries designed for learners of Arabic as a second language have attempted to adapt to this reality by minimizing such inherited features. For instance, in the Arabic Between Your Hands Dictionary, a total of 1,426 singular words and their plural forms were documented, yet multiple plural forms appeared in only 184 cases—amounting to just 12.9%.

The compiler of Al-Munawwir dictionary largely adhered to the traditional approach of classical Arabic lexicons in repeating the phenomenon of "multiple plural forms for a single noun" with few exceptions. This likely reflects the influence of the sources relied upon in the compilation process, particularly given that Arabic–Malay bilingual dictionaries have drawn heavily from monolingual Arabic dictionary traditions [44]. In this dictionary, 2,373 singular nouns (75%) have only one plural form, 695 (22%) have two plurals, 92 (2.9%) have three plurals, and 4 (0.1%) have four. The total number of plural forms recorded was 4,055, an increase of 891 over the expected 3,164, due to multiple plurals for 791 singular entries.

Although the phenomenon of "multiple plurals for a single noun" accounted for 25% of the entries in the dictionary, many of these examples would likely diminish in number if measured against contemporary Arabic usage. In fact, evaluating plural multiplicity based on modern usage extends beyond the plurals themselves to the singular forms as well. A large number of singulars and their corresponding

plurals listed in the dictionary are no longer actively used in contemporary Arabic, for example [41]:

- أصيص *aṣīṣ* "flower pot", pl. أصُص *uṣuṣ*.
- أرْفَة *arfa* "border between two lands", pl. أرَف *araf*.
- إثْب *itb* "sleeveless garment", pl. أتوب *utūb*, إتاب *itāb*.

Conversely, certain nouns with multiple plural forms recorded in Al-Munawwir Dictionary have experienced a reduction in plural variation in contemporary Arabic, resulting in a predominant use of a single plural form. For instance [41]:

- أرْض *arḍ* "Earth", pl. أراضٍ *arāḍin*, أرَضُون *araḍūn*.
- أنْف *anf* "Nose", pl. أنُوف *unūf*, آناف *ānāf*.
- آلَة *āla* "Machine, Instrument, Utensil", pl. آلات *ālāt*, آل *āl*.
- سَجين *sajīn* "Imprisoned, Prisoner", pl. سُجَناء *sujanā'*, سَجْنى *sajnā*.
- أعْزَل *a'zal* "Unarmed, Defenseless", pl. عُزَّل *'uzzal*, عُزْلان *'uzlān*.

In contemporary Arabic, it is observed that the second plural forms in the previous five examples are rarely used, while the first forms are the ones that are most commonly used.

Interestingly, there are also plural forms in contemporary Arabic that are used independently, without any trace of their singulars. Examples from Al-Munawwir Dictionary include [41]:

- بُرْثُن *burthun* "Claw, Talon", pl. بَراثن *barāthin*.
- آلاء *ālā'* "blessings, bounties, favors", pl. ألى *alā*, إلى *ilā*.
- آبدة *ābida* "something scary", pl. أوابد *awābid*.

5.5. Errors in Pluralization: Morphological, Orthographical, and Typographical

A linguistic dictionary is expected to be free from errors or defects that could undermine its reliability among users. By common agreement, a dictionary serves as a trusted reference and a safe source, enjoying a level of credibility rarely matched by other linguistic books. Users rely on it whenever they are unsure about a word's meaning or need to confirm a linguistic fact.

However, this expectation remains idealistic because a dictionary is a human creation and, therefore, cannot be entirely free of mistakes, even if produced collaboratively—let alone if created by an individual. Unlike holy books, dictionaries do not have a sacred status, despite how some, such as Americans with their well-known English dictionaries, might perceive them [45]. Moreover, dictionaries are not always the ultimate authority on language. Experience shows that consulting older dictionaries often proves insufficient for understanding the meanings and semantic changes of words over time [46].

Most lexicographers and dictionary users repeatedly realize that no dictionary is exempt from errors, including the well-known English dictionaries. A famous incident among lexicographers related to an error in the second edition of the Merriam-Webster Dictionary serves as evidence of this: the fabricated and strange word "Dord" was inserted in the dictionary as a noun meaning "density", although "Dord" had no prior meaning in the external world [47]. The origin of this error was a misunderstanding of a note by a chemical editor when editing the word "density." One editor sent a slip of paper containing "D or d" to indicate that the letter "D" or "d" was used as an abbreviation for "density" in physics and chemistry. However, the person responsible for inputting the entry mistakenly thought "D or d" was a single word, so it was entered into the dictionary on that basis, with the definition as a noun meaning "density". This error is considered one of the most famous mistakes in lexicographic history. Such words have become known as "ghost words", which are serious dictionary errors [48].

Dictionaries are expected to be free of errors, especially spelling mistakes, since they serve as the primary reference for learners during linguistic revision and spelling verification [49]. Therefore, the presence of misspelled words in dictionaries constitutes a serious error that can greatly hinder language learning.

Dictionaries provide learners with accurate and correct models of word forms and their spellings. Any mistake in this regard may mislead learners, making language acquisition more difficult and reinforcing incorrect usage. For this reason, maintaining the accuracy of dictionaries and updating them regularly is essential to ensure effective and proper learning.

The tolerance for errors depends on their number. When errors accumulate excessively, tracking them becomes overwhelming. In such cases, it is important to highlight these mistakes to prevent them from becoming sources of incorrect learning.

Regarding the Al-Munawwir Dictionary, despite the considerable effort and time invested in its compilation, it still contains various errors that should have been avoided, as these mistakes may negatively affect Indonesian learners of Arabic.

5.5.1. Morphological Errors

The examples presented in **Table 4** illustrate some morphological errors in the dictionary, particularly regarding incorrect diacritical marks on singular and plural forms, as demonstrated in the following cases.

5.5.2. Orthographical Errors

This category of errors pertains to incorrect spelling of the medial and final *hamzat al-qaṭ'* هَمْزَة القَطْع "disjunctive hamza" as well as the *tā' marbūṭa* تاء مَرْبُوطَة. Such errors can affect the clarity and correctness of lexical entries, as demonstrated by the examples listed in **Table 5**.

Table 4. Some Morphological Errors in the Dictionary and Their Corrections.

Error	Page	Correct
أَبْيَض *abyaḍ* "White; Bright", pl. بَيْض *bayḍ*	124	بِيْض *bīḍ*
جَنَّة *janna* "Paradise", pl. جَنَان *janān*	126	جِنَان *jinān*
حَلَق *ḥalaq* "Rings, Earrings", pl. حِلْقَان *ḥilqān*	290	حُلْقَان *ḥulqān*
خُزَعْبَلَة *khuzaʿbala* "Hoax", pl. خُزَعْبَلَات *khuzaʿbalāt*	337	خُزَعْبِلَة *khuzaʿbila* and خُزَعْبِلَات *khuzaʿbilāt*
سُفَيْه *sufayh* "Foolish, Stupid", pl. سُفَهَاء *sufahāʾ*	639	سَفِيه *safīh*

Table 5. Orthographical Errors and Their Corrections.

Error	Page	Correct
مَسْئَلَة *masʾala* "Question, Issue, Problem; Matter, Affair, Case"	600	مَسْأَلَة
فَاكّ *fākk* "Aged man; decrepit old man", pl. فِكَكَة *fikaka*	1068	فِكَكَة with (ـة t)
فيىء *fayʾ* "Shadow"	1080	فَيْء
نَاشِئَة *nāshiʾa* "Youth, Rising generation", pl. نَشْئ *nashʾ*	1416	نَشْء

Additionally, it is necessary to point out in this context that the plural of the word *samāʾ* سَماء "sky" is written in the Quranic orthography as *samawāt* سَمَوَات [41]. This is not intended as a criticism of the Quranic spelling itself, but rather to highlight that this form differs from the standard orthographic conventions taught to learners, which may cause a state of confusion or cognitive dissonance for the learner.

Among the errors found in the dictionary is the writing of some plurals ending with an *alif maqṣūra* (ى) أَلِف مَقْصُورَة as if they ended with a (ya ي), following the Egyptian style of orthography, such as *itāwa* إتَاوَة "duty, tax, tribute", pl. *atāwī* أتاوي [41] and *wuḥshān* وُحْشَان "wild animal", pl. *waḥāshī* وحاشي [41], among many others.

5.5.3. Typographical Errors

As a first observation in this context is the absence of *hamzat al-qaṭʿ* in a number of words. Had the author included them when compiling the dictionary, it is very likely that the cause of such omissions is typographical errors or formatting issues, for example, the font type, size, or the spacing of lines. Errors of repetition of the second plural for the singular form (*khātima* خَاتِمة "End, Close, Conclusion" pl. خَاتِمَة، خواتِم); the second plural here is simply a repetition of the singular [41]. Other errors exist as a result of replacing one letter with another, for instance: *zaif* زَيْف "Falseness; Pride", pl. *ziyāḥ* زِياح; *ṣuffāḥ* صُفَّاح "Plate, Sheet, Leaf, Flagstone", pl. *mafāfīḥ* مَفافيح; and *mulk* مُلْك "Property, Possessions", pl. *māmlāk* ماملاك [41], where the correct forms should be as follows: *ziyāf* زِياف, *ṣafāfīḥ* صَفافيح, and *amlāk* أَمْلاك.

5.5.4. Pluralization-Related Errors

One of the notable inconsistencies observed in the dictionary is the inclusion of plural forms that do not align with the most commonly recognized or semantically appropriate singular forms. This type of error may lead to confusion for learners, as the plural entries suggest a base singular form that is either rare, semantically divergent, or structurally less accurate in standard usage.

Examples of such usage include the following [41]:

- *matjara* مَتْجَرَة "store, shop", pl. *matājir* مَتَاجِر "stores, shops".
- *jadar* جَدَر "wall", pl. *judrān* جُدْران "walls".
- *jund* جُنْد "soldier", pl. *junūd* جُنود "soldiers".
- *ḥarf* حَرْف "profession, occupation", pl. *ḥiraf* حِرَف "professions, occupations".

In these cases, it would have been more accurate to employ the following singular forms: *matjar* مَتْجَر, *jidār* جِدار, *jundī* جُنْدي, and *ḥirfa* حِرْفَة — all of which are more standard, semantically precise, and pedagogically sound.

5.6. Plurals in Dictionaries: Favoring Obsolete Forms and Overlooking Common Usages

General bilingual dictionaries are typically designed to meet the needs of users who are proficient in both languages. However, linguists stress the importance of improving their effectiveness for language learners by tailoring them to the learners' specific linguistic requirements. This recommendation arises from the observation that many existing bilingual dictionaries do not fully address these needs [50].

A primary requirement for learners is access to commonly used vocabulary, including both nouns and verbs. When dictionaries prioritize rare or outdated entries over commonly used words, they risk becoming akin to linguistic museums, visited mainly by those interested in historical language artifacts. Therefore, lexicographers should not only analyze authentic, real-world language as the core medium of communication but also provide tools that support learners in acquiring the target language along with its essential cultural context [51].

In this regard, dictionary compilers—regardless of the

dictionary type—must consider the contextual use of lexical items carefully. They should avoid including obsolete words that are no longer in use and remove irrelevant meanings that do not serve the needs of contemporary learners [52]. Implementing such revisions would greatly enhance the practical value and pedagogical effectiveness of dictionaries.

The Al-Munawwir Dictionary demonstrates a tendency to include outdated plural forms while neglecting those widely used in modern Arabic, whether regular or irregular. Numerous examples illustrate this issue, showing that these obsolete forms add unnecessary bulk to the dictionary without benefiting learners who seek to acquire practical and functional Arabic. It seems that the dictionary's compiler relied more on analogical patterns than on actual usage frequency, likely influenced by the classical Arabic dictionaries referenced during compilation. **Table 6** below presents selected examples illustrating this phenomenon.

Table 6. Plurals Included in the Dictionary Versus Commonly Used Plurals Absent from It.

Singular	Plural in Dictionary	Page	Common Plural in Modern Arabic
ثَدْي *thad*yun "Female breast"	ثُدي، وأَثُد *thudī* and *athdin*	147	أثْداء *athdā'*
جالِيَة *jāliya* "Colony of emigrants"	جَوالٍ *jawālin*	206	جالِيات *jāliyāt*
سَجِينة *sajīna* "Female prisoner"	سَجائِن *sajā'in*	613	سَجِينات *sajīnāt*
سَدّ *sadd* "Plugging, Closing"	أسِدَّة *asidda*	620	سُدود *sudūd*
مَسافة *masāfa* "Distance, Interval, Stretch"	مَساوِف *masāwif*	679	مَسافات *masāfāt*
شَحِيحَة *Shaḥīḥa* "Stingy, Niggardly"	شحائح *Shaḥā'iḥ*	696	شَحِيحات *Shaḥīḥāt*
شِعار *shi'ār* "Motto, Device; Mark"	أشْعِرَة، وشُعُر *ash'ira* and *shu'ur*	724	شِعارات *shi'ārāt*
صاحٍ *Ṣāḥin* "Awake, Wakeful, Watchful"	صُحاة *Ṣuḥāt*	766	صاحونَ *Ṣāḥūn*
عالَم *'ālam* "World; Universe, Cosmos"	عالَمُونَ *'ālamūn*	966	عَوالِم *'awālim*
عامِلَة *'āmila* "producer, manufacturer"	عَوامِل *'awāmil*	973	عامِلات *'āmilāt*
مِقصّ *miqaṣṣ* "Scissors"	مِقاص *miqāṣṣ*	1126	مِقصّات *miqaṣṣāt*
كاذِب *Kādhib* "Liar, Lying, Untruthful"	كُذّاب، وكذّب *Kādhdhāb* and *Kudhdhab*	1197	كاذِبونَ *Kādhibūn*
نُعَرَة *nu'ara* "Haughtiness, Arrogance, Pride"	نُعَر *nu'ar*	1437	نُعَرات *nu'arāt*

It is unusual that many singular words have no plurals listed, whether obsolete or common, especially since many of these common plurals in contemporary Arabic are absent from the dictionary in favor of the rare ones. A good example of such case are words like (*alf* ألْف "Thousand"), (*baḥth* بَحْث "Search, Research"), (*ḥajm* حَجْم "Bulk, Size, Volume, Caliber"), (*uṣbu'* أُصْبُع "Finger"), and others [41]. These items have corresponding plurals that are considered common in contemporary Arabic, which are: (*ulūf* and *ālāf* أُلُوف وآلاف), (*buḥūth* and *abḥāth* بُحُوث وأبْحاث), (*ḥujūm* and *aḥjām* حُجُوم وأحْجام), and (*aṣābi'* أصابِع وأحْجام).

5.7. Methodology Disruption Used in Plurals

It is assumed that dictionary authors should follow a unified methodology to present morphological information in their dictionaries; otherwise, the dictionary would be random, inconsistent, and confusing. This could discourage users from learning from the dictionaries, leaving them feeling bored, frustrated, or even leading them to abandon the dictionary altogether because they cannot find what they are looking for [19].

Observations have emerged indicating the author's unsuccessful attempt to abide by the proper method in the way he managed plurals. These can be summarized in the following:

1. As previously mentioned, the author adhered to a consistent method of using the symbol (ج) to indicate plurals. However, this method was not followed in 15 instances within the dictionary. These omissions can be found on the following pages: 198, 223, 237, 281, 322, 386, 391, 823, 888, 933, 999, 1068, 1247, 1538, 1539 [41]. In addition to this, there are examples of symbol interference due to typographical error, for example using the symbol (م) instead of (ج) in the phrase: (مِخْلَب *mikhlab* "Claw": (م) مَخالِب *makhālib*) [41]. On the other hand, in four other instances, the symbol (ج) was used instead of (م) as in the following words [41]:

   - سَجْحاء أسْجَح "m. " *asjaḥ* "Shapely, Beautiful": ج *sajḥā'* "f. " .
   - شَخِيصَة شَخِيص "m. " *shakhīṣ* "Particle": ج *shakhīṣā'* "f. ".
   - شاكِرِي شاكِرِيَّة "m. " *shakirī* "Hireling": ج *shakiriyya'* "f. ".
   - مِعْصَرة عَصّارَة الزُّيوت "m. " *'aṣṣārit alzuyūt* "Oil press": ج *mi'ṣara* "Oil press".

2. The author disrupted his methodology when including broken plural forms of flawed nouns. This method aimed to list plurals without the definite article (al-) and without the final (ي *ī*) in the plurals, yet the flawed nouns appeared in the dictionary with their forms that

are defined (al-), such as (التَّراقِي *al-tarāqī* "Collarbones"), (العَوادِيَ *al-'awādī* "Wrongs, Offenses, misdeeds") [41]. In addition to that, some plural forms were written with the final (ي) even though they were not defined with (al-), such as (بَراري *barārī* "Steppe, Desert"), (جَرائي *jarā'ī* "Courageouses"), (مَحاشِي *maḥāshī* "fillings"), (دَوادِي *dawādī* "Swings"), (ليالِي *layālī* "Nights") [41].

3. Repetition of plurals, as mentioned above, where the author managed certain singulars with two different dictionary entries: one as a root-based entry and another as a non-root-entry (considering the entire word as a root).

4. Being inconsistent in managing collective nouns, which was illustrated in four forms:

   • A singular or among other plural forms after the symbol (ج) and preceded by its singular form, such as: (إوَزَّة *iwazza* pl. إوَزّ *iwazz* "Goose"), (آيَة *āya* pl. آي *āy* "Sign, Marks"), (بَقَرَة *baqara* pl. بَقَر *baqar* "Cows"), (جَرادَة *jarāda* pl. جَراد *jarāda* "Locusts"), (صَخْرَة *ṣakhra* pl. صَخْر *ṣakhr* "Stones") [41].

   • Mentioned and followed by its singular with the word *wahidat* واحِدَة "one" between them, such as: (one piece of تَمْر *tamr* "Dates" is تَمْرَة *tamra*), (one of شَجَر *shajar* "Trees" is *shajara*), (one of مَوْز *mawz* "Banana" is *mawza*) [41].

   • A combination with singular in one lexical entry, followed by plurals, such as: (سَحاب وسَحابَة *saḥāb* and *saḥāba* "Clouds" pl. سُحُب *suḥub*) [41].

   • Appearing after the singular and its plural, preceded by the word (one), for example: (جَمْرَة *jamra* "Embers" pl. جَمَرات وجِمار *jamarāt* and *jimār*)

one (جَمْر *jamr*) and it is better to handle this case as in the first form [41].

5. The unsuccessful attempt to oblige with a consistent pattern for the vowelization of the feminine plurals for singulars in the form (فَعْلَة *fa'la*) when the middle radical sound and unstressed, as there are 18 singulars in this pattern, 15 of these were vowelized with a (فَتْحَة *fatḥa*) and three with a (سُكُون *sukūn*): رَكْوَة *rakwa* "Small coffee pot of copper", pl. رَكْوات *rakwāt*), (صَحْوَة *ṣaḥwa* "A wakening", pl. صَحْوات *ṣaḥwāt*), (لَزْبَة *lazba* "Misfortune", pl. لَزْبات *lazbāt*) [41]. Despite the fact that both vowelizations are acceptable, the methodology should have been consistent to avoid confusing the user, as the most eloquent form of the plurals of a trisyllabic feminine noun with the sound unstressed middle radical is (فَعَلات *fa'alāt*) with the middle radical vowelized with a (fat-ha), although (سُكُون *sukūn*) is also acceptable based on the cited and mentioned examples [53].

6. Despite the author's keenness to register multiple plurals, whether in use or neglected, he did not oblige to this method; we can find items whose multiple plurals are not registered, such as the word: (إبْلِيس *iblīs* "Devil" pl. أبالِيس *abālīs* and أبالِسَة *abālisa*), whose third plural (أبالِس *abālis*) is missing [41].

7. A shortfall in the documentation process of common multiple plurals, which means that the author listed one commonly used plural in contemporary Arabic while excluding other commonly used plural forms. The author tracked common plurals for certain singulars, but this method was not consistently applied to all words in the dictionary. **Table 7** below illustrates some of the examples:

Table 7. Shortfall in Listing Common Multiple Plurals for Singulars.

Singular	Page	Mentioned Plural	Missing Plural
بُرْج **burj** "Tower"	70	أبْراج **abrāj**	بُروج **burūj**
باب *bāb* "Door, Gate"	117	أبْواب *abwāb*	بيبان *bībān*
ثَوْب *thawb* "Garment, Dress, Cloth"	159	ثِياب *thiyāb*	أثْواب *athwāb*
جُرْح *jurḥ* "Wound"	180	جِراح، وأجْراح *jirāḥ* and *ajrāḥ*	جُروح *jurūḥ*
حَجَر *ḥajar* "Stone"	238	أحْجار *aḥjār*	حِجارَة *ḥijāra*
ذَقَن *dhaqan* "Chin, Beard"	448	أذْقان *adhqān*	ذُقون *dhuqūn*
سَقْف *saqf* "Roof, Ceiling"	642	سُقوف *suqūf*	أسْقُف *asquf*
شَخْص *shakhṣ* "Person"	700	أشْخاص *ashkhāṣ*	شُخوص *shukhūṣ*
ضِلْع *ḍil'* "Rib"	826	ضُلوع وأضْلاع *ḍulū'* and *aḍlā'*	أضْلُع *aḍlu'*
عَيْن *'ayn* "Eye"	992	عُيون وأعْيان *'uyūn* and *a'yān*	أعْيُن *'ayn*
فَتَى *fatā* "Youth"	1034	فِتْيَة *fitya*	فِتْيان *fityān*
فَرْع *far'* "Branch"	1048	فُروع *furū'*	أفْرُع *afru'*
قَرْيَة *qarya* "Village"	1115	قُرئ *quran*	قَرْيات *qaryāt*
نُقْطَة *nuqṭa* "Point"	1456	نُقَط *nuqaṭ*	نِقاط *niqāṭ*
يَد *yad* "Hand"	1587	أيْدٍ *aydin*	أيادٍ *ayādin*

6. Conclusions, Recommendations and Future Research

The significance of accurately handling plural forms extends beyond the dictionary itself, as errors in their application can negatively impact users, especially in the context of learning Arabic among Indonesian speakers.

Al-Munawwir Dictionary is undoubtedly rich in the number of documented plurals, with the number of registered lexical items reaching 3,164. This abundance of documented words is one of the strengths of this dictionary; however, some errors and linguistic phenomena have surfaced in the way they were managed. One of the most notable flaws here is the prominence of the phenomenon of "multiple plurals with a single singular", despite its decreasing presence in contemporary Arabic.

The number of plural forms reached 4,055, with an increase of 891 plurals, presuming that each of these singular words has one plural. Such increase is a result of the multiplicity of plurals, and it appears that the dictionary author was influenced to a great extent by Arabic monolingual dictionaries that he used while compiling his dictionary material.

While the number of plurals is a strength of the dictionary, several linguistic and typographical flaws are evident in its handling. These include issues with morphological vowelization of singular and plural forms, spelling mistakes, typographical errors, and inaccuracies in listing plural forms for less common singular words.

Furthermore, the dictionary reveals a preference for including neglected plural forms over more familiar ones used in modern Arabic, adding unnecessary complexity without offering tangible benefits for learners.

Additionally, the dictionary's author faced challenges in adhering to a consistent methodology for managing plural forms, as evidenced by the improper use of the symbol (ح) in certain cases, and inconsistencies in the use of interface symbols, such as substituting (ه) for (ح) and vice versa.

Recommendations and Future Research

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that future editions of Al-Munawwir Dictionary adopt a clearer and more modern approach to the treatment of plural forms. This includes reducing the inclusion of rare or outdated plurals, providing frequency labels or usage notes, and ensuring consistency in the use of symbols and diacritics. Such improvements would enhance both the accuracy and educational value of the dictionary for learners.

For Arabic language instructors in Indonesia, it is advisable to use this dictionary with a critical perspective, supplementing it with up-to-date resources, and guiding students in distinguishing between commonly used forms and those that are no longer in active use. Emphasizing contextual language use, rather than exhaustive listing, would better support effective language acquisition.

As for future research, similar issues could be explored in other Arabic–non-Arabic bilingual dictionaries, particularly those used in Islamic education or academic contexts in non-Arabic-speaking countries. Comparative studies would help establish clearer standards for bilingual lexicography that reflect both linguistic accuracy and user-centered design.

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