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Sociolinguistic perspectives of Islamic English as lingua franco among non-Arabic Muslims

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Annotation

This study explores the sociolinguistic evolution of the English language within the contemporary global Muslim community, focusing on the emergence of "Islamic English." As globalization de-centers English from its native Western origins, non-Arab Muslim populations increasingly adopt it as a vital medium for religious expression and identity construction. Utilizing Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and a qualitative case-study approach, this research examines how speakers in Indonesia, Pakistan, Turkey, and Western Muslim diasporas navigate the inherent tensions between Anglo-centric linguistic norms and Islamic values. The analysis focuses on lexical borrowing, semantic transformations of Arabic roots, and pragmatic code-mixing within digital and academic discourses. The findings suggest that Islamic English functions not merely as a passive translation tool, but as an active, translingual instrument that validates localized religious identities. Ultimately, this study contributes to the fields of World Englishes and the sociolinguistics of religion by challenging traditional "Standard English" biases and documenting the legitimacy of religious linguistic variations.

KEYWORDS

Islamic English, World Englishes, Sociolinguistics of Religion, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), Non-Arab Muslim Identity, Language and Religion, Translingualism, Lexical Transformation.

Annotatsiya

Ushbu tadqiqot zamonaviy global musulmonlar hamjamiyatida ingliz tilining sotsiolingvistik rivojlanishini o‘rganadi va asosiy e’tiborni "Islomiy ingliz tili" (Islamic English) hodisasining shakllanishiga qaratadi. Globallashuv ingliz tilini o‘zining g‘arbdagi tub manbalaridan uzoqlashtirgan (de-sentralizatsiya qilgan) sari, arab bo‘lmagan musulmon aholi undan diniy ifoda va o‘zlikni anglashning muhim vositasi

sifatida tobora ko‘proq foydalanmoqda. Tanqidiy diskurs tahlili (CDA) va sifat ko‘rsatkichlariga asoslangan keys-stadi (case-study) yondashuvidan foydalangan holda, ushbu tadqiqot Indoneziya, Pokiston, Turkiya va G‘arbdagi musulmon diasporalaridagi so‘zlashuvchilarning anglo-tsentrik lingvistik me’yorlar hamda islomiy qadriyatlar o‘rtasidagi ziddiyatlarni qanday bartaraf etishini tahlil qiladi. Tahlil raqamli va akademik diskurslardagi leksik o‘zlashtirishlar, arabcha o‘zak so‘zlarning semantik transformatsiyalari (ma’no o‘zgarishlari) hamda pragmatik kod aralashuviga (code-mixing) qaratilgan. Tadqiqot natijalari shuni ko‘rsatadiki, islomiy ingliz tili shunchaki passiv tarjima vositasi emas, balki mahalliy diniy o‘zlikni tasdiqlovchi faol, translingvistik vosita bo‘lib xizmat qiladi. Oxir-oqibat, ushbu tadqiqot an’anaviy "Standart ingliz tili"ga xos yondashuvlarni shubha ostiga qo‘yish va diniy lingvistik variantlarning qonuniyligini asoslab berish orqali "Jahon ingliz tillari" (World Englishes) hamda din sotsiolingvistikasi sohalariga munosib hissa qo‘shadi.

Аннотация

Данное исследование изучает социолингвистическую эволюцию английского языка в рамках современного мирового мусульманского сообщества, уделяя особое внимание возникновению «исламского английского» (Islamic English). Поскольку глобализация смещает английский язык с его исконных западных центров (децентрирует его), неарабское мусульманское население все чаще использует его в качестве важного средства религиозного самовыражения и конструирования идентичности. Используя критический дискурс-анализ (CDA) и качественный метод кейс-стади (case-study), данное исследование изучает, как носители языка в Индонезии, Пакистане, Турции и в мусульманских диаспорах на Западе преодолевают противоречия между англоцентричными языковыми нормами и исламскими ценностями. Анализ сфокусирован на лексических заимствованиях, семантических трансформациях арабских корней и прагматическом смешении кодов (code-mixing) в цифровом и академическом дискурсах. Результаты показывают, что исламский английский функционирует не просто как пассивный инструмент перевода, а как активный транслингвальный инструмент, легитимизирующий локальные религиозные

идентичности. В конечном счете, данное исследование вносит вклад в области «Мировых вариантов английского языка» (World Englishes) и социолингвистики религии, ставя под сомнение традиционные предубеждения относительно «стандартного английского» и документируя правомерность религиозных языковых вариаций.

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Context

In the contemporary era of globalization, the English language has transcended its historical role as a mere tool for Western communication. It has undergone what sociolinguists define as a "de-centering" process, shifting from the exclusive ownership of native speakers to a pluralistic, global medium (Kachru, 1992). Within this paradigm, religion plays a pivotal role in reshaping linguistic landscapes (Suleiman, 2011). As non-Arab Muslim populations expand and interact on global platforms, the emergence of Islamic English has evolved from an academic curiosity into a cultural and religious necessity (Al-Faruqi, 1986). Rather than viewing English as an ideological threat, contemporary Muslim scholars and speakers utilize it as an organic vehicle to express their faith, bridge cultural divides, and articulate nuanced theological concepts to a global audience (Pennycook, 2007). Ratnawati Mohd-Asraf argues that although English is rooted in the Judeo-Christian culture, and often viewed as a primary vehicle for the transmission of "Western" values, the learning of English is not in conflict with Islamic values. In his article “English and Islam: A clash of civilizations?” he also presents an Islamic perspective on the role of language and the attitude that Muslims should adopt towards learning languages. Another scholar Tariq Rahman in his article “The Muslim response to English in South Asia: with special reference to inequality, intolerance, and militancy in Pakistan” he argues that since the British colonial era, Muslims in South Asia have responded to English in three ways: (a) rejection and resistance, (b) acceptance and assimilation, and (c) pragmatic utilization. These responses continue in Pakistan and are respectively associated with the traditionalist ulema, the Westernized middle and upper classes; and Islamists, including Islamic militants. In turn these social cleavages are closely linked to the role

of English as a marker of socio-economic class and the function of the state in creating and maintaining policies which have distributed the language unevenly.

1.2 Problem Statement and Research Questions

Despite the widespread adoption of English within the Muslim world, a profound sociolinguistic tension persists between Standard English norms and the preservation of Islamic identity (Karmani, 2005). Traditional linguistic frameworks often categorize English through Eurocentric lenses, leaving a gap in understanding how non-Arab Muslims negotiate religious expression in a language historically saturated with Western socio-cultural values. This study seeks to address this friction by investigating the following critical questions:

How do non-Arab Muslim communities linguistically navigate and resolve the tension between Anglo-centric linguistic norms and their Islamic identity? (Mahboob, 2009)

What are the primary lexical, semantic, and pragmatic strategies employed in digital and academic spaces to construct "Islamic English"? (Mahboob, 2009)

1.3 Purpose and Objectives of the Study

The overarching purpose of this research is to comprehensively analyze the sociolinguistic features, transformations, and communicative functions of Islamic English. To achieve this, the study outlines the following specific objectives:

To systematically deconstruct the lexical borrowing, semantic shifts, and code-mixing patterns prevalent in modern Islamic discourse (Mahboob, 2009).

To evaluate how English serves as an active, rather than passive, medium for dynamic religious expression among non-Arab speakers (Hashim, 2014).

1.4 Significance of the Study

This research holds substantial academic and practical significance. Conceptually, it contributes directly to the fields of World Englishes and the sociolinguistics of religion by challenging the deeply rooted "Standard English" bias (Kachru, 1992). By documenting the legitimacy of Islamic English, this study expands the boundaries of how localized Englishes are validated (Al-Faruqi, 1986). Practically, it provides researchers, educators, and digital content creators with a clearer framework for understanding cross-cultural communication within the global Muslim community (the

Ummah).

1.5 Scope of the Study

To maintain analytical depth, the empirical scope of this study is strategically delimited to three prominent non-Arab Muslim geographies—Indonesia, Pakistan, and Turkey—as well as the contemporary Western Muslim diasporas. These specific contexts offer a rich, comparative canvas to observe how diverse linguistic backgrounds adapt English to serve their distinct yet unified religious communicative needs (Hashim, 2014; Mahboob, 2009)

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