THE INTEGRATION OF FAITH AND GLOBAL COMMUNICATION: A SOCIOLINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVE ON ISLAMIC ENGLISH AMONG NON-ARAB MUSLIM COMMUNITIES

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Abstract: *The worldwide expansion of English has transformed it from the language of a limited group of native speakers into an international medium of communication used across diverse cultural and religious settings. One significant outcome of this development is the emergence of Islamic English, a variety of English that enables non-Arab Muslims to communicate Islamic concepts while preserving their religious and cultural identity.*

This article reviews existing scholarship on Islamic English from a sociolinguistic perspective. It combines Braj Kachru's framework of World Englishes with Ismail Raji al-Faruqi's ideas concerning the adaptation of English to Islamic discourse. The discussion demonstrates how Muslim communities in countries such as Indonesia, Pakistan, Turkey, and Muslim diaspora societies integrate Arabic religious vocabulary into English communication. These linguistic practices strengthen group identity, facilitate intercultural communication, and preserve authentic Islamic meanings. The review also identifies an important research gap, emphasizing that contemporary digital communication within the global Muslim community remains insufficiently investigated despite its growing influence on language development.

Keywords: *Islamic English; World Englishes; Sociolinguistics; Non-Arab Muslims; Religious Identity; Lingua Franca; Code-Mixing; Translingualism; Arabic Loanwords; Critical Discourse Analysis.*

INTRODUCTION

The rapid spread of globalization has significantly expanded the role of English beyond its traditional native-speaking environments. Today, English serves as a global means of communication in education, science, technology, business, and intercultural interaction. As a result, many communities have adapted the language to reflect their own cultural, social, and religious values, giving rise to numerous localized varieties collectively known as World Englishes.

Within Muslim societies, particularly those where Arabic is not the native language, English increasingly functions as a practical medium for discussing religious beliefs, Islamic scholarship, and everyday spiritual experiences. Rather than replacing Islamic identity, English has become a linguistic resource through which non-Arab Muslims express their faith while participating in international communication.

This phenomenon has contributed to the development of Islamic English, characterized by the incorporation of Arabic religious terminology, culturally specific expressions, and discourse patterns into English. The variety is widely observed in

educational institutions, academic publications, religious lectures, online communities, and social media platforms.

Understanding Islamic English requires an interdisciplinary perspective that combines sociolinguistics with Islamic intellectual traditions. Such an approach explains not only the structural characteristics of this language variety but also its role in constructing religious identity, strengthening transnational Muslim solidarity, and facilitating communication across diverse linguistic communities.

The present study therefore examines Islamic English as an evolving sociolinguistic phenomenon. By reviewing existing theoretical perspectives and current linguistic practices, it seeks to explain how English has been adapted to meet the communicative and cultural needs of non-Arab Muslim populations while maintaining the authenticity of key Islamic concepts.

2. Theoretical Foundations

2.1 World Englishes and Kachru's Three-Circle Framework

The concept of World Englishes, introduced by Braj B. Kachru, provides an essential theoretical basis for understanding the global development of English. According to this framework, English is no longer restricted to native-speaking societies but has evolved into multiple localized varieties shaped by the historical, cultural, and social realities of different communities.

Kachru classifies English-speaking contexts into three categories: the Inner Circle, where English is the native language; the Outer Circle, where English has institutional functions because of colonial history; and the Expanding Circle, where English is primarily learned as an international language. Countries with large Muslim populations, including Pakistan, Indonesia, and Turkey, illustrate how English has been adapted to local religious and cultural environments.

From this perspective, Islamic English represents a functional variety that extends across both the Outer and Expanding Circles. Rather than simply following conventional native-speaker norms, Muslim users reshape English to express Islamic concepts while preserving their religious worldview. Consequently, English becomes an instrument for intercultural communication without diminishing Islamic identity.

2.2 Ismail Raji al-Faruqi and the Linguistic Representation of Islamic Concepts

An equally significant theoretical contribution comes from Ismail Raji al-Faruqi, whose work emphasized the importance of accurately representing Islamic knowledge in English. He argued that many Arabic religious concepts possess meanings that cannot be fully conveyed through direct English translations because cultural and theological nuances may be lost.

To address this challenge, al-Faruqi encouraged the preservation of authentic Arabic terminology in English discourse. Expressions such as Tawhid, Ummah, Da'wah, Shari'ah, and Sunnah are therefore frequently retained in their original forms rather than being replaced by approximate English equivalents.

Today, this linguistic practice extends far beyond academic writing. It is widely observed in religious education, scholarly publications, digital media, international

conferences, and everyday communication among Muslims. As a result, Islamic English has developed into a dynamic communicative system that combines English grammatical structures with Islamic terminology, enabling speakers to communicate effectively while maintaining the authenticity of their religious identity.

The integration of Kachru's sociolinguistic model with al-Faruqi's intellectual perspective demonstrates that Islamic English should be understood not as a deviation from Standard English but as a legitimate variety shaped by the communicative needs and cultural values of Muslim communities throughout the world.

3. Language, Identity, and Translingual Communication

Language performs a vital role in shaping both individual and collective identity. For many non-Arab Muslims, English is not merely a means of international communication but also a medium through which religious beliefs, cultural values, and social affiliations are expressed. The increasing use of Islamic English demonstrates how speakers successfully combine global communication with local religious traditions.

Rather than abandoning their native languages or fully adopting Western linguistic conventions, Muslim speakers frequently construct a multilingual communicative space. In this environment, English functions alongside Arabic religious expressions and local languages, creating a distinctive form of translingual communication that reflects both global engagement and Islamic identity.

This phenomenon is particularly evident in countries such as Indonesia, Pakistan, and Turkey, as well as among Muslim communities living in Europe and North America. In these contexts, speakers naturally integrate Arabic terminology into English conversations to reinforce shared religious values, strengthen community solidarity, and communicate concepts that have no precise equivalents in English.

Code-mixing therefore becomes more than a linguistic strategy. It serves as a marker of religious affiliation, educational background, and membership within the wider global Muslim community. Through these practices, speakers negotiate multiple identities while maintaining both linguistic flexibility and cultural authenticity.

4. Sociolinguistic Characteristics of Islamic English

Islamic English possesses several distinctive linguistic features that differentiate it from other varieties of English. One of its most recognizable characteristics is the incorporation of Arabic lexical items into English discourse without translation. Terms such as Tawhid, Sunnah, Ummah, Zakah, and Da'wah are commonly preserved because they convey precise religious meanings that cannot be fully represented through English vocabulary.

Another important feature involves semantic specialization. Certain English words acquire meanings that are unique to Islamic discourse. For example, the expressions brother and sister often extend beyond biological relationships to signify spiritual unity among Muslims. Their interpretation depends on religious context rather than ordinary social usage.

Pragmatic expressions also contribute to the distinctive identity of Islamic English. Common phrases including Insha'Allah, Alhamdulillah, SubhanAllah, and Masha'Allah are regularly incorporated into English conversations. These expressions perform interpersonal and religious functions by expressing gratitude, hope, praise, or admiration while simultaneously reinforcing Islamic values during communication.

Overall, the sociolinguistic features of Islamic English illustrate that this variety follows systematic linguistic patterns rather than representing random deviations from Standard English. Its vocabulary, discourse conventions, and pragmatic functions collectively demonstrate the ongoing adaptation of English to the communicative needs of Muslim communities across different cultural and geographical settings.

5. Research Gap

Although previous studies have acknowledged the existence of Islamic English, important areas remain insufficiently explored. Much of the earlier research has evaluated linguistic forms according to native-speaker standards, often overlooking Islamic English as an independent and systematic variety.

In addition, limited empirical attention has been given to the rapidly expanding use of Islamic English in digital communication. Social networking platforms, online educational programs, virtual religious seminars, podcasts, and other digital environments have become major spaces where this variety continues to develop. Future investigations should therefore focus on these emerging contexts to better understand how Islamic English evolves in response to technological innovation and global interaction.

6.Methodology

6.1 Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative research design within the field of sociolinguistics to examine the development and communicative functions of Islamic English among non-Arab Muslim communities. Since the research focuses on linguistic practices, identity construction, and religious discourse, a qualitative approach provides the most appropriate framework for interpreting language in its social and cultural context.

The study also incorporates the principles of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to explore how language reflects ideology, religious identity, and power relations. This analytical perspective enables the researcher to investigate not only linguistic structures but also the broader social meanings embedded in Islamic English.

6.2 Research Context

The research focuses on several Muslim communities where English serves as an important medium of communication despite Arabic not being the native language. These contexts include Pakistan as an Outer Circle country, Indonesia and Turkey as Expanding Circle countries, and Muslim diaspora communities in English-speaking nations such as the United Kingdom and the United States.

These settings provide valuable opportunities to observe how English is adapted to express Islamic beliefs while responding to different cultural and social environments.

6.3 Data Sources and Sampling

The study relies on qualitative data collected from multiple sources to ensure a comprehensive understanding of Islamic English.

The primary sources include:

- Academic books and peer-reviewed journal articles discussing World Englishes, sociolinguistics, and Islamic discourse.

- English-language Islamic publications produced by universities and research institutions.

- Publicly available content from digital platforms, including X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, and other online communities where Muslims communicate in English.

- Transcripts of lectures, webinars, and educational programs delivered by internationally recognized non-Arab Muslim scholars.

Purposive sampling is employed to select texts that clearly demonstrate the use of Islamic English in authentic communicative situations.

6.4 Data Analysis

The collected data are examined through thematic and linguistic analysis. Particular attention is given to three major aspects.

First, lexical analysis identifies the use of Arabic-derived religious terminology within English discourse.

Second, syntactic analysis investigates the integration of Arabic expressions into English sentence structures through code-mixing and code-switching.

Finally, semantic and pragmatic analysis explores how ordinary English vocabulary acquires specialized Islamic meanings and how religious expressions function within everyday communication.

Combining these analytical perspectives allows the research to explain both the structural characteristics and the sociocultural significance of Islamic English.

6.5 Ethical Considerations

The study follows accepted ethical principles for linguistic and digital research. Only publicly accessible materials are included in the analysis, and any personal information relating to social media users is excluded. Where examples from online communication are discussed, identifying details are removed or paraphrased to protect participants' privacy.

This ethical approach ensures that the research respects confidentiality while maintaining the reliability and academic integrity of the findings.

7. Conclusion

The findings of this review demonstrate that Islamic English has developed into a meaningful and systematic variety of English used by non-Arab Muslim communities across diverse cultural settings. Rather than functioning solely as a global language,

English has been reshaped to accommodate Islamic beliefs, values, and patterns of communication.

The study shows that the integration of Arabic religious terminology, specialized semantic meanings, and translingual communication strategies enables Muslim speakers to preserve their religious identity while actively participating in international academic, social, and digital environments. These linguistic practices illustrate that Islamic English is not a collection of random lexical borrowings but a coherent sociolinguistic phenomenon that reflects the interaction between language, culture, and faith.

Furthermore, the application of Kachru's World Englishes framework together with al-Faruqi's intellectual perspective provides a comprehensive explanation for the emergence and continuing development of Islamic English. The combination of these theoretical approaches highlights the adaptability of English as a global language capable of representing diverse religious and cultural traditions.

Despite the growing recognition of Islamic English, important research challenges remain. Existing scholarship has concentrated primarily on theoretical discussions and traditional written discourse, whereas comparatively little attention has been given to the dynamic use of Islamic English in digital communication, social networking platforms, online religious education, and virtual Muslim communities.

Future research should therefore employ empirical methods, including corpus linguistics, digital discourse analysis, and cross-cultural comparative studies, to investigate how Islamic English continues to evolve across different regions and communicative contexts. Such investigations will contribute not only to sociolinguistics and World Englishes but also to a broader understanding of language as a reflection of religious identity in an increasingly interconnected world.

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